

**“POLICY, CURRICULUM AND THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE
PRIMARY SCHOOL”**

ALASTAIR D MCPHEE

**THESIS
IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

APRIL 1996

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BEING A

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by

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to examine the ways in which changes in political thinking affect policy in respect of the teaching of English language in the primary school. In particular, there is examination of the impact of liberal / progressive and New Right thinking in this area. It also examines how and to what extent these views appear in curricular documentation at national level in both Scotland and in England and Wales.

In order to accomplish these tasks, the study is dependent on data and methods of investigation from a number of different disciplines. Firstly, there is the consideration of the historical dimension, in which there is examination of the ways in which curricular policy in primary English language (within the context of broader issues affecting primary education in general) has evolved in the two macrosystems under discussion. Secondly, there is investigation of the linguistic dimension - the ways in which changes and developments in language theory have permeated - or perhaps just as revealingly - have not permeated national guidelines. Thirdly, the ideologies and philosophies which have proven to be powerful drivers in the formulation of policy with respect to this field are examined. Lastly, there is the empirical dimension, in which key players in the formulation of the 5-14 national guidelines in English language in Scotland are interviewed, using an open ended interview format.

In terms of the examination of the relationship between ideology and curriculum policy, the study looks at the concept of the policy community and applies this to the field of English language. In so doing, it draws upon the work of Humes, McPherson and Raab, Ball, and Lawton. Key documents from the past such as the Plowden and Bullock Reports and the Primary Memorandum of 1965 in Scotland reveal how the policy processes have traditionally operated in the age of consensus; and these are aligned with texts of New Right provenance. The technique of critical discourse analysis is utilised to gain access to the underlying discourses of power which

operate in these latter texts. The processes by which policy becomes curriculum in primary language are then scrutinised in detail.

The thesis then moves on to examine the pedagogy of the teaching of primary English language as expressed in the national orders or guidelines themselves according to three indices of analysis. The first of these is the needs of the systems within which the guidelines are to be effective, and special attention is paid in this context to the role and effect of assessment. Secondly, the ways in which the guidelines are driven by ideological concerns is discussed and within this context there is a review of the extent to which these concerns surface in the guidelines in both England and Scotland. Thirdly, the models of language which are encapsulated in the documentation are examined. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to review the background in developments in linguistics. The statements in the guidelines themselves are aligned with this background.

The last major theme is the consideration of the extent to which the guidelines or orders are affected by differing perceptions of teacher professionalism. In this context, a model of the professionalism of the primary teacher in English language is developed and once more the guidelines are compared with this and conclusions formed.

The final chapter seeks to return to the conceptual framework of the study and the research questions which are posed within that framework. There is discussion of the major themes which have emerged from the investigation - the importance of ideological concerns in the framing of educational policy: the relationship between language and power in this field: the way in which policy drives curriculum and how key policy actors operate: and lastly the complex web of relationships in discussion of policy, pedagogy and linguistics.

Alastair D McPhee

March 1996

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Conceptual Framework and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this section is to outline the principal and subsidiary areas of investigation of this thesis and to provide a conceptual framework within which the investigation will take place. The boundaries of the research in terms of documentation, terminology and time will also be outlined.

The first major theme to be pursued will be that of the potential impact of changes in political thinking on policy towards the curriculum in primary schools as defined in national guidelines on the primary curriculum as a whole and on the teaching of English language. English language is selected because it represents an area within which there has been considerable political debate, because there has been a wide divergence of views, and because it is an area which is considered by many, both within and outside the education system, as of considerable importance. In this respect, there will be a number of research questions:

- What different political views of the primary curriculum and of the teaching of English language emerge? In particular, there will be examination of the impact of New Right and liberal/progressive thinking upon this area.
- How and to what extent are these views realised in curricular documentation at national level?

This investigation will be contextualised within the development and evolution of policy with respect to the production of national primary

school curricular guidelines in England and Scotland. The research question which will figure most prominently in this area will be:

- Is it possible to discern a distinct line of policy development with regard to the production of national primary curricular guidelines in the systems of England and Scotland?

Sub-themes to this area of investigation will be the degree of interrelatedness between the sets of national curricular guidelines which operate within each system and an attempt to account for any observable differences in terms of policy, interpretation or emphasis by the communities responsible for them. In this area, there will be special emphasis on the genesis of the guidelines in English Language developed as part of the 5-14 development programme in Scotland, and the National Curriculum Orders for English in England. The study will therefore examine the links between ideologies, the policies which ensue from these ideologies, and the curricula which emerge from the implementation of these policies. The part played by institutions such as the Scottish Office Education Department, HMII, and the CCC in the interpretation of policy will also feature in the study.

The second major theme in the thesis will be related to the above. It will investigate views of the pedagogy of language teaching which are enshrined in the different sets of guidelines. In particular, the extent to which views of the pedagogy of language teaching in the primary sector are system-oriented, ideology oriented or theory-oriented will be examined. The term **system-oriented** implies investigation of whether national language guidelines are devised in order to meet the expectations of system users and, in particular, members of the teaching community. The term **ideology-oriented** implies investigation of whether or not the principal driver of a particular set of guidelines or an aspect of these guidelines is an ideology. Lastly, the investigation of the theory oriented aspect asks

whether guidelines are developed to incorporate a particular **theory of language** and thus to advance learning through the working out of that theory in practice. A corollary of this is to ask what the effect might be of rejection of other language theories which could have equal or more pressing claims on the primary school curriculum in English language.

The third and last major theme in the study will be an examination of the interpretations of teacher professionalism which underpin the documents. Within this topic, investigation of teacher professionalism will require consideration of the ways in which these views relate to perceptions of teacher status. It will also require consideration of how they relate to perceptions on the part of those who will be required to implement the curricular guidance or prescription which the documentation affords. Lastly, the ways in which these perceptions of professionalism relate to political/ideological concerns will be considered.

At this stage, it will be useful to define the parameters within which the study will operate. Firstly the study will restrict itself to consideration of major national curricular documentation. These will be documents which represent major staging posts in the development of thinking - perhaps in a linear fashion, perhaps via movement and counter-movement - towards the positions articulated by the 5-14 National Guidelines on English Language and the National Curriculum Orders in English.

Secondly, definition of the term "national curricular guidelines" itself is required. This will represent that documentation - advice, orders or guidelines - which relates to the curriculum in the primary stages as a whole, and to the teaching of English language within the primary sector. It might be possible to refine that by limiting investigation to, say, the early stages or the later stages: but what this study will concern itself with is the sum total of language

experience which is undergone by children when they attend primary school.

Thirdly, throughout this study the term "language" will refer to language in the sense of the totality of language teaching. That is, the four modes of reading, writing, speaking and listening plus the aspect of knowledge about language. It is accepted that it is profitable to specialise and investigate more closely in each of these areas. For example, one might look at the initial teaching of reading, or at the role of talk in the later stages. However, this thesis is concerned with the view of language formation as a whole, over the primary school as a whole. It is felt that there is a lack of this kind of overview in curricular studies, and thus this work attempts to partially fill the gap.

Fourthly, it is important to specify the scope of the thesis in terms of dates and time scale. In England and Wales, the study commences with the Hadow Reports. Hadow is selected as the starting point because the reports on the Infant and Primary schools represent the statement of intent of most significance prior to the Plowden Report. The study will terminate in terms of time scale with the 1991 National Curriculum Orders following the publication of the Cox Report, and this must be seen as a major focus for comparison and analysis. It has also been selected as a cut-off because subsequent developments - eg the Dearing Review - are reactions to situations such as professional unrest and concern over issues such as workload, and because during the timescale of this investigation the final position with regard to these concerns was as yet unclear, although the relevance of these reactions to the imposition and management of policy is accepted.

In Scotland, the starting point is the 1946 Advisory Council Report which was the direct antecedent of the 1950 Primary Memorandum. This is the terminus de quo because it represents a major statement

on the development of the primary school curriculum in Scotland, and because if a focus later on must be the 1965 Primary Memorandum, then this latter document can only be understood in terms of its antecedents. The terminus ad quem will be the 1991 5-14 National Guidelines for the teaching of English Language. These may be seen in very broad terms as cognate in Scottish terms to the National Curriculum Orders of the previous year. They are broadly also the offspring of the same ideology which produced the National Curriculum. This will allow comparison between the systems and also access to ways in which the Scottish education policy community or the language policy community processed that ideology into practice.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

Investigating within the Conceptual Framework

The introduction in the previous section has attempted to lay out the conceptual framework of the study and the definition of the limits within which it operates. It is the task of this section to describe the processes of investigation and to attempt to describe in some greater detail the paths down which the investigation itself has proceeded. In any study of this nature, there have to be made decisions which will shape the areas for investigation, the research methods which are employed, the starting and finishing points, and so on. This section will attempt to elucidate and clarify these decisions and the reasons for taking them in the light of the information which was available at the time the study was carried out. But it will hopefully also be a part of this section to attempt, within that framework, some further definition of terms and terminology employed, as the interpretation of these may be of great importance in understanding and interpreting the thesis.

The Historical Dimension

In the Introduction, reference was made to the historical dimension. The question might then be asked: is this a historical study, investigating the history of policy making in education and the ideological or political constraints which might drive that policy? This question illustrates the kind of decision, referred to above, which has to be taken. In this case, it was decided to employ historical data in order to shed light on the ways in which educational policies have been formulated in Scotland and in England and Wales. Yet taking that decision involves a consciousness of what historical data are to be examined, whether primary or secondary sources or both are to be employed, and whether the investigative approach should limit itself to merely preparing a historical, essentially sequential approach to accounting for events or whether in fact a deeper level of investigation is necessary

which not only sequences events but attempts to account for the circumstances, both socioeconomic and political, which caused these events to occur¹. An even greater decision is the extent to which the historical element should figure in the study, and the other elements which might be omitted or diminished if such an approach were adopted. Further investigation reveals that within the historical field, other disciplines come into play. Policy studies is one of these. This sub-discipline, essentially of sociology, has been much in focus in recent years as investigators and theorists have sought to fill in the contextual details to historical research by explaining how policies come to be formulated and how they might be implemented with the interests of certain groups in mind.² Succeeding sections will discuss the relevance of policy studies to this study and the part which this discipline can play in the investigation.

Thus, having taken the decision that the study will not primarily be a historical one, what will be the part which historical data might play? In what way might they illuminate discussion of the research areas outlined in the previous section? How might historical considerations illuminate our understanding of policy and curriculum in the field of the teaching of English language in the primary school, and what historical methodologies and approaches might be used in the gathering and interpretation of data?

To answer the first question, it is necessary to discuss and define the limitations to the role of historical data in the study. The aim in this respect is to investigate the emergence of a line of policy development with regard to the production of national guidelines in primary language in Scotland and in England and Wales. To access these lines, to decide whether or not they are distinctive and different and then to undertake a comparison with the current provision and nature of primary language guidelines requires consideration

¹ As Hinchcliffe (1978) comments:

“Much historical writing of a secondary character tends to be either a synthesis of selected elements or a generalised account of a sequence of events. In consequence, what actually occurred in the past, the reasons for it, its relationship with other occurrences and the outcome may be obscured, distorted, or in some cases, subordinated to the writer’s point of view”

Gerald Hinchcliffe “Piecing together: The Pedagogical Model” in “Historical Research”; A Chadwick, G Hinchcliffe, M Stephens and B Tolley: TRC Rediguides, 1978.

² eg Humes (1986 and 1994); McPherson and Raab (1988) comment on the emergence of policy studies as almost a subdiscipline of sociology.

of the documentation which has preceded the present arrangements. To undertake that consideration one has to have access to historical documents in the form of productions from the various government departments charged with the formulation of policy within the primary school sector. Such documentation might include guidelines which were specific to the provision of primary school teaching in English language³ or documents which were more generally intended to cover a much wider area of concern within the primary school.⁴ These documents therefore are the primary historical sources in the investigation. But there may be other documents which are able through commentary and analysis to shed light on the primary sources and which will have to be subject to critical scrutiny and evaluation in the course of the construction of the thesis: these will be the secondary sources and as such will be recognised through footnote and bibliography⁵. In this study it is not intended to offer a separate section in which the relevant and appropriate literature is reviewed and analysed.⁶ Rather it is thought more appropriate to feed in textual support for points as they are made. Therefore, to summarise the first point, historical data will be used to determine the contextual background to the production of the current sets of curricular guidelines both north and south of the border and to show, by contrast and comparison, whether these new curricula represent substantial change from the models which have been used in the past and if so what the effects of these changes might be.

Having defined therefore the role of historical elements in this research, it is appropriate now to discuss the reasons for the cut off dates which have been given in the Introduction in the previous Chapter. In Scotland, the 1946 Report of the Advisory Council⁷ has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it represents the first major post war pronouncement on primary education; and secondly, it was of considerable influence in the formulation of the 1950

³ see, for example, COPE Papers and the documentation issued by SCOLA; these are cited in the Bibliography at the end of the study.

⁴ see, for example documents like the 1965 Primary Memorandum in the case of Scotland or the Plowden Report (1967) in the case of England and Wales.

⁵ "Educational Research" ; Borg and Gall: 1989; Longman; Page 115 and especially in this context, Page 817

⁶ The case for such separate analysis is made by a number of commentators on educational research, such as Borg and Gall 1989; Page 114 and ff; Anderson 1990; Page 97 and ff; Merriam 1988; Page 53 and ff.

⁷ Report of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland; Cmd 6973; HMSO 1946

Primary Memorandum,⁸ which is in itself a primary source of major importance to this study and research. It can be argued that the 1946 Advisory Council Report was the product of earlier developments, and so indeed it was: the result of continuous flow of development which had been going on since at least the nineteenth century. But even within the context of research which is genuinely historical in its thrust, there have to be beginnings and there have to be endings, and this decision has been taken because it helps to provide a starting point which may be seen as the commencement of a new direction in primary education policy and one which has been of profound influence in subsequent curricular developments. In terms of the decision to close the era under investigation with the current 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language, the decision is much simpler - they represent the current statement of official thinking in this area and as such are worthy of investigation in terms of their origins, context, pedagogical and curricular approaches. Further, these are the guidelines which have been set against the historical data in order to determine the extent to which they represent new directions, the extent to which they are driven by ideology and the extent to which the influence of the policy community has operated upon them. By employing a consideration of historical data, it should be possible to establish whether there is a distinctive Scottish line of development against which this comparison might effectively be made.

In terms of England and Wales - though for the purposes of this study distinctively Welsh aspects such as Welsh language and culture will not form part of the consideration - it is perhaps more difficult to establish a clear starting point such as the 1950 Primary Memorandum in Scotland. Consequently, the decision was taken to establish a starting point of comparable significance to the 1950 document. This proved more difficult to undertake than might seem the case. Whereas in the nineteen sixties there was a burgeoning of curricular documentation in the 1965 Primary Memorandum and the Plowden Report and direct comparison is possible because these two documents are contemporary and, moreover, born of the same thrust in thinking, there is no cognate document for England to the 1950 one. The predecessor to Plowden is in fact seen as the three Hadow

⁸ "The Primary School in Scotland"; HMSO Edinburgh; 1950

Reports dating from the days of the Advisory Council in the late nineteen twenties and early thirties, and so the decision has been taken to use them as the starting point for consideration. This apparent time-lag in itself may be significant for purposes of comparison and the construction of a model⁹ of curriculum development in England and Wales.

The closing point for consideration in the system south of the border is equally difficult to determine, though for very different reasons. There has been a plethora of educational documentation since the implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1988, and much of this documentation for reasons which will become apparent, relates to English language and the concept of "basic skills". It is therefore a matter of choosing to terminate with a document which may be of some use in constructing a comparison with the cognate document operative in Scotland and for that reason it has been decided that the appropriate text is the 1990 National Curriculum Orders in English. These were written following upon the publication of the Cox Report on English 5-16 and therefore reflect much of the thinking of the time as well as the processes of policy and pedagogy which were enshrined within it. It is recognised that there have been at least two subsequent revisions, some concerned with the primary sector and others of greater relevance to the secondary, and that the publications of the Dearing proposals of 1994 and 1995 have again changed the picture. However, to bring such changes into the present study would be to present a distorted view - in terms of the subsequent politicking and teacher revolt - of the fundamental and ideologically driven processes which empowered the construction of the original guidelines, and therefore the decision has been taken to cut off at the 1990 Orders. It is recognised that this decision might be seen as in some respects an arbitrary one and one which moreover ignores one of the more important aspects of views of teacher professionalism. However, it is felt that the distortion which might occur from an undue consideration of these aspects is an unacceptable risk: further, views of teacher professionalism will indeed be examined in some detail in a later part of this thesis.

⁹ The dangers of using models in this way are outlined by, for example, Bastiani and Tolley: "While planning models can be a useful framework..... they often suggest a more tight topic and a fixed set of relationships" It is wished to be made clear at this stage that these dangers are recognised in the present study and that account will be taken of them in the use of the models which emerge from the process. ("Researching into the Curriculum"; Bastiani and Tolley: TRC Rediguides 1979)

The previous discussion will have gone some way to answering the second of the questions which were posed: to what extent will sets of historical data illuminate the areas which are the principal focus for the study. It has been suggested that they will enable lines of development to be traced and that they can be used to show comparison with current thrusts and momentums. They can also be used to demonstrate ways in which thinking changes, from one age to another, from one government to another, from one set of policy actors to another: and this will be part of a subsequent discussion in this section relating to philosophical concerns. Further, historical data can shed light on the actors themselves, how they react to certain thrusts in thinking and how they change policies in order to counter these thrusts. In turn, other actors in the policy world see other directions and prepare counter movements, or take the established impetus further down a particular line of thinking and therefore on to a further line of policy development and implementation. Historical data locate events within a time frame, and therefore they also assist by helping to explain how educational thinking may be a reaction to, say, events within the economic or social policy domains. Where such data can be employed in this way, recourse has been had to them, through primary and secondary source documentation as defined above.

The third question, relating to how historical considerations might illuminate our understanding of policy and curriculum in the field of the teaching of English language in the primary school, and what historical methodologies and approaches might be used in the gathering and interpretation of data, must now be discussed. Once again, some progress has been made in this area in the light of previous discussion: however, this will require to be amplified and developed. As has been stated, the spirit of a time can shape the thinking of a generation. To misquote the proverb, there is nothing which can stop an ideology whose time has come. Therefore, consideration of historical and philosophical - ideological contexts must inevitably proceed hand in hand to a certain extent. Since curricula are the products of ideologies after the refinement of the policy and implementation processes, what is taught in the classroom at the end of the chain may be removed from the original statement of intent by several stages, but it will still inevitably be

related to the chain of events, however loosely; however strong the impact of the policy community¹⁰ may be upon it. Through that chain, we can interpret the impact of policy communities in one sense by comparing ideological statements and policy drivers and the eventual curricula which emanate from their articulation. Historical documents and consideration of them in that context enable us to have access to points along the process and to understand some dimensions of how the process might have operated. Other ways in which we might have access could be, for example, to interview policy actors or to distribute questionnaires to them. This aspect in particular will be subject to discussion later in this section.

The methodology by which historical aspects are investigated is important, because it affects the ways in which data are read and interpreted. In this study, the decision was taken to construct a number of historical surveys and to articulate the data emerging from these surveys as a continuous narrative. The primary sources for these surveys, which do not feature as a substantive part of this thesis but rather as data from which the thesis itself is abstracted, are official documentation which has its provenance in one or other of the government offices with responsibility for education or education policy, quasi-autonomous non governmental organisations (Quangos), documents emanating from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, both in Scotland and in England and other official publications. A complete list of the documents consulted is provided in footnotes where this is appropriate and within the Bibliography. Since the provenance of such primary source material is clear, the constraints of external criticism¹¹ do not apply - they are what they say they are. They are of course subject to internal criticism during the evaluation stage which leads to the construction of the thesis itself.¹² Secondary sources which have been used include commentary and analysis of these official documents, both contemporary and subsequent to the events, historical and educational texts and texts on political and social theory which illuminate these aspects.

The decision to construct such narrative frameworks was taken because it

¹⁰ see discussion of McPherson and Raab "Governing Scottish Education" in subsequent sections.

¹¹ "Research Methods in Education"; Cohen and Mannion; 1985; Croom Helm; Page 57

¹² see Cohen and Mannion (1988) op. cit. Page 58

enables a coherent and consecutive approach to be taken to the analysis and presentation of these historical aspects. It enables facts to be stated, but it also enables historic events to be connected to each other and for the relationship between one document and its context (described in the above terms) and another to be established. Hence, It might be possible, for example, to establish relationships between one document and others over time, or between one and another of the two educational systems under investigation. Narration does not preclude analysis; it is only one way in which the results of that analysis might be presented, and it was felt that in the context of the present study it was the most appropriate. Narration also permitted analytical comment to be interwoven into the text of the presentation of data, and this was attempted where it seemed to be most relevant. Subsequently, the results of this process of narration and analysis are discussed within the main text of the study . Although these narratives were themselves substantial they do not form part of the main text because they were essentially data gathering devices and it is in this light, and within the constraints of length that the decision was taken not to include them.

The linguistic dimension

A historical approach can, however, be used with respect to documentation and spheres of research other than those which deal with events and documents. This has been the approach identified as the most appropriate when dealing with the background of developments in educational linguistics. If one chooses to investigate the construction of national guidelines in English language, then there is an obligation to understand what is going on in the world of research into educational linguistics: otherwise there can be no comprehension of whether guidelines are progressive, recidivist or neutral in nature. On the other hand, this is not intended to be itself a study into educational linguistics. Again, the researcher is at the fork in the road, and has to decide which way to turn, or indeed how far to go down any particular turning. Since there is an intention to use the background of research into educational linguistics but not to carry out an empirical research project in that particular domain, the question remains of how best to align this essential linguistic awareness with the rest

of the study and how best to use it in illuminating the main focus of research - the guidelines themselves. The decision was taken to use an historical method, again within the framework of a narrative in order to accomplish this task. This narrative is to be found within the text of Chapter Six. The justification for employing this methodology is that it will firstly enable an alignment of investigative method with that previously described above and therefore there will be some consistency of approach. Secondly, such an approach will enable the consideration of the development of language research and language theory at the same time as the production of the curricular documents themselves - a further refinement of the alignment described above. Thirdly, the benefits of understanding of relationships and connections which the narrative approach entails will be transferable to the linguistic dimension if the narrative method is employed.

It is wise at this stage to delineate how in fact the linguistic background was researched. The author is extremely fortunate in being a colleague of Andrew Philp, who himself studied and later researched with MAK Halliday in London. Philp's understandings of the linguistic considerations which bear on the present field of study are profound, and although influenced by his espousal of systemic linguistics and all that is Hallidayan, he is a more than articulate observer of the entire field of educational linguistics and has published in this area. The opportunity was therefore taken to hold extended discussions with Andrew Philp over a number of sessions in which educational linguistics, their development and current status were discussed, as well as to take due cognisance of his published work. This provided a starting point for the various important staging posts in the development of research in educational linguistics over the past forty or so years to be identified, as well as providing an opportunity for the writer to reflect on the changes which had occurred in this field since he was an undergraduate working in this area himself. It was recognised that Philp himself might have held, or might indeed hold, a view which was biased by his own training and his own interpretation of the realities of current research. However, once this recognition was made, it was possible to probe deeper into such areas such as systemic linguistics, traditional grammar, genre theory and discourse theory which have been of great relevance in recent discussions on linguistics in education and indeed on the teaching of

English language in the primary classroom. This process has been undertaken with respect to primary and secondary sources concerned with these areas, and they are acknowledged in both footnotes in Chapter Six, and in the Bibliography. Again, it should be recognised that this is not in itself a thesis on linguistics; but rather one where an understanding of the part played by theories of language in the construction and revision of policy is necessary.

This use of the knowledge and experience of an acknowledged expert in the field can further be justified not in theoretical terms but in axiological terms. Anderson¹³ defines this as the “theory of experience” or “insightful observation”. Axiological knowledge is found in the literature written by practitioners whose experience leads them to important conclusions and generalisations. It is in this light that use has been made of Andrew Philp’s expertise, and the important distinction between this and theoretical knowledge is made.

Consideration of linguistic factors is important, because another technique which will be employed in the present study is that of critical discourse analysis. This technique, covered in Chapter Three in detail where it is used, gives the researcher access to ways in which specific power sets are articulated by policy actors, and through these to the underlying assumptions and ideologies which drive the statements. This technique is well established as a tool for investigations of the relationships between power and language and policy, and is used by, for example, Ball (1990) and Tikly (1994).¹⁴ It is further covered by Cookson¹⁵ who argues that there is a super-elaborated code which is used by the power elites and which relates to a concept of cultural superiority which is fostered by the classical curriculum and which in turn empowers them with moral superiority and powers of leadership. Consideration of the unpacking and analysis of these discursive frameworks is important in understanding how elites, policy formers and policy actors think and operate. Since this study will be centrally concerned

¹³ “Fundamentals of Educational Research”; Gary Anderson; 1990; Falmer Press; Page 46

¹⁴ for specific references, see subsequent sections.

¹⁵ “The Power Discourse: elite narratives and educational policy formation”; Peter W Cookson Jr: in “Researching the Powerful in Education”; ed Geoffrey Walford; UCL Social Research Today Series 1994. See particularly Page 119 and ff.

with the ways in which primary language policy is formed and how it is translated into curricular guidelines for use in schools, clearly it will be advantageous to use techniques of critical discourse analysis in accessing these factors.

The philosophical - ideological dimension

A further strand of the research which will require discussion in this section will be the ideological/philosophical aspects of the study. At this point it is perhaps appropriate to define exactly what is meant by ideology. For the purpose of this thesis, an ideology is a cohesive set of ideas and beliefs which may be broadly defined and categorised. Examples of this which illustrate the concept employed and which operate within the study are the entities "Progressive" and "New Right". The author is aware that ideology can be defined in other, much more specific ways, and indeed that these definitions are active within the realm of educational research.¹⁶ However, what is required in this study is a holding term within which these broad sets of ideas and beliefs can be accommodated, and which would be recognisable to a wider community. Therefore this is the definition of ideology which has been adopted in this case.

Consideration of ideology takes the researcher into the sphere of philosophy. The links between ideology and philosophy are strong, just as the links between ideology and policy are strong. In a sense, it is possible to see the three concepts as almost a kind of sandwich, with ideology as the jam filling. Philosophical concerns may be seen as those aspects which lead to the creation of an ideology: concerns of policy as the results of the application of the ideology in the practical and political worlds. It will therefore be the concern of this section to attempt to address these fields in describing how the study seeks to use them in the construction of its thesis. Once again it is perhaps important to point out that the study is not seen as first and foremost a philosophical treatise. However, there will inevitably be a need to address philosophical and particularly ideological concerns in the

¹⁶ see, for example, "Paradigm and Ideology in Educational research"; Thomas Popkewitz; The Falmer Press, 1984

discussion of the area under examination - how ideology becomes policy and how in turn policy becomes public statement of curriculum. Therefore, ideologies and how they affect policy decisions have to be the subjects of careful examination.¹⁷ The decision to be faced by the researcher, as in dealing with historical considerations, is to what extent it is possible or desirable to go down this particular road without distorting the planned area of investigation or indeed without ending up in investigating another area entirely. There is a sense in which this happens all the time, and this present study has been an example of it - that there is an exciting journey to be undertaken, with the destination never exactly certain and ultimately decided by which forks in the road are taken.

In the case of philosophy and ideology, as with history, there are a number of questions to be answered. How can consideration of ideological aspects illuminate the area under investigation, what methodologies should be employed to access these concerns of ideology and how should they ultimately be related to concerns of the primary language curriculum?

To deal with the first of these questions, it is perhaps necessary to look at the definition of ideology which is employed once more. Throughout the history of recent curriculum development it is possible to identify broad thrusts and countermovements. Thus, the progressive movement of the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies might be seen as a reaction to the traditional classical curriculum and its relevance in a rapidly changing world, as a debate between the subject or the child as the centre of the curriculum¹⁸ . Equally, it might be seen as an application of the results of research in psychology, sociology and learning theory to the practical everyday world of the school. Or thirdly, it might be seen as an expression of the spirit of an age, of rebellion against established practice and questioning of concepts and assumptions long held to be self-evident truths. A fourth view, that articulated by Darling¹⁹ , is that there is an honourable tradition of progressive thinking in education which can be traced as an intellectually

¹⁷ "Politics, Philosophy and Economics in Education"; G Fowler, A Melo and A Westoby; The Open University Press, 1974

¹⁸ "Perspectives on the Curriculum"; Martin Shipman and John Raynor; The Open University Press; 1974; Pages 21 - 33

¹⁹ "Child Centred Education and its Critics"; John Darling; Paul Chapman Publishing 1994

sound continuum from Rousseau through Dewey to the present day and that the tradition is not lacking in intellectual rigour. However, it is possible to delineate progressive thinking as a wide strand in educational thought.

Similarly, it is possible to identify the reaction to progressive liberal thought in the publication of the Black Papers²⁰ and to trace the development of that reaction during the nineteen seventies. When allied to the rise of what has become known as Thatcherism, it is again possible to identify the rise of the movement which has been tagged with the label "New Right". This movement has been subject to the scrutiny of many commentators and to the rigorous analysis of educational philosophers and ideologues²¹. But it has its own philosophical base, articulated by such as Roger Scruton, John Marenbon, Sheila Lawlor and PJ Kavanagh.²² It has been extremely successful in recent times in translating its philosophy into policy, and the results of that are evident in many of the changes which have marked curriculum and school management development in the last fifteen years. It is these broad sweeps which will be essential considerations in this study.

The tension between left and right, between elitist and democrat, between convivialist²³ and the advocate of competition, is articulated in an important paper by Michael Bassey²⁴. In this paper, Bassey argues that research in these areas actually creates education, that it is not possible for politics to be kept out of education. The articulation of these ideological concerns through policy, creates education, creates curricula. Thus if the process is to be understood, the first principles which led to the formation of the policies will have to be understood and analysed. It is in this sense that the present thesis makes use of philosophical and ideological data. These are used to inform understanding of the policy process; to shed light on the thinking which forms the background and foundation to it.

And it is that relation to policy which now requires to be looked at in this

²⁰ see footnotes and references in subsequent Chapters

²¹ see, for example, Denis Lawton, Clyde Chitty, Larry Whitty, Stephen Ball et al.

²² see subsequent references and footnotes.

²³ in the sense described by Ivan Illich in "Tools for Conviviality" 1973

²⁴ "Creating Education through Research"; Michael Bassey; Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association; published in British Educational Research Journal, Vol 18 No 1; 1992

discussion of methodology. How can the researcher access the thinking which was fundamental in the shaping of policy? There are basically two ways which suggest themselves. The first is the interviewing of key policy actors²⁵ and the second is the analysis of documents which themselves articulate concerns of policy or ideology. The first method has been used in certain key areas and will be discussed later in this section. The second has been principally employed in the researching of the relationship between ideology and policy. Basically, what is involved is a detective job: a sifting of articles and publications which might contain some key information or a statement of a position which will assist in the forming of judgments about ideological or policy constraints. To exemplify this, if it were possible to identify a publication where a key policy former or ideologue had stated an important position, then analysis of that document would be important in illuminating the central arguments of the thesis. The techniques by which such text might be analysed are important: once again the texts can be subject to analysis of discourse, and this is a method which has been employed to give access to considerations of power and control through the employment of language. In these ways key policy statements can be analysed and related to other statements in order to form a picture of what is meant or implied.

The second of the questions which was posed earlier was: to what extent can ideological - philosophical concerns be related to the curriculum in primary language and to what extent do they shed light on it. In a sense this raises further perhaps more serious questions such as what is meant by curriculum and what is meant by primary language? This goes beyond the mere provision of a definition for the purpose of the research and takes us into important areas of phenomenology. However, at this stage it is not proposed to do that: this is one of the forks in the road where decisions have to be made about the direction and scope of the study as a whole. There is a whole discipline of curriculum philosophy²⁶, and a substantial investigation of this is not part of the main thrust of the investigation either. Nevertheless it will be useful to be aware of it, and to utilise some of its thinking where this is appropriate. For example, is English language teaching an area where a

²⁵ Agreed transcripts of such interviews are to be found in the Appendices.

²⁶ see as an example of this "Curriculum Philosophy and Design"; D Jenkins, R Pring and A Harris; The Open University Press, 1972; This text provides an overview of this area.

body of knowledge is conveyed and taught, or is it an area where processes are learned and rehearsed? Is the teacher an expert charged with the duty of conveying that knowledge or a facilitator whose role is to enable pupils to expand their world through literature and to be empowered to cope with its demands? These are not simply concerns relating to the methodology of the teaching of English language, but fundamental philosophical positions.²⁷ Such fundamental differences appear in a number of publications and in other research documentation²⁸ where they are discussed at length. It is not the position of this study to replicate these discussions but to be aware of them and to utilise them to inform thinking. Thus, it may be useful to know that the movement towards liberal and progressive thinking in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies was characterised in the field of the teaching of English language in both primary and secondary schools by a movement away from a formal and rigid curriculum toward one characterised in broad terms by concepts such as freedom of expression, creative writing and choice in literature. Such a movement is well documented, not just in terms of texts relating to the philosophical debate, but also in terms of the official publications of the time, such as Plowden and the 1965 Primary Memorandum.²⁹

But these concerns have been also part of the recent and vitally important debate on what sort of English should be taught in primary schools and how it should be taught. The concept of movement and countermovement in education was described earlier, and it is equally valid to apply it to this debate, too. There are those who continue to advocate the tenets of the expressive movement and whose views of the teaching of English language and how children are formed in this curricular area are coloured by that movement. There is furthermore research to substantiate its views, too. But there are also those who advocate a return to traditional values in the English language curriculum, and who wish to see a back-to-basics approach in the classrooms. They, too, can refer to research to validate their

²⁷ see, for example, "Interest and Discipline in Education" ; PS Wilson; Routledge 1972; Pages 120-128

²⁸ for example, David Northcroft; 1991; "The Teaching of English in the Scottish Secondary School 1940-1990: A Study of Change and Development"; Unpublished PhD Thesis; University of Stirling

²⁹ These documents are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in the study.

point of view. What is significant, indeed critical to the present study is whether these philosophical concerns with regard to the English curriculum are simply being revisited and re-articulated or whether in fact we are witnessing a much more fundamental debate which goes right to the heart of the relationship between language and the dynamics of power and control. This is a theme to which the study will in due course return on a number of occasions, and one of the fundamental reasons why critical discourse analysis is such an important part of the methodology available to the researcher.

Therefore, what is meant in this thesis by the term curriculum is not just the content of learning which is laid out in official documentation, but also the ways in which that learning are presented to children; the pedagogy of the teaching of English; the models of language which emerge from the teaching and the views of the role of the teacher and her professionalism which are so important. This wider concept is important in the perception of interrelationships and the making of connections between ideology, policy and curriculum, and will constitute a substantial part of the study.

Lastly, to complete the discussion of the role which philosophical considerations can play in the treatment of the topic of the study, it is important to state the significance of the technique of critical review³⁰ in dealing with all documentation, both primary and secondary. Whereas primary sources will be evaluated in terms of the validation or otherwise of a particular ideological or philosophical position, secondary sources such as commentaries on documentation, or evaluations of a particular ideology in terms of its impact on a system, will have to be scrutinised too with a clear eye on the background or intentions of the writers, since these will clearly impact on the analyses which are articulated in them. Thus, for example, it is helpful to know that Lawton writes from a left-wing viewpoint and wishes to articulate a particular analysis of government policy at the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act. This does not of course mean that either Lawton's analysis is invalid or that the criticisms implied in texts such as "The

³⁰ see "An Introduction to Philosophical Research"; A W Beck; TRC Rediguides; 1981, Pages 10-11.

Education Reform Act - Choice and Control"³¹ or indeed "Education and Politics in the 1990s"³² are necessarily ill-founded: simply that the researcher needs to be aware of where the analyst is coming from in terms of the construction of his text, and therefore of certain assumptions which may be made in his or her discourse.

The empirical dimension

Thus far, the discussion on methodology has looked at the roles which historical data, linguistic data and data relating to philosophical and ideological concerns will play in the study. There is of course a fourth area which requires to be aired, and that is the role which empirical research might play. So far, the impression may well have been formed that this is to be a book exercise, one which deals exclusively with documentation and with primary and secondary source material. This is certainly true in terms of the two areas which have been outlined. But it was mentioned earlier that there is another way in which the researcher can access policy decisions and the way in which they were made and that is by discussion with key players in the formulation of these policies. Again, such discussion will only be valid if it does not replicate work which has been done by others. There would be little point for example, in re-interviewing those already interviewed by McPherson and Raab³³ or indeed by Boyd³⁴ in his study of the formation of educational policy. Likewise, with respect to England and Wales, there already exists a large volume of documented research in the work of Lawton³⁵, Ball³⁶, and others which involves interviews with key players in the formulation of educational policy with regard to that context. What does not exist is a similar body of research knowledge of the

³¹ Lawton, Denis (Ed); 1989; The Education Reform Act: Choice and Control; Hodder and Stoughton

³² Lawton, Denis; 1992; Education and Politics in the 1990s - Conflict or Consensus?; The Falmer Press

³³ "Governing Education in Scotland"; McPherson and Raab; 1987; Edinburgh University Press

³⁴ Brian Boyd; 1993; "Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom: A Study of Educational Policy Making in Scotland in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s"; unpublished Ph D Thesis, University of Glasgow.

³⁵ Lawton 1989, 1992; Lawton and Chitty 1988.

³⁶ Ball 1990, 1994.

processes by which the 5-14 initiatives in the construction of national curricular guidelines and frameworks with respect to English language in Scotland. This is a gap where the collection of evidence on an empirical basis would indeed be useful.

The question now arises: how should this evidence be gathered? As subsets to this, one might also enquire: who would be those best placed to provide the information and what is the framework within which this evidence is to be gathered? To deal with the last point first, one has to return to the identified gap in present knowledge and awareness of the processes by which policy in Scotland becomes curricular proposal. Policy statements are issued by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Why? What is the identified need which requires a change in educational policy to be formulated? Is it because there is within the educational community a feeling that there are real needs which have to be addressed in order for the system to be able to deliver the quality of service which it should? Or at the other extreme, is policy being reformulated simply in order to implement political dogma? Or is there some sort of combination of these elements present, in such a way for example that perceived needs might be a vehicle upon which ideological baggage might be carried? These are the areas within which the researcher has to operate in order to address the conceptual framework which has been set out for this study.

Who are the key personnel who are best able to provide this information? Obviously the Minister of State for Education at the time of the framing and initial implementation of the 5-14 proposals would be very well placed to provide the information which is sought from his own political viewpoint. However, it is not generally possible to interview a serving member of the government. Therefore one has to look elsewhere in order to establish how these processes take place. Within the 5-14 Framework, a number of Review and Development Groups were set up, in addition to some Committees who had an overarching remit. Clearly, those who served on the Committees and the RDGs would be well placed to provide the information. The decision was therefore taken to interview members of the RDG which was responsible for the framing of the national curricular guidelines on the teaching of English language which will form the centre point of the study and the comparator

with the cognate proposals for England and Wales. But within the RDG there were personnel who were in particular positions of responsibility, such as the National Development Officers and those representing the Scottish Office Education Department and the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum. There were also serving teachers and others such as university and college lecturers who were participants because of the particular expertise which they had to offer. The decision was therefore taken to interview not the entire RDG but those who were able to offer contributions which would be distinctive and unique. There was also a dimension in which it would be important to establish if the RDG had a unified view of its remit and its mission and the sampling of certain key players would enable cross-checking of this kind to take place. A list of those who were interviewed is provided at the end of this section on methodology.

Reference has already been made to the fact that there were also some Committees set up which had a view across the various RDGs. One such Committee was that on Assessment. Assessment was one of the Secretary of State's chief concerns when the 5-14 development programme was announced in November 1987³⁷. The Committee on Assessment under the Chair of Professor Bart McGettrick therefore had a remit which extended into all the curricular areas and thus into that concerned with English language. Further, it was given a remit which enabled it to have a vision of the whole 5-14 development programme. Thus, there clearly would be merit in obtaining key information from those who had been instrumental in the functioning of the Committee on Assessment, and this was duly undertaken.

At this point it might be asked why similar interviews were not carried out with respect to policy actors in England and Wales. There are two responses to this. The first relates to pragmatic concerns. Within the time scale available for the construction of this thesis, important decisions had to be made about the arranging and implementation of interview schedules as part of the data gathering process. Since it took the best part of a year to organise the interviews in respect of Scotland, it was not feasible to undertake a similar task south of the border, given the logistical implications of that task. The

³⁷ Scottish Education Department; 1987; Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the Nineties: A Paper by the Secretary of State for Scotland, November 1987; HMSO Edinburgh

second response relates to the first. It has already been pointed out that such interviewing had already been carried out in respect of key policy actors³⁸, and within the realm of the teaching of English language, key players had committed themselves to print,³⁹ describing the processes in which they were involved. Crucially, amongst these, Cox had written a book⁴⁰ describing in detail the construction of his report which formed the basis of the National Curriculum Orders. It was therefore felt that there was already in existence a resource adequate to enable the construction of a thesis from the data represented by that resource.

However, there would also appear to be merit in looking beyond the developments and not just from the point of view of those who had taken a serious and a substantial part in the implementation of the programme itself and in the processes connected with it. There would also be those who were concerned with it both within and outside the Scottish Office Education Department as observers and interpreters, and the decision was taken to incorporate this dimension, too, into the data gathering process. It was thus hoped that a rounded and as reasonably objective view of these operations as could be obtained within the constraints of the possible and the practicable would be had. A further decision which had to be taken was to ascertain which official documents would be available for scrutiny and which would not be cleared. The composition of the groups, their remits and the SED submission to the Kingman Commission were made available from official sources. However, a request for a copy of the Minutes of the various meetings of the Review and Development Group for English Language (RDG 1) was at first approved and then approval was withdrawn from within either the SOED or the SCCC. In any event, these minutes were declared confidential and access to them was not granted. This is unfortunate, since scrutiny of the minutes would have constituted a useful cross check with the perceptions of the witnesses who were interviewed. Nevertheless it is still felt that the range of those who were interviewed, their professional integrity and the degree of corroboration of their testimony will provide a satisfactory validation of the data gathering process.

³⁸ for example, by Ball, 1990

³⁹ for example, members of the Kingman Committee such as PJ Kavanagh and Richard Knott have published on the work of that Committee. See Chapter Five for precise references.

⁴⁰ "Cox on Cox"; Brian Cox; Hodder & Stoughton, 1991

The next decision which had to be taken was the format which would be used for the interviews themselves. There are many ways in which interviews may be carried out in educational research, and many ways in which the products of these interviews might be recorded. Some of the options are discussed in handbooks such as that by Powney and Watts⁴¹. Reducing these to a basic presentation of the options, it would appear that there are three basic formats for the interview: structured, semi-structured and open. Each has its advantages and its disadvantages. The problem facing the researcher is to select the pattern which best fits both the research design and the constraints of time and practicality. The advantages of the structured interview, are those of standardisation of question and recording of response within a chosen matrix. This enables comparability to be achieved. But comparability of response is not a major issue in this particular research: what is required is the perception of the individual of the experiences and processes in which he or she had been involved. This then leaves the option of the semi structured interview to be considered. In this, the interviewer may ask follow-up questions in order to expand a point or to elicit further information. Thus there is not the same degree of comparability of response, but further and perhaps more important information may be unlocked in the course of the interview. This option, too was rejected, because there were within the list of respondents those who could contribute a particular angle or personal expertise and it was with reference to this personal angle that the interview would be conducted: therefore it did not seem logical to use a standardised list of questions, a number of which might not be appropriate for the individual respondent. The option which was eventually chosen was that of the use of a number of freestanding headings within which discussion rather than close questioning might take place. It was felt that this was the best option for the encouragement of respondents to give their own views on a process within which they had played an important part, and for follow-up to take place as and when this was appropriate. The paradigm was piloted with Dr James McGonigal, Head of Language and Oracy at St Andrew's College, who was willing to comment on the process of interview as well as to provide valuable information from

⁴¹ "Interviewing in Educational Research"; Janet Powney and Mike Watts; Routledge Education Books, 1987

the perspective of a close observer of the 5-14 Development Programme vitally concerned with its progress and centrally involved in its implementation. Dr McGonigal is also a respected linguist in his own right with a particular interest in spoken language. It was therefore felt that the opportunity of receiving his contribution was not to be missed as it would be one which would complement that already made by Andrew Philp. The use of such axiological knowledge in research has already been discussed.

The final decision which had to be taken in respect of the interviews was the way in which the products of the interviews were to be recorded. Once again, the researcher has a decision to take. Obviously the most reliable means of recording an interview is some sort of electronic recording, either audio or video, from which a transcript is made, should this be necessary. The problem with this approach was that in order to obtain some perception of the current thinking within the Scottish Office Education Department at the time of the development - or indeed to reveal the nature of any differences in approach between the Department and the Inspectorate it was necessary to interview key personnel who had been centrally involved at the time. Fortunately I was able to obtain consent from two HMII who had recently retired but who had themselves played a significant part in events during the years of Review and Development of English Language. However, they were unable to be interviewed on an attributable basis; and therefore the possibility of electronic recording and transcription did not exist. At least one other respondent also indicated discomfort with this form of recording and therefore the decision was taken to use attested record of the interviews which took place. In this, a series of longhand notes were made during the course of the discussion by the interviewer. Subsequent to the interview taking place and within seven days of its occurrence in every instance, a record of the interview under the various headings which had previously been agreed with the respondent was sent out with the invitation to the respondent to make any alterations which were necessary. The returned and amended record was to be accompanied by a certificate that the revised version was a true record of the discussion which had taken place and this certificate was signed by the respondent. This procedure of attestation was carried out with respect to every interview which was held. The locations for the interviews were those chosen by the respondents concerned: either in

their homes or in their places of work, or in St Andrew's College if they wished this to be the case. It is felt that this procedure allowed a full and fair discussion of the issues under consideration and that it permitted access to the processes which took place during the Review and Development stage of 5-14, and therefore to the vital transformation of curricular policy in Scotland into curriculum itself. The attested records of these interviews are included as Appendices One to Ten.

Having arrived at the stage where the guidelines were formed, the next stage is the analysis of them. This could be dictated by a number of considerations: the number of possible comparators, the models of language contained within them and the extent to which these are related to ideological considerations; the relationships between the curricula posited in the guidelines and the systems within which the curricula will operate, and the relationship between the curricula in the guidelines and current language theory. In the event it seems that the best way of proceeding is to examine views of the pedagogy of language teaching contained within the curricular documentation with respect to three critical indices of comparison. These are the needs of the system within which the curricula will be expected to operate, the extent to which ideological drivers have surfaced in the guidelines which have been eventually produced and finally the extent to which various view of language theory have been incorporated in the guidelines. It will be useful to examine each of these aspects in turn.

The first is the extent to which curricula are oriented towards the needs of a particular system. This is seen as a useful index of analysis for a number of reasons. Firstly, it will reveal the extent to which systems maintenance aspects are important in the framing of curricular proposals. Secondly, if set against statements of intent which may be ideologically driven, it may reveal the extent to which various policy communities have operated in modifying the original vision which called for a particular review to take place. Thirdly, it will reveal the extent to which the expectations of teachers - the principal users of curricular guidelines - are taken into account when guidelines are manufactured. Refusal to consider these aspects could indicate particular views of teachers and teacher professionalism and this will be a further area for investigation. Similarly, any set of guidelines which did not take account

of these aspects might well prove to be largely unworkable in practice. Therefore systems considerations would appear to be a valuable index of analysis.

The second index of analysis is one to which substantial reference has already been made, and indeed within the context of the previous paragraph of this discussion. This is the extent to which national curricular guidelines reflect particular ideologies. It is felt that this will be a particularly interesting and useful index, for the following reasons. Firstly, it will indicate the extent to which a particular ideology has been able to permeate the curriculum in primary school English language. By comparison with initial statements of position articulated by the ideologues themselves, it should again be possible to determine the effect of any mediating influence which policy communities may have had upon the guidelines as announced to the public consumers. It should also be borne in mind that the statement of ideological positions may come from several directions and not solely from within government or political sources. It may be possible, for example, to identify thrusts which emanate from ideological sources within the teaching community, or from interest groups within those responsible for the teaching of English language. The identification of such directions is important, no matter their provenance, since it is entirely possible that they might have a profound effect upon an area of the school curriculum which is identified by many observers as extremely important ; not only in its own right, but also in terms of the effect which it might have on other aspects of curriculum.

Language is a vehicle for the articulation of thought and for the expression of the human spirit, and these are permeative aspects with a significance which goes far beyond the boundaries of one discrete subject area. Secondly, the identification of ideological colouring to national curriculum guidelines may be important in terms of the relationship it may pose between crucial aspects such as language and power or language and control. This has been the subject of investigation, research and analysis by many scholars, such as Foucault, Gramsci, Kristeva, Lee and others.⁴²

The possibility exists that groups can exercise influence, through the content of national curricular guidelines, over the ability of children to think about and interpret the world: one has only to think of dictatorships such as that in

⁴² see footnotes and references in subsequent chapters for details of these.

Nazi Germany prior to the Second World War for exemplification of this. Examination of national curricular guidelines in this respect will be important, and will clearly involve the consideration of methodologies such as genre and discourse theories.

Thirdly, Analysis for ideologically driven content and recommendations in national curricular guidelines will again highlight possible counterpoising of current theory on language and linguistics with political or ideological statements of what language is or should be, and this will be another interesting link to the previous point. It will go beyond the mere pitting of one view of language against another, with the prize the supremacy of one particular view's exposure to a generation. Since many modern theories of language stress the connection between language and its social context, between language and the power sets which constrain its construction and utterance, and the need to embrace much wider concepts of text than has previously been the case, it will be important to discern the extent to which these theoretical positions have been taken on board or ignored, and the extent to which alternative theories have been substituted. In this comparison, much will be revealed about the nature of language in schools, the role which it is perceived as having in the education of primary school children, and the ability of the teachers themselves to use particular theories in their classrooms.

Discussion of the ability of teachers to cope with the demands of teaching new curricula or revised curricula leads on naturally to discussion of the nature of teacher professionalism and the views of this which are held by those responsible for the construction of national guidelines in the two educational systems under review in this study. On the one hand, it is possible to see the teacher as the autonomous expert, with the education, training and ability to make the correct decisions in terms of the curriculum offered to the pupils in her charge. On the other, it is possible to assume a position which has a distrust and disrespect for the "expert" or indeed of the classroom teacher herself. In this latter position, it might be seen as the role of government to prescribe what is to be learned in the national interest, and to disregard the opinion or feelings of those who are charged with the task of implementing and fleshing out the curricular proposals which have been

framed. The effects of such decisions, either to value professionalism or to distrust it, could be far reaching. On the one hand there is the possibility that the status of the classroom practitioner could be reinforced or even enhanced, both in the eyes of the teaching profession itself and in the eyes of the general public, and on the other there is the possibility that the role of the teacher could be reduced to that which has been described as “curriculum technician”, merely charged with interpreting and implementing the ideas and proposals of others, without any great deal of discussion or say in the matter. Clearly, too there is the possibility of intermediate positions between these two extremes, and it will be part of the task of this thesis to investigate these aspects, because they will have a profound effect on the ways in which curricula are implemented and ultimately in the success of their implementation.

The methodology for this aspect of the investigation will be that of analysis and discussion of aspects of the professionalism of teachers in the actual curricular documents themselves; similar analysis of primary sources such as political and other interest groups’ statements of their position with regard to this area; and analysis of the evidence on aspects of teacher professionalism which presents itself in the interviews with key personnel involved in the construction of national curricular guidelines in Scotland - once again the constraint which was mentioned earlier with regard to the situation in England and Wales applies. That is that there is, in the opinion of the author, already in existence a body of documented evidence which suggests that the task of interviewing would be merely a replication of ground which has already been covered by others and that therefore the task of this research is to weigh up, evaluate and analyse this evidence, to use it as a comparator with respect to the situation which applies in Scotland and ultimately to attempt to make connections where these may legitimately be made.

Finally, in this Chapter, it will be necessary to attempt to locate this study within the sphere of educational research in general. Statements have already been made that it is not intended as primarily historical research; nor is it seen as primarily philosophical ideological research. However, both of these areas will be investigated in order to inform the study and to provide

vital dimensions of enlightenment where this can be achieved. The question then surely suggests itself: what kind of research is it and where can it be located within the corpus of research in education?

Clearly one of the main thrusts is within the area of policy studies. The emergence of this as a subdiscipline of sociology or perhaps even as a discipline in itself has already been commented upon, and this has been also referred to by Ball⁴³, Humes⁴⁴ and by McPherson and Raab.⁴⁵ There is a clear location for at least part of the study within the realm of policy studies. But the thesis also sets out to look at the interrelationship between this discipline and curriculum: therefore the study also locates itself within the realm of curriculum studies. There must also be a sense in which the study is seen as evaluative⁴⁶ - evaluative of policy, evaluative of curriculum, evaluative of the processes involved in constructing these. It is not instrumental research as defined by Nisbet⁴⁷ and Brown⁴⁸ in the sense that it does not seek to investigate a problem and report with recommendations and conclusions about how this problem might be solved. Indeed, it is entirely possible that it might well suggest as a result of the investigations other problems which subsequent researchers may wish to examine in detail! It may, however be termed enlightenment research in the description used by Nisbet and by Brown in that it seeks to shed light on an area of controversy: to

“encounter or engender conflict to change people’s perceptions, question their assumptions, influence their aspirations, and offer them new insights.”⁴⁹

It is perhaps presumptuous to assume that this study will actually achieve that, but this is certainly what it sets out to do.

⁴³ Stephen J Ball; 1990 especially and 1994. Fuller references subsequently in the text..

⁴⁴ “The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model”; Walter M Humes; Education in the North; June 1994

⁴⁵ “Governing Education - A Sociology of Policy since 1945”; op cit.

⁴⁶ “Educational Research”; W Borg and M Gall; Longman 1989; Pages 741 and ff

⁴⁷ “The Contribution of Research to Education”; John Nisbet; in “Education in transition”; ed S Brown and R Wake; Scottish Council for Research in Education 1988; Page 14 and ff

⁴⁸ “The Role of Research?”; Sally Brown; in “Education in Transition”; op cit; 1988

⁴⁹ “Education in Transition”; op cit 1988; Page 156

It also undoubtedly sets out to examine aspects of educational theory⁵⁰, and indeed perhaps aspects of linguistic theory, too. In that respect it may be said to be a study which is theoretically grounded, but it is not desired that it should be thought to be purely a theoretical thesis: it is also concerned with the ways in which children in primary schools are taught and learn English language, with the curricula which their teachers are obliged or encouraged to provide and with the ways in which these teachers are perceived by the policy makers and by the public. In this sense, it is hoped that it is perceived as a study with its feet on the ground. It is practical, too, in the sense that at times it is concerned with the sometimes dirty world of politics.

Yet educational research even of the evaluative kind may be instrumental, too, in the sense that policy makers may wish to take on board the results of the research and to change policy as a result of it^{51 52}. It is not for one moment being suggested that there will or could be such an outcome for the present study: yet it is only as a result of research like this that we will ever know whether what may be taken as part of the assumptive world of politicians, educationists and teachers is to be found valid or wanting and future policy and action changed as a result. This thesis sets out to look at part of that assumptive world - the curricular guidelines which are offered to teachers to implement, based on self-evident truths of assumptions about language and its nature and how it should or should not be taught, and to attempt to evaluate some of these. In that sense it may be seen as forward looking as well as retrospective, and it is in this spirit that it is offered. It is therefore a multi-disciplinary study, and perhaps one of its contributions may indeed be the drawing together of the various disciplines from which it takes evidence.

List of persons interviewed during the data gathering process.

⁵⁰ "Understanding Research in Education"; K Lovell and KS Lawson; University of London Press 1970; Page 16 and ff.

⁵¹ see, for example, "The Role of the Researcher as an Adviser to the Educational Policy Maker"; Jerome Bruner; in "Rethinking Educational Research"; ed B Dockrell and D Hamilton: Hodder and Stoughton Educational; 1980

⁵² "Research and Development - Scottish Style"; Sally Brown in Research, Policy and Practice; ed John Nisbet and Stanley Nisbet and Jacquetta Megarry; World Yearbook of Education; Kogan Page; 198; Page 170

All interviews were carried out between August 1994 and January 1995.

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Professor Gordon Wilson | Convener, Review and Development Group on English Language and Principal of Craigie Campus, University of Paisley |
| 2. Mr Robbie Robertson | SCCC Representative and Adviser to RDG on English Language |
| 3. Dr J McGonigal | Head of Language and Oracy St Andrew's College |
| 4. Mr Gordon Liddell | Head of English at Moray House Institute and National Development Officer (Secondary) to RDG 1 |
| 5. Mr Gordon Gibson | Lecturer in English, University of Paisley and National Development Officer (Primary) to RDG 1 |
| 6. HMI No 1 | Now retired member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (Scotland) |

This interview is not attributable.

7. Professor Bart McGettrick

Principal, St Andrew's
College and
Convener of Committee on
Assessment, 5-14

8. Dr Brian Boyd

Assistant Director, Quality in
Education Centre, University
of Strathclyde and Formerly
Chief Adviser Strathclyde
Regional Council and
member of National
Steering Group on Staff
Development

9. HMI No 2

Now retired member of her
Majesty's Inspectorate of
Schools, Scotland

This interview is not attributable

10. Mrs Louise Hayward

Head of Department of
Support for Learning, St
Andrew's College :
formerly National
Development Officer 5-14 for
Assessment and Reporting

CHAPTER THREE

IDEOLOGY, POLICY AND CURRICULUM ISSUES IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Education Reform and the Politics of Change

Change has always been a feature of the education systems of the British Isles. Indeed the fact that we have education systems at all is the result of change. The manner in which these systems manifest themselves as still relatively distinctive in nature is a result of processes of evolution over time. Broad statements might be made about the differing character of these systems, and the ways in which they operate, and this may take into account their development and origins. Thus, for example, one could concur with those who characterise the system operative in England as being - at least until very recent times - largely determined in policy terms at local education authority level. Indeed, Barnard¹ makes the point that it was only after the passing of the 1902 Act that there could be claimed a national system of education in England at all². The history of policy making after that may equally be seen as one where there is an increasing movement towards central determination of policy: and that this movement gathers momentum in the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties and culminates in the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the imposition by law of the National Curriculum. The 1944 Education Act (the Butler Act) was part of the process, even though, as Maclure³ states, the objectives of the legislation were different from those of the 1988 Act. Butler sought social cohesion - "One England" issues - and the rhetoric was about equality of opportunity. Thus, centralisation and the construction from a Board of a Ministry of Education were brought about in that context.

Equally, one might look at the situation in Scotland and note a strong

¹ "A History of English Education"; HC Barnard; Unibooks; 1969

² "A History of English Education; op cit; Pages 204 and ff

³ "Act of Faith amid the Heat of Battle"; Stuart Maclure; Times Educational Supplement; May 6th, 1994

central involvement by the state from early times. Macintosh, noting the academic tradition of high intellectual standards in Scottish schools, also comments on the tradition of unity and uniformity in administration⁴. These factors or traditions find echoes in the work of other well-known commentators such as Hunter, who notes the concern which has been expressed in some quarters about the perception of over centralisation in administration and policy making in Scotland.⁵ What is unlikely to be disputed is that from a historical perspective the two systems of England and Scotland are distinctively different. The centralisation / decentralisation dichotomy is but one dimension of that distinctiveness.

This is brought out in the work of Mackintosh⁶ and Kellas⁷. Arguing for a reform of local government along a provincial model, with a unitary parliamentary/ regional structure for Scotland and Wales respectively, Mackintosh - raising issues which have very recently (1995) become of considerable interest once more, such as the role of appointed boards and patronage - takes the view that what has now become known as subsidiarity should apply. With decisions which can be taken at local level being so taken, the perceived nationalist threat to the unity of the United Kingdom can be met by the putting in place of a unified regional tier of government for Scotland as a whole. Policy decisions can be made at the appropriately devolved level within the structure. Kellas, on the other hand, sees Scotland as historically a nation within a nation, and argues for the possibility of the existence of an identifiably separate Scottish political system within existing structures. However, he recognises that the Scottish Office has - particularly since the election of the Conservative Government since 1979 - taken over some of the area occupied by local government in England, and has been more directive than local government ministries there. The role played by the Scottish Office in

⁴ "Education in Scotland: Yesterday and Today"; M Macintosh; Gibson, 1962; Page 6 etc.

⁵ "The Scottish Educational System"; S Leslie Hunter; Pergamon Press, 1972; Pages 35 and 72 &ff

⁶ "The Devolution of Power"; John P Mackintosh; Chatto and Windus; 1968

⁷ "The Scottish Political System"; James G Kellas; Cambridge University Press; fourth edition 1989.

education is in fact used as an example of this process: Kellas sees the controls lodged with the Scottish Education Department over the organisation and management of education in Scotland following the 1872 Act as being still largely in place. An important issue with regard to these texts is whether in fact the centre of decision making lies - or should lie - within Scotland or beyond it.

The purpose of this study is not, however to pursue research into the history of policy making in the educational systems of the British Isles. Nevertheless, it has been indicated that historical data are part of the consideration of trends informing policy and therefore this set of data has been taken into consideration. As the title of the study suggests, its purpose as a whole is to examine the relationships between policy, curriculum and the teaching of English language within the primary sector. The purpose of this chapter within that overall context is to examine issues of ideology, policy and curriculum, with the emphasis on the first of these: and to examine them with particular reference to the National Curriculum in England and Wales and the cognate 5-14 development programme in Scotland. The connection between ideology and the policies which result from the adoption of particular ideological positions, and the curricula which result within the constraints of realpolitik and which eventually affect learning and teaching in the schools themselves will be investigated.

A curriculum does not exist in a vacuum. It is the product of a particular policy; although at school level, a curriculum may result from other factors which impinge upon its construction such as the personalities and perceptions of the teachers and the micro politics of the school, the availability of resources and so on. This may operate at a number of levels: a school for example, may have chosen to implement a particular method of teaching reading across a range of classes, and because the staff or the head teacher have chosen to do this in response to a number of circumstances such as pupil need, available resources, etc, this has become the school policy. Similarly a local authority, in responding to a particular perceived need, might decide to form a policy for implementation in the schools over which it

has jurisdiction. Examples of this might well be such as multicultural and anti-racist education, support for learning and other similar areas. Nationally, policy decisions relate to much larger issues such as the kind of schools which we have, how they are funded, how they should be managed and staffed - and now, for the first time in the United Kingdom at least, on a national level, - what should be taught in them at every stage. There is a sense of incrementalism⁸ in the model - the further up the school - authority - Department hierarchy that you go, the more significant are the policy decisions and the more significant the areas within which these decisions are implemented.

But policies are the results of ideologies - of stances taken up by those who espouse particular political viewpoints. They are frameworks of beliefs and values which in turn govern the actions which these "policy actors" take.⁹ They do not arise in a vacuum, nor are they implemented in a vacuum. It is important to examine the groups or indeed the individuals who are responsible for the curriculum policies before one can properly access understanding of the policies themselves. This will be the purpose of the first part of this chapter. There has recently been much discussion of the nature of these processes, and a substantial bibliography is now available to the student. It is with these materials that the analysis will begin.

To the work of Macintosh and Hunter, may be added that of Scotland¹⁰. This text is regarded by some as the definitive history of education in Scotland, but it is worth recording that there are detractors from this opinion. Scotland has been criticised for listing the "facts", but failing to give us an adequate perspective on the social/political backgrounds to the objective events which occurred.¹¹ One might well record that some of the most significant developments

⁸ see, for example, "Governing Education"; McPherson and Raab; 1988; Edinburgh University Press; Pages 3 and ff and Pages 472 and ff.

⁹ This term is used in this context in "Education Policy in South Africa"; Leon P Tikly; PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1994

¹⁰ "The History of Scottish Education"; James Scotland; University of London Press (2 Volumes); 1969

¹¹ see, for example, "Scottish Culture and Scottish Education 1800-1980"; edited by Walter Humes and Hamish Paterson; John Donald; 1983; Page 2 and ff.

which have affected Scottish education have occurred since its publication. These historical materials will give the reader insight into the way in which Scottish education has evolved over the centuries. Such insight will also provide access to some of the traditions and to some of the ways in which policies have affected curricular decisions - the decision to teach English as well as Latin as an academic subject in the grammar schools of Scotland might be an example of this. But historical study alone will not necessarily illuminate the subtextual background to what happens. Historical study seeks to explain, but the detail into which it enters may not be sufficiently dimensional to analyse particular factors. A closer look is required, and many recent texts have accomplished this with regard to the Scottish educational community. This closer look may result in the formation of a new discipline or sub discipline, and Humes¹² argues that the emergence of policy studies has represented the construction of a 'significant sub-discipline'. Humes, also, identifies the earlier treatment of policy matters as unproblematic in historical studies.

Walter Humes' "The Leadership Class in Scottish Education" ¹³ is one text which constitutes a major contribution to policy studies. In this text, Humes examines amongst other matters, the long-cherished belief that Scottish education is managed in a democratic and open manner. Humes analyses the concepts of bureaucracy, professionalism, ideology and the construct of a leadership class who drive the system, perpetuating their control in subtle ways. The concept of a leadership class is a wide one, and it embraces functionaries from the civil service, schools inspectors, members of local authority directorates, members of bodies such as the then Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, the Examination Board - even head teachers. One of the critical points in Humes' analysis is the relationship between politicians and the civil service - specifically Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools and The (then) Scottish Education Department. In a gross simplification of a number of

¹² "Policy Analysis in Scottish Education"; Walter Humes; Paper in "Educational Studies at Glasgow University: Past Present and Future": Glasgow University Press; 1994

¹³ "The Leadership Class in Scottish Education"; Walter Humes; John Donald; 1986.

complex interactions which Humes meticulously explored, it might be summarised that he contends that there is evidence that the educational system is effectively run by its bureaucracy, and that this bureaucracy perpetuates its own powers through the structures - thus creating the 'leadership class'¹⁴ . However, since this text was written some nine years from the time of writing this section, events have moved on considerably. For example, Humes' statement that:

"...the level of interest among politicians, especially Conservative politicians, is not noticeably high"¹⁵

might well be challenged in the light of subsequent developments, both north and south of the Border; although Humes notes that there is a developing interest in matters of curriculum and examination. It is with these matters and the developments subsequent to them that this study is concerned.

The next major study to be prepared was that of McPherson and Raab.¹⁶ This text has become in many ways the standard for a sociological study of the development of policy in education as distinct from a purely historical study such as those referred to above. McPherson and Raab pay considerable attention to the historical factors which operate in considering the formulation and development of policies; but they are, like Humes, concerned with the people behind the statements - who they are, what interest groups they represent, how these groups operate and how they cooperate and conflict with each other. They examine closely the interfaces between policy, history and theory and how these work themselves out in operational situations:

"Our own study is empirical and mainly about educationists, officials and politicians. How they decided for or against certain policy options

¹⁴ see, for example, "The Leadership Class in Scottish Education; op cit; Pages 39-40, Page 57, Page 201 and ff.

¹⁵ ."The Leadership Class in Scottish Education"; op cit; Page 39

¹⁶ "Governing Education: a Sociology of Policy since 1945; Andrew McPherson and Charles Raab; Edinburgh University Press; 1988.

is an important part of the story... But the story of their decisions is not the whole story. Policy was shaped in other ways as well. In particular there were the options and issues that did not get on to the agenda..."¹⁷

Through examination of the policy history of keystone initiatives in the development of the educational system in Scotland, McPherson and Raab argue the existence of the 'policy community' in Scotland. This is in many ways cognate with the 'leadership class' for whose existence Humes argues. For example, the bridges between governmental and non governmental participants are described in both texts. But it might be fair to say that there are two separate lines of approach. Humes is concerned with the exposition of a bureaucratic clique, and the debate is perhaps conducted in more polemic terms as the result of this. On the other hand McPherson and Raab state that

"The term 'policy community' denotes a set of persons and groups which stretches across the divide between government and outside interests and which is directly involved in the making and direction of policy....."¹⁸

and they go on to argue that in some ways, there could be seen to be a partnership between the Department and the teaching community, and that the construction of this partnership led to what is defined as a pluralistic model of the decision making process in Scottish education. Pluralism implies that power and decision making is not solely the province of an elite or the top of a command structure, even though such a structure might be fairly explicitly stated in respect of a range of issues over which it is deemed to hold sway. It implies that in fact decision - real decisions in the sense of those which actually affect the policy end-product - might be made, or top-down decisions modified, at levels further down the command structure. Such decisions are often made at local level, and are the result of

¹⁷ "Governing Education; op cit; Page 5

¹⁸ "Governing Education"; op cit; Page 472

interpretation in the light of circumstances which may not be known or agreed by those who paint policy with a broad brush.¹⁹

"This, then, is a picture of contained, pluralist decision-making on ordinary issues, but decision making that was manipulated by central government, if not covertly, then at least to a greater degree than is implied in the official accounts of the consultative process in Scotland."²⁰

In their conclusion, McPherson and Raab expand this:

"The received account of Scottish education describes it as a centralised system, relative to England, in which the constituent parts traditionally look to the centre for a lead. We have taken issue with this view on two main grounds. First, we have argued that Scottish institutions, including the centre itself, have considerable centrifugal potential. The occasions when people have been persuaded to take their lead from the centre represent an achievement over considerable odds, though always at the cost of some limitation on the range of policies that can be pursued. The received account itself contributes to this achievement by suggesting that the order it describes is natural, and that the centre lies only in Scotland...."²¹

An assumption that the centre might lie furth of Scotland will be a theme to which this study will return ²² : in the light of developments in curriculum, it is certainly an area worthy of exploration. McPherson and Raab go on to note the increasing activity of the centre in the formulation of policy in the 1970s²³ . This could also be true, as we shall see, of developments in England and Wales, although the contrast in the change to central from devolved policy making at the level of curriculum has been perhaps more marked and the means

¹⁹ see, for example, "Governing Education" Pages 6 and ff and reference 6 on Page 26

²⁰ "Governing Education: op cit; Pages 472-3

²¹ "Governing Education";op cit; Page 481

²² see the earlier debate on the location of the centre in political terms between Mackintosh and Kellas.

²³ "Governing Education": op cit; Page 485

chosen to ensure implementation more draconian.

The increasing pace of change in recent years in curricular terms has already been referred to. When that is related to marked changes in policy direction from within governmental circles, and in particular with the rise of a new ideology which crusades with almost evangelistic zeal, the degree of change, the nature of the change and the direction from which the impetus for change comes are greatly affected. This is recognised by Humes in the paper "Policy Analysis in Scottish Education" , where in describing some of the methodological tools available to policy analysts, the origins and scope of recent changes in policy direction are charted. Humes takes up this theme further in "The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model"²⁴ In this paper, Humes relates his previous work in "The Leadership Class in Scottish Education" to that of McPherson and Raab, and examines the differences between his leadership class and the 'policy community', discussed above. He also identifies the fact that McPherson and Raab were not able to enter into the recent changes in educational policy after 1980²⁵ and offers a model of the policy process which takes into account the substantial developments since 1988.

The concept of a 'policy community' is one which is recognised in the work of commentators on education in England and Wales, too: Ball,^{26 27} using a similar methodology of interviewing key players to that employed by McPherson and Raab, comments on the struggles of the educational 'policy community' in England and Wales with the imposition of the National Curriculum. What is certain is that the concept of the existence of such communities is a valid one and one which can be determined in the formulation of policy in not only Scotland but also England and Wales.

²⁴ "The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model"; Walter Humes; Education in the North (New Series); June 1994

²⁵ "The Policy Process in Scottish Education"; op cit; Page 4

²⁶ "Politics and Policy Making in Education"; Stephen J Ball; Routledge; 1990

²⁷ see also "Education Reform - a Critical and Post Structuralist Approach"; Stephen J Ball; Open University Press; 1994

The question might at this stage be asked: is it possible to determine a policy lineage in each of the systems where the formulation and evolution of policy with respect to curriculum in the primary school is concerned? Analysis of national guidelines along the lines described in the earlier section on Methodology might suggest that this is indeed the case. The question might also be asked: what is the point of determination of such a lineage?

The famous American journalist, H L Mencken, once likened history to looking at the cross section of a tree trunk which had just been cut down. According to Mencken's analogy, the present was the bark of the tree - the outer ring. Just as it was impossible for the outer ring to exist in the form and shape that it had without the other rings which lay beneath it, so it was impossible to understand the present without reference to all that gone before it. This analogy is perhaps apt in the light of the present discussion. One cannot fully understand the current policy towards the primary curriculum without looking closely at the antecedents of that policy. What, then, were these antecedents?

In respect of Scotland, it is contended that it is possible to detect a progression, a development from the 1950 Primary Memorandum - itself an heir of the 1946 Advisory Council Report - to at least the 10-14 Report of 1986, and possibly on into the 5-14 Development Programme itself. This progression can be traced. The 1950 Memorandum is a document which sets out the primary curriculum for the immediate post-war era. It may be viewed as a document which is forward-looking and progressive. It undoubtedly set the tone -in terms of documentation, if not in terms of classroom reality - for the next decade or so. Similarly, the 1965 Memorandum, following some 15 years later, looks forward, taking on board some of the then current thinking on the curriculum, and indeed on the primary school as an institution - its ethos, and management. At the heart of this Memorandum was the child, and concern for the development of the child. It has been described as liberal, progressive - a landmark

document, one which set the agenda for the next two decades. It articulated many of the tenets of what has come to be recognised as child centred education - and what has subsequently come to be derided by many as ill structured, non knowledge centred education. In terms of documentation this was undoubtedly the case. In terms of representation of reality, there is perhaps more room for conjecture as to whether the Memorandum in fact represented what was going on in the classroom. But it is nevertheless possible, from scrutiny of the historical narratives described in Chapter Two, to trace a line of development between the 1950 document and its successor.

A similar line can be traced between the 1965 Memorandum and the 1980 COPE Position Paper. The latter might well be seen as an updating of the former, a restatement of the attitudes, position and values of the Memorandum. There is little doubt again about the centrality of the child and his/her experience in the Paper. There is little doubt about the overall liberal/progressive thinking which underpins the curriculum. The succeeding document, the 10-14 Report of 1986 likewise may be visualised as an updating of previous documentation rather than as a reaction against any of the proposals contained within it. In this respect, the 10-14 Report might be seen as constituting a reform which contextualised the best of previous thinking within a curriculum spanning the primary and secondary sectors.

This sense of continuity and development can also be borne out by the way in which this documentation was constructed. The 1950 and 1965 Memoranda were both documents emanating from the Inspectorate. Although the 1950 document was rooted in the classroom in the sense that there were clear practical applications of its recommendations for the primary curriculum, there is no indication of its provenance being other than members of the Inspectorate. However, the 1965 Memorandum was constructed by an ad hoc Committee, many of whom were serving teachers or head teachers. Other members were HMII and Training College Lecturers. The 1980 COPE Position Paper was similarly generated by a profession-based

mix of teachers, head teachers, advisers, lecturers, members of the directorate, HMII and the CCC. It was in many ways a real cross section of the profession, although no doubt carefully chosen to represent 'good' practice. One can detect a similar mixture in the Programme Directing Committee of the 10-14 Programme. The effect of this was, it is contended, to ensure that the framing of curricular proposals was kept within the profession and within the control of those within the profession who could bring their own expertise and their own gifts to bear. Subsequently, the direction of the profession and the curriculum was both reflected and steered.

On the other hand, although such a line of development may be discerned in England and Wales, it is argued that historical narratives show that it is not nearly so marked and that the pattern of evolution is quite different. The two reports of the Hadow Committee which deal with the Primary and Infant sectors were planned to give a framework within which development could take place. Theirs were recommendations, not prescriptions. They set the tone for primary education in England and Wales through the 1944 Education Act and on into the nineteen fifties. Between the last Hadow Report and Plowden in 1967, there was a gap of some 34 years. Plowden was a landmark document²⁸ . But it was also a very big document, and representative of a process which can be identified much more in England with respect to the generation and development of curricular proposals for the primary sector than is the case in Scotland. That process is, that when review comes in England, it is accompanied by a fairly substantial report or set of reports. These reports, although they take account of previous documentation (eg Plowden's references to Hadow) are new statements of a position in their own right. They are - or perhaps were - much more research based than their Scottish counterparts. These latter tended to rely much more on nous and 'good practice'. This distinction holds good in English language, too. Whereas in Scotland from the nineteen seventies on there were the reports of the Central Committee of the CCC and

²⁸ See Maurice Kogan; "English Primary Schools - The Interrelationship of Government Structure and Educational Innovation"; in "Decision Making in British Education"; eds Gerald Fowler, Vera Morris and Jennifer Ozga; Heinemann for the Open University; 1973

COPE, these again were generated largely from within the profession, from within the policy community. There was no sense of there being a necessity to bring in an outside body, agency or consultancy to carry out the work and report to the profession. However, in England, the pattern was the generation of just such an agency to investigate and to present its findings to the profession. The Bullock Report exemplifies the process: later, when the die had been cast and the Education Reform Act was in progress with the attendant National Curriculum, the government would constitute the Kingman Committee to report on the teaching of English Language and the Cox Committee to look at how this could be done in the context of the National Curriculum. Although these Committees may have consulted widely, this consultation 'took evidence' and there is little sense in which they might be seen as having followed a similar process to that in Scotland in framing their proposals.

To summarise, it is contended that up until the events associated with the Education Reform Act and the National Curriculum and the parallel 5-14 Development Programme in Scotland, there were differing processes followed in the evolution of curriculum policy with regard to the primary sector in Scotland and England, and that analysis of the documentation supports this assertion.

The different nature of policy communities

It is perhaps also possible to develop the concept of the policy community somewhat further. McPherson and Raab, in evolving the concept, see it in largely national terms, dealing with the macro issues and the system as a whole. But it is also possible to see the emergence of policy communities within specific areas of education. It is the contention of this study that it is possible to argue for the existence of such a community within the area of English language. The author was himself, during the nineteen eighties, firstly a member of the sub group of the Scottish Central Committee on English which reported on the teaching of reading in the first year of the secondary

school; subsequently for two terms a member of the Central Committee itself; representative of the CCC on the SEB/SCCC Joint Working Party which produced the Standard Grade Arrangements for English and lastly a member of the Joint Working Party which produced the proposals and latterly the Arrangements for the Revised Higher. The Inspector who assisted with all of these developments as SED Assessor was HMI Mr James Alison. Other similar continuities can be observed. Was it the case that there were no other teachers available to fulfil these positions or capable of doing so? Such a proposition is unlikely. The reality is more probably that there was continuity: there was a sense of unity which resulted from one set of proposals which had basically proved workable and broadly acceptable to the profession being utilised in the production of subsequent proposals and policies.

A similar pattern can be discerned with regard to the Review and Development Group which framed the 5-14 curriculum in English language. Three members had played major parts in the previous developments of Standard Grade and Revised Higher. One other had been involved as Field Officer in the production of the 10-14 proposals. Two further members were involved in the development work associated with Standard Grade at national level. Other members were primary teachers with known expertise.

This concept of a consensus based policy community is also borne out by interview respondents. Professor Wilson, Convener of the 5-14 RDG in English Language, comments in favourable terms on the concept of a group of practitioners reviewing the situation and forming proposals in the light of the remit. HMI No 1 also comments on his perception of the existence of a broad consensus, not only within the RDG, but more widely in the English language teaching community. The perception seems to have been that it was best in the Scottish context, to entrust the development of this crucial set of guidelines which would represent policy in the teaching of English language to the professionals who had done the job before. Since the Assessor was feeding this back to the Department for comment - see interview

with Professor Wilson - one can conclude that this was being done with the agreement - at least tacitly - of the major policy interpreters. It is thus argued that there is a case for the existence of a language policy community with considerable influence over the evolution of national curricular guidelines in the teaching of English language, as far as Scotland is concerned.

Ideology and Policy in Education and the role of the New Right

Having then argued for the existence of a policy community within the domain of English language teaching, and indeed within the domain of the primary curriculum as a whole, it is useful to turn now to consider differing political perceptions of the curriculum, and to examine the ideologies which underpin these. In Scotland, as in England, there was during the nineteen sixties - although its origins can be traced much further back - a movement towards liberalism and progressivism in curricular design, and this movement can be associated with the appearance of key features of the education system and of the curriculum in primary education itself.²⁹ Such features might be identified as the creation of open-plan primary schools; the integrated day; the movement from subject-centred towards child-centred primary education; the management of classes in terms of group teaching rather than whole class teaching; the tendency towards investigation by the child rather than straightforward didactic teaching; the incorporation of varieties in methods including a movement towards a wider range of resources and a shift of perception in the role of the teacher from imparting knowledge to one which was much more multi-faceted and which incorporated the ability to facilitate discussion and encourage exploration. This movement is well documented in the Plowden Report of 1967 and the 1965 Primary Memorandum in Scotland.

²⁹ see "English Primary Education and the Progressives"; RJW Selleck; Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1972

It may also be seen as associated with the progress made by child centred education as a whole. Although more recent times have seen the movement as a whole described as inchoate and incoherent, full of "fuzzy thinking" and "half-baked" ideas (see the "discourse of derision" offered by the New Right later in this section), it has been argued by Darling (1994)³⁰ that in fact there is a traceable history and logical development in the movement as a whole, and that in fact much of the criticism which has been levelled at the movement has been informed by political rather than philosophical concerns.

In terms of English Language, there was in general a movement from concentration on decontextualisation of language activities towards a greater sense of 'freedom'. This and 'creativity' became important terms in the folklore of the liberal/progressive movement, if not in the actual documentation of the curriculum of that time. The historical narratives referred to in Chapter Two have addressed the detail of this in terms of the actual documentation itself, and form the basis of support for these assertions. However, it is wise to note that consideration of what was actually said may in fact present a slightly different emphasis from the folklore: both Plowden and the 1965 Memorandum were concerned with the utilisation of a range of methods: both were concerned to a great extent with the maintenance of standards: both were concerned to see the role of the teacher not only restated but expanded. Further evidence of this concern with standards is supplied through the remit of the Bullock Committee in 1975: it must not be assumed that the entire education community wholeheartedly espoused liberal progressivism and held its tenets dear. Nevertheless, it is true that as a broad statement of the spirit of the time, the liberal/progressive view of the world was in the ascendant, backed by research in social and educational psychology, and by changes in linguistic theory. These changes in the theory of language are further examined in Chapter Six. There was a spirit of challenge to accepted wisdom, and this reflected a wider spirit of enquiry and challenge in the scientific and commercial worlds.

³⁰ "Child Centred Education and its Critics"; John Darling: Paul Chapman Publishing; 1994

But there can be no action without reaction: and although the progressives might have held the ascendancy in that they represented the spirit of the age, the reaction duly came in the form of the challenges and questions issued by the Black Paper authors. The first of the Black Papers was "The Fight for Education: a Black Paper" by C B Cox and AE Dyson (Eds) published in 1969 by the Critical Quarterly Society. This was swiftly followed by "Black Paper Two" (1969) and "Black Paper Three; Goodbye Mr Short" (1970). Another author concerned with the publication of the "Black Papers" was Dr Rhodes Boyson, later to become a Minister in the Department of Education and Science in the first Thatcher Government. Boyson edited further "Black Papers" with CB Cox in 1975 and 1977 and was responsible for the influential text "The Crisis in Education"³¹.

It is perhaps significant in the context of this study that the first topic which is addressed is the perceived growth of illiteracy. For the Right, English language is, as we shall see, a key topic indeed.

This group of academics, politicians and educationists asserted the traditional values of teacher authority, teacher/subject based learning, the perception of 'basic' skills in language and number, and the perils of a perceived decline from these values. This was the beginning of the 'standards' debate in a real sense. An important text which encapsulated much of the arguments which were being put forward by this right wing group was "Why Tommy isn't Learning", by Stuart Froome³². Froome was himself a primary head teacher and a member of the group associated with the first Black Paper, published in 1969. He presented a case that there had been an inexorable and accelerating decline in the standards of achievement of pupils in English language and number skills; that the very centrality of these skills was being questioned and eroded; and that this decline was associated with the movement towards methods of exploration and creativity described above. Another central plank of the argument was the perceived decline in the authority of the teacher and the change in the teacher's role from that of controller to that of enabler.

³¹ "The Crisis in Education; 1975; Dr Rhodes Boyson; The Woburn Press

³² "Why Tommy Isn't Learning" by Stuart Froome; Tom Stacey; 1970

The effect of the Black Papers on the curriculum is further explored in the following chapter. What is of concern to the present purpose is to establish the origins of a movement which was to have a profound effect on political thinking in the nineteen eighties and which was indirectly to give rise to the concept of the National Curriculum and the 5-14 Development Programme in Scotland.

These two movements do however require some contextualisation, because they may well be seen as representing polarities. There is some truth in the assumption made by Gatherer³³ that there was a post war consensus in education policy and that this policy consensus established a framework within which governments and political parties operated.³⁴ This framework encapsulated concepts such as liberalism and expansion; participative decision making; the rights of the professional teacher - although there were sometimes quite profound differences of emphasis. The imposition of the comprehensive model in secondary education following the election of a Labour government in 1964 would be an example of this. Nevertheless, the dialogue between Labour and Conservative Education Ministers in Kogan (1971)³⁵ shows a surprising degree of agreement - although much of it is tacit and pragmatic rather than reflective of differing ideological standpoints. However, Kogan says of Boyle:

"Because he was free of rigid moralistic commitments he found it easy to meet the social radicalism of the 1960's half way"³⁶ .

This consensus is also part of the reason for the length of time between reviews of primary education in England and Wales; between Hadow and Plowden and between Plowden and the

³³ W A Gatherer in "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 90's"; ed Roger and Hartley; Scottish Academic Press; 1990

³⁴ see essays in Section Three of "Policy-Making in Education - the breakdown of consensus"; Ian McNay and Jenny Ozga; Pergamon Press for the Open University; 1985

³⁵ "The Politics of Education"; Anthony Crosland and Edward Boyle in conversation with Maurice Kogan; Penguin Education; 1971

³⁶ "The Politics of Education, op cit; Page 18

Education Reform Act.³⁷ The reasons for the formation of such consensual politics in education and the values which they were seen as representing are investigated by Kogan³⁸ and also by Archer³⁹ in McNay and Ozga, who additionally chart the disintegration of that consensus and the reasons for these changes. That such a consensus also existed in Scotland is attested by Sir Charles Cunningham, interviewed in McPherson and Raab⁴⁰ .

If the Black Papers were the seedbed of New Right thinking in education, the election of the Thatcher government in 1979 was the stimulus which inspired rapid growth. Mrs Thatcher, herself originally a Minister of Education in the Heath Government, had hardly proved to be a massive force for change during her tenure of that post. As Wapshott and Brock⁴¹ comment, she was using that period to learn and to shape her thinking for later events. However, she was strongly influenced by Sir Keith Joseph⁴² , and his thinking on education was much more highly developed. Mrs Thatcher was also a protagonist of the thinking of right wing monetarist economists such as Hayek and Friedman⁴³ , and her view of the world included an opinion that the education service was partly to blame for the situation in which she found herself. People had become all too dependent upon the State⁴⁴ . The State had invested massively in education during the years of expansion, but the benefits of this investment were not visible in terms of a more highly trained, entrepreneurial workforce.

³⁷ The immediate history of the Act is traced in Chapter 5 of "The Control of Education"; John Tomlinson; Cassell Education; 1993

³⁸ "Educational Policy and Values"; Maurice Kogan; in "Policy - Making in Education"; ed McNay and Ozga; Pergamon Press; 1985

³⁹ "Educational Politics; a Model for their Analysis; Margaret Archer in "Policy - Making in Education"; McNay and Ozga; op cit

⁴⁰ McPherson and Raab; op cit; Page 156 and ff

⁴¹ "Thatcher"; Nicholas Wapshott and George Brock; MacDonald; 1983

⁴² "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Page 14 as an example.

⁴³ This is implicitly admitted in "The Downing Street Years"; for example Pages 618 and 804: however the emphasis is on a much broader concept of tight control of monetary policy. It is interesting that although there are substantial references to the idea of "Thatcherism" there is no substantial definition of the term offered in the autobiography.

⁴⁴ "The Downing Street Years"; op cit ; Page 627. Here, in terms reminiscent of the American New Right Sociologist Charles Murray, Lady Thatcher talks of the dependency culture and the creation of an underclass.

Mrs Thatcher's views on education and the role it had played were therefore not highly complimentary:

"As one cabinet minister observed of these exchanges, (*between her Education Minister Mark Carlisle and DES officials who were obstructing him - it seems that the leadership class/ policy community were just as active south of the Border*) "She doesn't like local government, she doesn't like the civil service and she doesn't like teachers - so education isn't a very good job to have".

She made it clear that she thought that the necessary changes were fundamental and were still to be made. In autumn 1982 she revisited her old twelfth floor office on one of a series of Whitehall visits and delivered a familiar plaint to the ministers and officials she lunched with: why have we spent so much on education and achieved so little? She did not appear impressed by the answers. A few months later she was addressing a gathering of forty or so junior ministers on budget strategy and election timing when she was asked what the government was planning to do about education. 'It's a disaster' she replied...."⁴⁵

This is only part of the 'discourse of derision' which came to characterise the New Right approach to the consensus in education. Mrs Thatcher's own views on education⁴⁶ equate strongly with Wapshott and Brock's very accurate analysis, made ten years earlier. In "The Downing Street Years"⁴⁷ the former Prime Minister lays the blame for the failure to achieve higher standards squarely on the teachers:

"I also believed that too many teachers were less committed and more ideological than their predecessors. I distrusted the new 'child-centred' teaching techniques, the emphasis on imaginative engagement rather than learning facts and the modern tendency to

⁴⁵ "Thatcher"; Wapshott and Brock; MacDonald; 1983.

⁴⁶ Mrs Thatcher described Mark Carlisle as "not... a very effective Education Secretary who had leaned to the Left..." ("The Downing Street Years", Page 151)

⁴⁷ "The Downing Street Years" Lady Margaret Thatcher; Harper Collins; 1993

blur the lines of discrete subjects and incorporate them in wider, less definable entities like "humanities". And I knew from parents, employers and pupils themselves that too many people left school without a basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic".⁴⁸

There had been in England since the Callaghan speech in Ruskin College in 1976 a "great debate" to review standards in education and indeed where the educational system was going⁴⁹. This debate had not risen to the same extent in Scotland, possibly due to the different nature of the system and possibly due to the perception that standards were not so much of a concern in the system in the sense that there might even have been more complacency that Scottish education in general was doing a good enough job. This debate was earnestly entered into by the right wing of the Conservative Party, some of whose members and notably, as we have seen; Rhodes Boyson, had been responsible for the publication of some of the Black Papers. Therefore the election of a right wing Conservative Government in 1979 provided a heady cocktail of optimism within which some of the Black Paper thinking which had been part of the "great debate" could be worked out in practice. But this in fact did not happen, largely because the government had been concerned with other more pressing concerns and was largely minded, if not content, to let the consensus continue for a little while longer.

It was really the second Thatcher government which worked to end the consensus. During the period of her first government, the moderate Mark Carlisle had been replaced by Mrs Thatcher's guru, Sir Keith - later Lord - Joseph; an intellectual with marked right-wing

⁴⁸ "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Page 590

⁴⁹ There is an extremely interesting article by Lord Callaghan in "Continuing the Education Debate"; ed Williams, Daugherty and Banks; Cassell Education; 1992. In this article, the former Prime Minister voices his concern to instigate the debate and his desire to ascertain whether it was a reasonable way of proceeding to see if it would be possible to determine age-related standards and to test for their implementation. Callaghan sees a directly traceable link between the Ruskin speech and the development of the National Curriculum. It is further interesting to note the extent of agreement between Callaghan and the author of the following article, the Conservative Secretary of State for Education, John McGregor. However, whereas Callaghan was concerned to encourage debate about these issues and to take the educational community with him, McGregor seems to assume the basis of the National Curriculum as a given quantity, and to see the debate about its implementation.

views including the proposition that a system of vouchers was the best method of encouraging individual responsibility and freedom in education.⁵⁰ These vouchers would be issued by the State to be 'spent' on education as the individual wished.⁵¹ Although Mrs Thatcher felt that her objectives of "parental choice and educational variety" would be achieved by means less controversial than an overt voucher system, it can be argued that the consensus had ultimately prevailed, and nothing had happened. Education had been left: but it was felt that the time to put the mess to rights was fast approaching. The philosophy, as Ball comments can be perceived as follows:

"Thatcherism in education, as elsewhere in policy formation, is an amalgam, a managing of nascent contradictions. But the important point is that, analytically, education is no longer separated off from other areas of social and economic policy. It is no longer a backwater of policy. It is now in the mainstream of the political ideology and policies of Thatcherism."^{52 53}

Now that education was in the mainstream, reform could begin in earnest. It did not, however, begin with the primary curriculum: that was to wait for the Education Reform Act. It could be argued that the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) was the first major change, and it was part of a new realism, a move towards 'vocationalism' in education. The sense was that Britain had been let down by the education system. There was a lack of skill in the areas of science and technology - these areas which would do most to increase the economic performance of the UK. Therefore, investment

⁵⁰ see "The Downing Street Years" op cit; Page 591 and commentators such as Ball (1990) Page 63 and ff

⁵¹ This view is somewhat derided by Margaret Thatcher's Chancellor, Nigel Lawson. Lawson describes Keith Joseph as a "secular saint" who was far too nice to do anything about the root cause of the decline in educational standards which he perceived. Lawson wrote a paper on education which was received by Mrs Thatcher and which advocated central control of education spending with devolved powers for schools and therefore the abolition of the role of the local authorities in the management of education. See Nigel Lawson; "The View from No 11; Memoirs of a Tory Radical"; Bantam Press; 1992; Pages 599-611.

⁵² Stephen J Ball, "Politics and Policy Making in Education: Routledge; 1990

⁵³ see also "Political Ideology Today"; Ian Adams; Manchester University Press; 1993; where a similar point is made on page 260 and ff.

in these sectors would in time be repaid through a greater awareness of the importance of science and technology and a workforce which was more able to respond to the demands which they made upon it. This is commented upon by Ball and others. Of interest is the fact that Ball compares the thinking of the New Right to that of a theology - and argues that it is in these terms that it should be considered. Nevertheless, there was, even up to 1986, no real evidence that there was any thought being seriously given to the construction of a National Curriculum. The 1986 Education Act concentrated on such issues as the management and control of schools; the strengthening of the powers of governing bodies; increased clarification of the role of the Head; the prevention of political indoctrination and the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education. On November 20th 1986, Conservative Central Office published an edition of "Politics Today" devoted to education. Almost exactly one year before the publication of the Education Reform Bill, it stated

"Britain has never had a uniform, national curriculum. The Government has no intention of trying to create one. It is, however, working steadily towards agreement with LEAs on the essential tasks that the school curriculum should perform."⁵⁴

What happened to this statement of consensus thinking, to this vision of partnership in the short space of one year? There are some clues in the pamphlet. The Government had put more money into education than ever before, yet standards had not risen. At that time, the reason for this was seen as poor management by the LEAs who were not using the resources which they had been given to their best effect. Local Authorities were not concentrating their resources on the 'common sense' things; they were indulging in activities seen as peripheral to the main tasks of raising educational standards from the level to which they were perceived as having declined. The answer would also seem to lie in the thinking of New Right Philosophers such as Roger Scruton and the articulation of these philosophies by the

⁵⁴ "Politics Today"; 20th November 1986; Page 359

Hillgate Group⁵⁵ . In particular, the Hillgate Group publication "The Reform of British Education" ⁵⁶ would appear to be a document which was of great influence. This is certainly the view of Ball and Lawton ⁵⁷ .

Having established the central importance of education to the second Thatcher government, it will be wise to examine the fundamental ideology which was to underpin the formation of policy during the critical years for education of 1986-1991. One way of examining the ideology is to address the contexts within which it is constructed: another to look at the discursive framework within which its utterances are couched. Analysis of discourse relates to the ways in which power and language interact; how power is constructed through language. The technique has its recent origin in the work of Michel Foucault⁵⁸ . Foucault is at the centre of the growth of interest in the post-structuralist movement and deconstruction theory, and the central issue is that humans observe and construct the world through the use of language. Language therefore "embodies our reality".⁵⁹ It becomes our reality, too. Discourses shape not just what is said, but also the authority with which it is said, the social and other contexts within which it is said, and the consequences of its saying.⁶⁰ It therefore follows that deconstruction of language will give us access to the way in which ideas are conceived and power is represented and used. Discourse analysis is now a respected tool for accessing these understandings: examples of its use in deconstructing texts are those

⁵⁵ The influence of this group is well charted in "The New Right and the National Curriculum" by Geoff Whitty in "Curriculum Policy"; ed Rob Moore and Jennifer Ozga; Pergamon Press for the Open University; 1991

⁵⁶ "The Reform of British Education - from principles to practice"; The Hillgate Group; Claridge Press; 1987

⁵⁷ "Education and Politics in the 1990s: Conflict or consensus?"; Denis Lawton; Falmer Press; 1992

⁵⁸ "The Archaeology of Knowledge"; Michel Foucault translated by AM Sheridan Smith; Tavistock, 1972: quoted in "A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy"; edited by Robert Goodwin and Philip Pettit; Blackwell, 1993

⁵⁹ "Modern Political Ideologies"; op cit; Page 186

⁶⁰ "Education Reform"; 1994; op cit; Page 22 and other texts.

of Ball⁶¹ and Tikly⁶². It will therefore be appropriate to examine the discourses which are used in key New Right documents relating to the foundation and institution of school curricula in order to evaluate the underlying ideology and to access an understanding of how it operates and how it might therefore affect policy and the policy communities which operate it.

New Right ideology lies within the tradition of British Conservatism⁶³, but represents a category which is difficult to define. It is clearly very different from older traditionalist, paternalistic varieties of Conservatism culminating in the "One Nation" brand which derives its nomenclature from Disraeli's "Two Nations".^{64 65}

New Right ideology is radical.⁶⁶ Having its immediate origins in the liberal thinking of anti-totalitarian critiques of the 1950s such as those by Hayek and Oakeshott and developed by the Chicago school of economists (most notably by Milton Friedman), it challenges all assumptions, all consensuses. It champions the freedom of the individual and has been classified thus as neo libertarian - and the terms 'liberty' and 'liberation' appear in its literature. It asserts the right of the individual to choose his/her own destiny. It also asserts family and national values. ⁶⁷ "The Reform of British Education", written by the New Right philosopher Roger Scruton, and four others, is a significant document. It refers to the Government's proposals for a national curriculum. Yet, as we have seen, only one year earlier, there was no such agenda, and even the consideration of such an entity seemed remote. "The Reform of British Education" was published in September 1987 - at least two months prior to the Education Reform

61 "Education Reform"; op cit; 1994 Pages 21-27: here Ball discusses the various tools which the commentator may use to access ideological and other bases of policy.

62 "Education Policy in South Africa since 1948"; Leon P Tikly; Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow; 1994. Tikly subjects key political documents relating to education to discursive analysis in order to access and analyse the bases and premises on which they are founded.

63 "Educational Reforms - Ideologies and Visions"; Sally Tomlinson; in "educational Reform and its Consequences"; edited by Sally Tomlinson; Institute of Public Policy Research; 1994

64 see, for example, "Modern Political Ideologies"; Andrew Vincent; Blackwell; 1992; Pages 66-67

65 "Scottish Toryism and the Union"; M L McKenzie; Tory Reform Group; 1989

66 Ball 1990, 1994; Lawton 1992; Vincent 1992

67 "Political Ideology Today"; op cit; Page 263 and ff

Bill of November 20th, and while the proposals were at the stage of being a paper from the DES⁶⁸. The rationale of the document is interesting, too. The perception of a deterioration of standards is repeated, and the blame for this laid again at the door of the local education authorities, the teacher unions and "Powerful groups entrenched in the Department of Education and Science" - the policy community? Schools are to liberate themselves from LEA control. Multicultural and anti racist education are treated to the language of denigration. They militate against the unifying influence of British culture.

The liberation of schools from this tyranny of control and the handing over of power to parents, so that they can exercise their right to influence schools to the full will, according to the thinking of Hillgate, result in the formation of a national curriculum. This is because

"sensible parents will be too busy to ruminate on the niceties of the curriculum, or to wonder at every juncture whether their children are being properly instructed in subjects which will be of lasting value."⁶⁹

The discursive framework used here is interesting. Once again we have the association of right-wing ideas with "common sense" or "sensible parents". Children will not be educated or even taught: they will be "instructed". This is the perception of the role of the teacher throughout the document.⁷⁰ Ball sees this as the 'nostalgia mode' - a harking back to a golden age of educational rectitude based on 'traditional values' for which no model has ever existed, since it is in itself a pastiche. The complexity of the proposals for the national curriculum and its implementation is realised, as is the fact that the proposal runs counter to the consensus argument, for which some sympathy is stated. But

"Unfortunately this consensus does not extend to the educational

⁶⁸ The National Curriculum 5-16; Department of Education and Science; July 1987

⁶⁹ "The Reform of British Education"; op cit; P5

⁷⁰ It is also commented on by Ball (1994) ("Education Reform - A Critical and Post-Structuralist Approach; Stephen J Ball; Open University Press; 1994

establishment which, prey to ideology and self-interest, is no longer in touch with the public. The national curriculum proposed by the Government is, we believe, likely to win the approval of most people who know the difference between fact and opinion, knowledge and ignorance, culture and barbarism. It is therefore more likely to renew the underlying consensus than to destroy it."⁷¹

This passage is worthy of inclusion and analysis because it reveals much about New Right ideology where education is concerned. There are a number of premises:

1. There is a public consensus, and that consensus supports our views. It is held by 'sensible' people.
2. These views are not shared by a minority within the educational establishment, who have subverted 'true' values.
3. This minority is prey to ideology. What we are taking up is by implication and definition not an ideological stance, but one based upon common sense.
4. Civilised people will wish to support the Government's view of the national curriculum. By implication, if you do not support it, you are not civilised.

This approach is an example of what Ball⁷² defines in a wider context as the 'discourses of derision'. It is also included here in order to extend Ball's point to the specifically educational ideology/policy context.

The paper goes in to examine arguments and counter arguments and examines each with rigour from the ideological stance of the authors. In this it is entirely consistent and logical. Nevertheless, one

⁷¹ "The Reform of British Education"; Page 9

⁷² "Politics and Policy Making in Education"; op cit; Pages 40-42

interesting point is that while wishing to free schools and teachers from the perceived tyranny of local authority control within the framework of a libertarian approach, as it is hoped to demonstrate, other perhaps more insidious controls may well be exercised. Innovation in education which is genuine is rare: schools should however be allowed to develop within the confines imposed. Teacher expectations are too low. Testing is the preferred option to enforce the curriculum, at least in the foundation subjects, since to prescribe statutory programmes of study is undesirably centralist and unwieldy. The Hillgate Group go on to propose alterations to the national curriculum proposals, some of which - such as the establishment of a statutory framework for national attainment targets and tests - were to be enshrined in the eventual legislation. The conclusion is a restatement of the voucher system, and a recognition that it can be achieved through 'entitlement' policy, where children and parents have the right to exercise their choice in any sector, state or private.

The discourses which operate within this paper are many, and the discursive framework worthy of further study. In addition to the discourse of derision, already mentioned, there are discourses which relate to the concept of "nationhood". Tikly has done considerable work in relating these discourses to the application of racism to education policy in South Africa: it is indeed interesting that a similar discursive framework may be seen to apply in this instance.⁷³ Further discourses centre around the concepts of empowerment and disempowerment and indeed the nature and control of knowledge. In these contexts, a crucial concept is that the centre or the Government should dictate what is to be learned "in the national interest" and therefore should have the ultimate sanction in determining ownership of the curriculum, which lies not with teachers or with pupils, or indeed with the educational establishment, who are perceived as being largely responsible for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. There are some areas within which parents should have power, but these are defined as those where market forces can most effectively be

⁷³ "Education Policy in South Africa"; op cit; Page 121 and ff.

brought to bear,⁷⁴ such as the defining of the level of remuneration for teaching staff and the right to decide on the nature and constitution of schools themselves. But the constitution of the National Curriculum itself, as defined by the Government is reluctantly accepted as being necessary to overcome the difficulties. The reluctance stems from the New Right sense that anything which is centrally imposed is to be viewed with suspicion.

The debate about the control of knowledge and the power which ensues from controlling it is a fascinating one. It can be argued from discursive analysis of Hillgate that such control is precisely what their perception of the National Curriculum proposals is about. Their comments about the teaching of English are an example of this.

“Teachers of English must be obliged to impart a proper understanding of English grammar and of the written word, together with some knowledge of the true monuments of our literature, The imposition of a core curriculum is effective only if the subjects so imposed cannot be subverted in the name of a misplaced ‘relevance’ - and this means that the attainment targets must be thought through in the light of an educational philosophy true to the principles behind the proposed legislation”⁷⁵

Following a section which states that the curriculum should be ‘truly national’ in nature and where British and European history should be the foundation of teaching in that subject, this is an example of the discursive framework within which these New Right authors operate: a framework which disdains the teaching profession and seeks to disempower it and which restates the imperative of nationalism in culture and history.

From a Scottish perspective, what is additionally interesting about the

⁷⁴ This relationship between market forces and parental choice is further explored in “Market Forces and Parental Choice: Self-Interest and Competitive Advantage in Education”; Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz; in “Educational Reform and its Consequences”; edited by Sally Tomlinson; Institute of Public Policy Research; 1994

⁷⁵ “The Reform of British Education”; op cit; Page 9

document is that throughout it refers to the 'British' system of education and to 'British' values. Yet in the entire paper only one reference to the Scottish system or way of doing things is made; and that is to the "knowledge-based" examination system in Scotland, perceived as more praiseworthy than the CSE system in England. The language is of the DES, of GCSE, of maintained schools, etc. Is one to assume that the Scottish system is of no consequence to the authors? Or is there a wider agenda that sees the model from England and Wales being exported north of the Border, because the terms "British" and "national" are frequent? A third alternative is that consideration of the 5-14 proposals was clearly under way, as evidenced by the fact that these were published on the same day as the Education Reform Bill, and that the authors were content to leave matters Scottish to the authorities with responsibility for Scottish education. But if that were so, why refer to the British system at all? The role and influence of Scottish minister Michael Forsyth in the reforms of Scottish education has been documented by Boyd⁷⁶ and more recently by Humes: it is significant that Humes' analysis of Mr Forsyth places him squarely within the New Right thinkers who were influential at that time in the Thatcher Government's policy on education. Moreover, Mrs Thatcher herself records her admiration for Mr Forsyth and his influence in the No Turning Back group of influential New Right MPs.⁷⁷ She describes him thus:

"The real powerhouse for Thatcherism in the Scottish Office was Michael Forsyth, whom I appointed a Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Scottish Education and Health..... he was the only Conservative politician in Scotland whom the Labour Party really feared."⁷⁸

Perhaps it was with this assurance that Hillgate felt Scotland could be left to reform itself.

New Right ideology in education then, is concerned with standards,

⁷⁶ "Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom" Brian Boyd; unpublished PhD thesis; University of Glasgow, 1992

⁷⁷ "The Downing Street Years" ;op cit; Pages 620-623

⁷⁸ "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Pages 620 and 621

with common sense, with choice, with liberating parents and teachers from the control of the local authorities who had been so responsible for letting the system and the country down in the past. The thinking in "The Reform of British Education" is consistent with the tenets of Friedman, Scruton and Sexton. These tenets are recognised in the notes and references section in the document. This document is worthy of close comment because it is such a concise statement of New Right thinking, and because it comments upon the critical investigation of this study - the curriculum.

The New Right and the teaching of English

It is perhaps relevant in the context of this study to consider whether or not the ideological stance of the New Right extends to a view of English language. It is clear from any survey of the literature that ⁷⁹ standards of literacy and the teaching of English language feature centrally in political debate about education. This debate is still current, some four years after the publication of the orders for the teaching of English in England and Wales and the appropriate national guidelines in Scotland. Texts such as that by Bex ⁸⁰ or Coggle⁸¹ make it clear that there is still much to be discussed in this area and that the arguments are by no means over. In Scotland, a similar example can be found in the article by Dorothy-Grace Elder ⁸² Therefore there is evidence that the teaching of language is an area where there is public concern about standards. The New Right shares this concern, from its populist libertarian stance. If this is the case, what is the nature of this stance on language, and how is it expressed? It has been noted that "The Reform of British Education" comments that teachers of English

"must be obliged to impart a proper understanding of English

⁷⁹ see for example, "An Overview of ERA +3"; Duncan Graham; in "The Search for Standards"; ed Harry Tomlinson; Longman in Association with BEMAS; 1992

⁸⁰ "Estuary English: Guardian Education"; June 6th 1994

⁸¹ "The Dangers of Illiteracy"; Paul Coggle; The Sunday Times; 10 April 1994

⁸² "Peopul are Eliterit"; Dorothy-Grace Elder; Scotland on Sunday; 5th February 1995

grammar and of the written word, together with some understanding of the true monuments of our literature."⁸³

Although as has been noted this is important in the discursive context, it may in curricular terms be seen as a fairly bland statement, and contains few details of the thinking behind it - although in the global context of the ideology it is not difficult to extend it. For these details, it is necessary to go further into the documentation which reflects the thinking of the time.

There are in this context two key documents which were extremely important in the formulation of New Right thinking on the nature of English language and how it should be taught within the matrix of the school curriculum. HMI No 1 comments upon these in his interview, where he places these in the Scottish context:

"Michael Forsyth had well-defined views on the matter, and these were influenced by the thinking of the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies, particularly coming from Lawlor, Marenbon and Scruton."⁸⁴

Since he was the Under Secretary for Education at the Scottish Office who was directly responsible for the production of the 5-14 development proposals, and who was intent on reform of the Scottish educational system, these documents are of considerable importance; firstly because they further reveal the nature of the ideological stance which the Minister adopted, and secondly, as we shall see, because comparison between that stance and the thinking articulated in these documents and what eventually transpired in the way of national guidelines for 5-14 English language will reveal much about the changes brought about by the policy community with respect to the teaching of English.

The first of these documents is "English, our English - the new

⁸³ "The Reform of British Education"; op cit; Page 9

⁸⁴ See Appendix Six

orthodoxy examined".⁸⁵ This was produced by John Marenbon, for the Centre for Policy Studies. This is, as the HMI says, a right wing think tank, and the paper is one of four entitled the "Education Quartet". The timing of it is again interesting because this was the stage at which the proposals for a national curriculum were being mooted and when the options for its content and construction were presumably at their most open. As in the case of other documents emanating from New Right sources, the problem which is to be addressed is examined. The problem is once more a perceived decline in standards. According to the paper, there is widespread concern at the decline in the ability of pupils and even university students to use and understand their native language. Examples are produced to substantiate these claims. The paper moves to examine why this state of affairs has arisen, and its conclusion is that there has come into being a 'new orthodoxy' which is centred around child centred methods; English being a process rather than a subject; the teaching of spoken language is important; grammar is descriptive of language, not prescriptive; language use is judged by its appropriateness in context. In many ways, this is a description of some of the main tenets of modern linguistic thinking - see Chapter Six. But it is also highly selective, missing out aspects such as the teaching of genres, reading and listening skills, etc. Marenbon gives evidence for each of the statements which he perceives as being fundamental to the construction of this new orthodoxy.

Very interestingly, Marenbon then goes on to examine his perception of the reasons for the spread of the new orthodoxy which has caused all these problems. He sees the Bullock report of 1975⁸⁶ as being one of the instigators of the process. It is omitted that the reason Bullock's research and inquiry was carried out was exactly the same as that for the production of Marenbon's paper - that there was a perception of a decline in the standards of teaching of English, and that this had to be addressed. Bullock was, as Chapter Six shows, a

⁸⁵"English our English - the new orthodoxy examined"; John Marenbon; Centre for Policy Studies; June 1987

⁸⁶ "A Language for Life"; Report of the Committee of Inquiry under Sir Alan Bullock, FBA; HMSO; 1975

very measured and research-based response to this remit. Marenbon continues with the assertions that the others responsible for the spread of the new orthodoxy are Her Majesty's Inspectorate, The Assessment of Performance Unit and the GCSE examination system. All have contributed to this pernicious spread of declining standards in English.

Marenbon then goes on to look at the new orthodoxy in detail, explaining why it is in his view wrong. English is a subject, not a process. It has clearly defined boundaries and aims just like any other subject in the curriculum. It should not be child centred in nature. Although "effective instruction" (note that similarity of language) is assisted by the pupil's interest, it is not a prerequisite of it. When it is explained and taught as a subject, the interest follows. The concentration on oracy and spoken English is a major factor in the decline of the written word. Assessment is wrongly based on positive merits - it should also concentrate on pointing out and correcting errors. Language use should not be judged on criteria of appropriateness, but by criteria of correctness. Logically that brings the argument round to consideration of the place of standard forms. Standard forms represent a superior discourse to those of dialect. He does concede a place for dialect forms in certain circumstances, but these are not within the educational domain. The new orthodoxy is seen as devaluing Standard English, and therefore creating a dynamic which leads to a danger of its destruction.

Finally, Marenbon turns to the teaching of literature. All the approaches in use in schools militate against the propagation of literary heritage. Children are asked to respond in a personal way; they cultivate techniques for writing about literature. They do not cultivate knowledge about literature and are therefore deprived of access to a great area of cultural and intellectual experience. And they do not read the right books - they are denied the vision of greatness afforded by the classics in favour of "accessible" modern works.

Thus, having clearly enunciated the perception of the problem,

Marenbon sets out the New Right aims for English teaching. Firstly, English should be taught as a subject, as a body of knowledge. Secondly,

"..The teacher would not hesitate to prescribe to the children on matters of grammatical correctness."

The children would have tasks and exercises, not experiences. The process of learning would often be laborious and would make demands on the children's self-discipline. The grammar to be taught would be Latinate grammar, because

"The terminology of traditional grammar remains the best instrument for describing the broad features of Standard English, and so of prescribing usage to those learning it." ⁸⁷

Part of the problem, of course, is that the teachers themselves are unclear about these matters, and therefore the teacher himself (sic) will have to learn these traditional grammatical structures. He should moreover, not be afraid to use rote-learning and drills in the task of teaching. Marenbon deals with the problematic demand that teachers should be aware of the developments of modern linguistics. These are part of the new orthodoxy, and therefore should be rejected. The teaching of literature should centre round the great works and the transmission of the cultural heritage.

The conclusion is that the national curriculum under proposal need not be yet another enforcement mechanism to be seized upon by the policy community for its own ends: in this case the continuation of the new orthodoxy.

"It need not be so, if politicians and committees keep strong in their common sense, distrustful of experts and chaste towards fashion. May God grant them sharpness of mind and firmness of resolve, for in the future of its language there lies the future of a nation."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Marenbon 1987, Page 35

⁸⁸ "English our English" op cit; Page 40

The language of the New Right resurfaces at the peroration. Thus is clearly enunciated precisely the kind of view of English teaching which might well have figured in the mythical "golden age" described by Ball. Nevertheless, it represents a clear view of what is perceived to be wrong with the current state of affairs, and it suggests a remedy - return to traditional values. But there is more than this. There is distrust of experts and those who have vested interests. The discourse of derision figures prominently, as in Ball's analysis of New Right documentation. And it springs from a populist concern to "entitle" all children to the benefits of the perceived solution. The vision of greatness argument, the return to traditional values, all search out for a chord which is within us all. Once again we see the discourse of nationalism in that the great texts which are seen as crucial in the enculturation process are promulgated: the very title of the document bespeaks not just the language but also the nation which gave birth to it. Earlier the critical aspect of control was noted; this aspect has been developed by a number of commentators.⁸⁹ Here there is also the discourse of control, as was noted in the Hillgate publication. In discursive terms, this is again critical, because it may therefore be argued that not only is there engagement with the control of teachers and with the control of what is taught; but that if there is control discourse where language is concerned, one is engaging with the very substance of which thought itself is made. If as post-structuralists such as Foucault, and Julia Kristeva within the context of a feminist perspective, contend that it is through language that we construct and deconstruct the world, then those who control what language, what literature are taught are indeed wielding considerable power over our lives. Whether or not that was the *intention* of these New Right documents is irrelevant: it is their *effect* which is crucial. And their effect on policy can be identified and traced.

The second text which is of great importance to the consideration of

⁸⁹ An example of this is "The Education Reform Act - Competition and Control"; Leslie Bash and David Coulby; Cassell 1989. Bash and Coulby identify a number of similar contradictions between the New Right statements of liberation from control and the actual effect (or intention) of the ideology when worked out in practice.

New Right ideology where the teaching of English language is concerned and where there is a vision of what this should contain is by John Marenbon's wife, Sheila Lawlor. This is again issued by the Centre for Policy Studies and is concerned with the translation of the ideas contained within "English our English" into curricula for implementation within schools. The document is "Correct Core - simple curricula for English, maths and science"⁹⁰. The timing of this document is again interesting. Just as the previous one related to an early stage in the thinking out of a national curriculum, so this one is more precise, giving ideas about how that curriculum might work out in practice, and is available at the stage when the Education Reform Bill was going through the Commons to become law in the Education Reform Act of 1988. The document follows almost exactly the same pattern as the others. There is the definition of the perceived problematic area; discussion of how officialdom and theorists have conspired to defeat the ends of education, mistaken assumptions and then the proposed remedy for these shortcomings.

The basic principle is laid out in the introduction: the curriculum should be kept basic and simple because it is through this approach that effective education is obtained. The curriculum should consist of the three core subjects of English, maths and science: schools and Heads should be free thereafter to decide what they wish to add. Any greater restriction of that freedom is a negation of what Conservatives stand for (Page 5). There are many similarities, as one might expect, to the earlier document produced by John Marenbon. The demise of subjects is regretted; experiential and child centred methods are unsatisfactory; pupils are not stretched and standards are low; external assessment has diminished; multicultural approaches have led to a dilution of a sense of national identity. In English, the Bullock Report, long regarded by the teaching community as a statement of considerable weight, has edged teachers away from the virtues of traditional approaches. Official HMI Reports such as "English 5-16" have made some references to traditional grammar, but have lapsed

⁹⁰ "Correct Core - simple curricula for English, maths and science"; prepared by Sheila Lawlor; Centre for Policy Studies; May 1988

into a miasma of the use of English "for the transactions of our everyday lives" and for "social and personal relationships". An interesting comment is that on the ongoing work of the Kingman Committee.

"....from remarks made by members of the Kingman Commission (sic), it is becoming clear that misgivings about the form which the National Curriculum will take are not unjustified".⁹¹

Did this remark refer to public pronouncements, or did the CPS have the ear to members of the Committee? Another point worthy of consideration might be; why the need for Kingman at all, when Bullock had made such a well defined response to the same problem not twelve years previously? Was there evidence of a further catastrophic fall in levels of achievement? Or was the influence of the discourses of derision by the New Right significant in creating the impression that there had been?

Lawlor then goes on to state that in the past there has been a theory that there should be no absolute standards: that teaching is not a matter of passing on a body of knowledge: that education has a social role and that enjoyment has a place in the process of learning. This approach, she avers, has "not led to higher standards". Not surprisingly, her statement of the opposite case follows. Testing will play a central part in the monitoring of standards, and a minimum acceptable standard of achievement for 7, 11, 14 and in English only, 16 year olds will be set.

The next section deals with the proposed curricula. That for English is the natural successor of "English our English". There are a number of headings: reading (aloud); Grammatical Description; the literary heritage; Assessment and Terminology, this including syntax and vocabulary. Lawlor then proceeds to work these out in terms not of targets, with the implication that the target may in certain cases be missed, but in terms of requirements. The change in vocabulary is

⁹¹ "Correct Core"; op cit; Page 14

slight, but important in terms of the New Right view of the curriculum and education. And the discursive framework is similar to that which operates in respect of Hillgate and Marenbon. This is control discourse, with power residing in those who frame the requirements, and disempowerment the lot of those who are obliged to implement them or indeed to receive the products of them.

The model is clear. The national standards - "requirements" - will be set; tests will be administered to ensure that they are met, and the curriculum will be designed to ensure that children are able to pass the tests. Thus, the curriculum to assessment model which had formed the basis of much earlier thinking was entirely reversed.

The requirements for 7 year olds are concerned with reading aloud with fluency and precision. As well as simple pieces, they would be able to read aloud more complicated pieces including "ordinary" as well as "simple" syntax. The author is not entirely certain as to what this distinction implies. The 7 year old should be able to write legibly in sentences, using appropriate punctuation, and be able to spell correctly words belonging to simple vocabulary. He should know simple rhyming poems by heart. By the age of 11, this is extended to reading aloud with greater understanding of what are the mechanics of reading - syntax, vocabulary, meaning. The pupils should be able to write legibly in a cursive script, with a full range of vocabulary, using appropriate punctuation and organising their work into paragraphs. Again, the concentration is upon grammatical correctness, and this is worked up into the ability to identify parts of speech. They should also know by heart famous passages from the Bible and from literature. Similar requirements are made of 14 and 16 year olds. Interestingly enough, there is no mention of Standard English forms, and no prescription of texts, possibly because this had already been done in "English our English". The keynote is simplicity and a return to traditional values in language education.

Thus, from these key documents, we have access to the New Right position on the teaching of English, and their vision of how it should

be accomplished within the context of the National Curriculum. We also have access to the discursive framework. This enables us to see how discourses of derision are applied to those who may adopt a different position from the originators of the discourse. We have access to how articulated national and nationalistic concerns, including those of tradition and family values; control and the possession of self-evident rightness (“It is only common sense”) by the originators affect - some would contend constitute - the power sets and power bases controlling the formation of policy. How influential this vision was in the eventual construction of the national curricular guidelines in English language in both England and Scotland will be the subject of the next chapter: it will be the task of a subsequent section to investigate the view of teacher professionalism intrinsic in this statement of their position.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW RIGHT IDEOLOGY AND THE TRANSITION TO NATIONAL CURRICULAR GUIDELINES

The Transition Process

The previous section considered the thinking of the New Right during the nineteen eighties on educational matters and in particular on the curriculum and the teaching of English within the framework of a national curriculum. This thinking was considered from the points of view of the ideological stances adopted in general towards curricular matters, and the discourses which are employed in crucial documents giving expression of the viewpoint. The purposes of this next section are to examine the extent to which this ideology and thinking permeated the national curricular guidelines which were issued as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act and to assess the impact which policy communities might have had in moderating the stated ideological stances in their translation into practical documentation. This process will be undertaken with respect to both England and Scotland: however the methods of investigation will be different, as described in Chapter Two (Methodology). Thus, for England and Wales, recourse will be made to documentation, while for Scotland, the sources of evidence will include original interview material.

England and Wales - the National Curriculum

In consideration of the situation in England and Wales, it is worth recalling the traditions of the Black Papers, described in the previous chapter. One of the principal actors in the preparation of the Black Papers, and in the articulation of the principles upon which the thinking of the authors of the Black Papers was founded, was C B Cox. Cox appears both as joint editor with firstly A E Dyson and later Rhodes Boyson, and also as a contributor to the series. The stance adopted in the Black Papers is in some ways very similar to that adopted by later New Right publications. Indeed, there is a real

sense in which the latter may be seen as the inheritors of the Black Paper tradition;¹ the last of the Black Papers was published in 1977, two years before the election of the first Thatcher government. It is perhaps of interest to note that the editors of this last Black Paper claimed that the “Great Debate” for which James Callaghan had called in 1976 was a case of the authors of the Black Papers having their clothes stolen.²

The Black Papers were of significance because they have a reasonable claim to have initiated - or been a stimulus to the initiation of - the debate not only about standards in education but also the ways in which education is organised and the values which are inherent in the systems. These are recurring themes in the Black Papers. So is the perceived decline in standards in English, part of the wider debate to which allusion has already been made. In this context, one of the most interesting articles is that in the 1977 Papers by Stuart Froome. Froome was a member of the Bullock Committee and the author of the only Note of Dissent in the Report.³ Froome’s argument centred around his opinion that the Bullock Committee had not paid enough attention to the perceived decline in standards and to the attribution of this to “free, unsystematic methods of teaching English”⁴ Cox’s own contribution to this Black Paper is a survey of the high standards in reading attained by a Junior School in Staffordshire which had retained traditional methods and where testing was used to confirm the high standards of reading. This is counterposed with the notorious William Tyndale case in a very effective juxtaposition of two extremes.

A further interesting point to emerge from consideration of the Black Papers is the similarity in terms of some of the discursive frameworks to that later adopted by the New Right. The concern for tradition is similar, and the concern for standards is similar. But the Black Papers do not replicate the discourse of control to anything like the same extent as the later documentation. Nor is there employment of the discourse of derision to the

¹ In “The Making of Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain 1950-1986”; Christopher Knight; Falmer Press; 1990, the author is of the opinion that during the latter years of the 1970s when the Conservative Party were in opposition, there was a conflation of the Black Paper thinking and official Conservative Party policy on education.

² “Black Paper 1977”; edited by CB Cox and Rhodes Boyson; Maurice Temple Smith; Page 5

³ The Bullock Report, Page 556

⁴ “Black Paper 1977” op cit; Page 33. See also footnote reference to “Continuing the Education Debate” in the previous Chapter.

same extent, although this is undoubtedly present in some of the documentation.⁵ Another notable absentee is the discourse of nationalism, although traces of it can be detected. This comparison is useful, because it helps us to identify the extent to which the New Right have in fact sharpened the debate on educational standards, and linked it in to a more general stance on market forces and libertarianism.⁶ It also shows how there is continuity in thinking - albeit with substantial modification - between what was a radical counter-movement in the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies, offering a defence of traditional values and ways of educating to what was perceived as an attack on these by the then Secretary of State, Mr Edward Short; and what became an even more radical movement in the ensuing decades, but this time operating with the ear of a radical reforming Conservative government. The different dynamic is the access to real power. In the first instance there is a reaction - a revulsion, even - at what was happening to an education system which was perceived as having not only served well but as having intrinsic, almost immutable values. In the second instance, there is a desire to set the agenda from within for this reforming Government and to promulgate into policy the concerns which the reformers wished to advance.

At this point it may be helpful to return to the Education Reform Act. The history of this Act and the reasons for it have been well documented elsewhere, and it is not the intention to revisit these in detail now.⁷ What is important for consideration at this juncture is that the Education Reform Act was the instrument which was used to implement the concept of a National Curriculum which would be taught in all schools in England and Wales. The curriculum would be for the whole of the primary school and for the secondary school up until GCSE at age 16 - the compulsory leaving age. In other words, the whole of a child's statutory education would be covered by the prescription of this curriculum. Within the ten subjects of the National

⁵ see, for example "Return to Sanity" ; in The Black Papers on Education; CB Cox and AE Dyson; Revised Edition; 1971 ; Davis-Poynter Limited.

⁶ see "The Reform of British Education" by the Hillgate Group as an example of this. It is interesting that Caroline Cox, a member of the Hillgate Group was also an author of the 1977 Black Papers.

⁷ see, for example, "The Education Reform Act: Choice and Control"; Ed Denis Lawton; Hodder and Stoughton 1988: "Implementing Educational Reform - the Early Lessons"; T Simkins, L Ellison and V Garrett; Longman for BEMAS, 1992: also Ball (1990, 1994): Lawton "Education and Politics in the 1990s"; Flude, Michael and Hammer, Merril; 1990; The Education Reform Act 1988 - Its origins and Implications; Falmer Press, etc.

Curriculum would be the three core areas of English, Mathematics and Science. In 1987, prior to the passing of the Education Reform Act, the Secretary of State announced the setting up of a Committee of Inquiry into the teaching of English Language (The Kingman Committee) and two working groups to consider Mathematics and Science. In fact, Kingman's Committee was announced prior to the other two, in January 1987; and was seen as the answer to perceived public misgivings - particularly among employers - about the standards of literacy amongst pupils in the nation's schools.⁸

It is worth while at this stage, too, to reflect on the context of the Kingman Report. The year was 1987, and Bullock had been published only twelve years previously⁹. What had happened in the intervening time which had made another Committee covering the same area necessary? Had there been a further substantial decline in standards of reading and literacy, so severe that it was necessary to incur further expenditure and commit resources outwith the education system to the production of a report? In fact, no such dramatic decline has been observed. Bullock concluded

"There was no significant change in the reading standards of 11 year olds over the decade 1960-1970, but such movement as took place after 1964 was in all probability slightly downwards..... There is evidence to suggest that this probable slight decline in the scores of 11 year olds may well be linked to a rising proportion of poor readers among the children of unskilled and semi-skilled workers"¹⁰

In the ensuing fifteen years, there has arguably been no further significant shift. Foxman, Gorman and Brooks comment

"Reading Standards among 11 to 15 year olds have changed little since 1945, apart from slight rises around 1950 and in the 1980s. In writing

⁸ That this concern had been central to Conservative Party thinking in education is evident in Protherough's 1984 quotation of Sir Keith Joseph:

"The development of nationally agreed objectives for English teaching ... is a particularly important part of the Government's policies for raising standards in schools"

Robert Protherough; "English"; in "Curriculum Progress 5-16"; eds Wiegand and Rayner; The Falmer Press; 1989

⁹ see Chapter Five for analysis of Kingman.

¹⁰ "A Language for Life"; the Bullock Report; HMSO 1975 Page 517.

performance, there was no overall change during the 1980s.”¹¹

Since much of the latter information was obtained from the Government’s own Assessment of Performance Unit which carried out very large-scale monitoring of standards in achievement over England and Wales between 1977 and 1990, it is inconceivable that the government were not aware of the results of this research. Moreover, Bullock had been seen as a benchmark, thoroughly backed by research, and encyclopaedic in its approach. It is regarded in these high terms amongst the English teaching community to this day.¹² A much more likely explanation is that Bullock had not come up with the answers which the government wanted. Bullock was attacked in “English our English” as being responsible for the foundation of the new orthodoxy which had so damaged standards in schools. This had been achieved through discovery learning and the rejection of English as a discrete subject area in favour of a more permeative approach. The Report is criticised as being

“remarkable for its confusion, vagueness and ignorant mishandling of the philosophical concepts it employs”

- here again the discourse of derision¹³. It is also of interest to note that the Assessment of Performance Unit comes in for similar criticism in the same document. It is seen as analysing data from the point of view of the new orthodoxy; little attention is given to the “mastery, for comprehension and use, of grammar and vocabulary.” Significantly, the Assessment of Performance Unit was abolished with the implementation of the National Curriculum in 1990. There is a similar perception evident in Chapter 2 of “Correct Core”, where the view of Bullock presented on one page of A4 is selective, to say the least. ¹⁴ It would therefore seem reasonable to infer that the reason for the Kingman Committee and its remit charging it to look again

¹¹ “Standards in Literacy and Numeracy”; D Foxman, T Gorman and G Brooks; in “Teaching and Learning in the Secondary School”; edited by Bob Moon and Anne Mayes; Routledge for the Open University; 1994; Page 337

¹² see, for example, the interview with Mr Gordon Liddell - where the 1980s are seen as the decade of implementation of Bullock. The fact that Bullock is still referred to as a benchmark today is an indication of its stature and the acceptance which it found.

¹³ “English Our English”; op cit; Page 12

¹⁴ “Correct Core”; op cit; Page 8

at the teaching of English language had a lot more to do with the political circumstances of the time, and in particular with the influence of New Right thinking than it had with a measurable and catastrophic decline in standards of literacy. Subsequent events, as we shall see, will take little away from the reliability of that inference.

As discussion in Chapter Five shows, Kingman did not advocate a return to traditional Latinate grammar. The remit was that the Committee should

“... recommend a model of the English Language as a basis for teacher training and professional discussion, and to consider how far and in what ways that model should be made explicit at various stages of education”.¹⁵

It is noteworthy that the “model” is not made explicit: indeed the remit of the Committee was as wide ranging as its final report. The potential to reiterate the concepts of traditional grammar is most certainly there - the “model” which the Committee might have suggested might indeed have been the traditional one. There is evidence, too, that the composition of the Committee might have suggested that such a model be produced. None other than CB Cox himself, Black Paper author and editor, was a member of the Kingman Committee. So were writers Keith Waterhouse, AS Byatt and PJ Kavanagh; as well as Professor Peter Levi, then Professor of Poetry at Oxford. There were representatives from industry, including the editor of ‘Consumer Affairs’. Teachers were very much in the minority - only two members out of a Committee of fifteen. Therefore those who had let the education system down were not going to be given the chance to do so again. But the Kingman Report did not advocate a return to traditional grammar. And many of the perceived concerns articulated in the Hillgate Group paper and in those by Marenbon and Lawlor were not addressed in the way which the spirit of the government at this time might have expected them to be¹⁶.

¹⁵ Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the teaching of English Language; appointed by the Secretary of State under the Chairmanship of Sir John Kingman FRS; March 1st 1988; HMSO London; Page 1

¹⁶ A very strong article was written at the time Kingman was deliberating on his Report by Ronald Carter of the University of Nottingham Department of English Studies. In this article, Carter argued for an approach to English teaching which was pragmatic and which did not rule out the possibility of a genre led curriculum, as the research in Australia marrying English teaching and linguistics was seen to be promising in practical terms.

There seem to be two main possibilities here. The first is that, faced with an overwhelming weight of evidence from linguistic and other research and with the actual evidence which was presented to the Committee, Kingman and his colleagues had no intellectually honest course to take other than that which they eventually adopted. There is some evidence to support this view, too. Although the submissions to the Committee were in general not published, the then Scottish Education Department were invited to submit evidence, and this was presented in the form of a paper from HM Inspectors of Schools. This paper¹⁷ is not about traditional grammar. It is about the Scottish system and the approaches to English teaching adopted here and the influences which have acted upon them. It is about the history of the growth and development of English teaching since the 1965 Memorandum, and about the approaches which had become enshrined in the Scottish way of teaching English. It relates to linguistics, and it relates to “..the Scottish consensus on English language derived from the corpus of documents....”¹⁸ The terminology used is not that of the traditional approach, but largely that of systemic linguistics. Terms such as ‘mode’ ‘field’ and ‘tenor’ are used, and the importance of social and cultural factors are pointed up. Yet again, there is no sense either in which the baby may be seen as rejected with the bath water: there is reference to the Scottish emphasis on correctness in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. However, the dangers inherent in decontextualisation of these conventions are also pointed up. An interesting comment indeed is offered in

“HMI’s current judgement is that despite these setbacks (*relating to the rigid formality imposed on courses by the examination system*) the underlying changes for the better in teachers’ thinking and practice on language are real, and amount to permanent if modest gains”¹⁹ .

The role of developments such as Standard Grade in influencing these improvements are flagged up. Further, there is an assertion that the evidence of SED commissioned research indicates that the standards of

¹⁷ “Evidence for submission to Sir John Kingman’s Committee from HM Inspectorate of Schools, Scotland”; Scottish Education Department, June 1987

¹⁸ SED Paper, op cit; Page 2

¹⁹ SED Paper; op cit; Page 11.

performance achieved by children are “acceptable”. This paper, coming from a Government department, is not divorced by a great distance from many of the final conclusions of Kingman and his Committee. Since there is no access to the processes by which the Kingman Committee reached its conclusion²⁰ it is impossible to speculate as to the precise weight which this particular item of evidence carried during the Committee’s deliberations; however, it does seem reasonable, in the light of the fact that there are many common strands between the SED view and that finally adopted to assume that the weight of evidence presented to the Committee was along these lines and that the Committee was therefore obliged to accept what it saw and to report as it duly did, whether or not it was to the liking of the Government.

The other possibility is that the politicians, specifying a remit to “recommend a model of the English language”, simply accepted their own views as self evident truths and did not fully recognise the implications of the remit. Again, there may be some justification for this view. There is as we have seen, ample evidence to suggest that the strongly influential New Right were actively advocating a return to traditional grammar teaching. There can be no justification for a revisiting of the field of English language other than that Bullock did not contain the answers which were being looked for in terms of the New Right’s and the Government’s views of this area. More than this, the Report was instrumental in the establishment of the new orthodoxy which had done such harm. Therefore it is possible to assume that Kingman was established to provide the “correct” model for the teaching profession. But, because of the framing of the remit, the Committee did not come up with the desired prescription. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how a Committee containing such figures as Sir John Kingman and Professor Henry Widdowson (who wrote the note of reservation about the justification for Kingman’s model) would have consented to be in effect a rubber stamp for Government or indeed any other thinking. And as has been noted, the process of curriculum review and development in England and Wales has followed a pattern of fairly massive documentation by figures whose opinion carried weight and would influence the practice of the teaching profession. It is therefore inconceivable that a Committee comprised of individuals of less

²⁰ This comment relates to official documentation: as Chapter Five shows, some individual members of the Committee were prepared to discuss how they saw the development of the Kingman proposals from their own perspectives.

influence would operate successfully within this tradition and achieve the desired results.

It is appropriate at this time to return to the figure of CB Cox. Cox was asked by the Secretary of State for Education to Chair the working group on English in the National Curriculum on 26th April 1988, a month after the publication of Kingman. Kingman's report had not gone down at all well with the Prime Minister²¹. She therefore concurred with Kenneth Baker that the correct person to approach for the job of formulating the proposals for English in the National Curriculum was CB Cox, Kingman member and much more importantly, doyen of the Black Paper movement in the earlier years. In order to get it right this time, Cox records that the Working Group was carefully chosen by Kenneth Baker and Angela Rumbold, Minister of State at the DES "to reflect a more conservative stance to the teaching of English".²² After all, it was still not too late to ensure that through the National Curriculum, the correct prescription could be offered to the teaching profession. And there could be no better person to ensure this than the author of the Black Papers, who had had such influence on Conservative education thinking, and who was known to be a safe pair of hands. Moreover, as Professor of English at Manchester he was a respected academic in his own right and could be seen widely as a suitable figure to continue the tradition of key reports being headed up by influential figures.

But what clearly had not been realised by Kenneth Baker was that Cox could not be seen in simplistic terms as no more than the author of the Black Papers. He was a much more complex academic than that. Indeed he records that the previous ten years had seen him publicly advocating the centrality of creative writing in the English curriculum. Moreover, the Working Group with which he found himself associated, was more progressive in outlook than the Kingman Committee.²³

Commenting upon the appointments, Cox says

"My own view is that neither Mr Baker nor Mrs Rumbold knew very much

²¹ see "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Page 595: also "Cox on Cox"; Professor Brian Cox; Hodder and Stoughton, Page 4

²² "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Page 4

²³ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Page 4

about the complex debate that has been going on at least since Rousseau about progressive education, and that they did not realise that my Group would be strongly opposed to Mrs Thatcher's views about grammar and rote-learning. The politicians were amateurs, instinctively confident that common sense was sufficient to guide them in making judgments about the professional standing of the interviewees. I suspect that they did not realise that words such as 'grammar' or 'progressive' reflect very different meanings according to the context, or that the language of educational discussion had changed radically since they were at school."²⁴

This comment is interesting, because it heightens the earlier impression that the Black Papers, although they represented many of the same ideals as the reforming Conservative Government of the nineteen eighties, were nonetheless conducted in discourses more academic than vituperative, and that the provision of curricula according to the tenets of the New Right perhaps owed as much to gut reactions as it did to philosophy.

The report which Cox and his committee worked on was submitted in two sections, the first relating exclusively to the primary stages and the second to English 5-16. The first report attracted adverse reaction, because it gave insufficient attention to the teaching of grammar. Kenneth Baker, in his proposals, advocated that the place of grammar be strengthened. Cox records the reaction of the Press to this in terms of headlines such as "Baker's Hard Man Soft on Grammar". Cox himself was anxious to soft pedal his reaction, lest he be replaced by "an old fashioned advocate of Latinate grammar, and that would be a disaster for the schools²⁵ ." Thus, the final report advocated a process approach, concentrating on the raising of children's abilities to appreciate the function and purposes of their uses of language, and far removed from the "short Report, with strong emphasis on grammar, spelling and punctuation, which would have been easy for parents to read" which Kenneth Baker wanted²⁶ .

The final version was never fully published, although a version was

²⁴ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Page 6

²⁵ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Page 8

²⁶ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Page 11.

circulated to schools and interested parties. Cox angered the Prime Minister, too. In "The Downing Street Years" she records her disappointment at the fact that Cox - whom she does not name, although she records Kingman - did not give adequate emphasis to the teaching of traditional grammar. Although the targets contain statements about where a child should be in respect of a particular age, there is no formal acknowledgement that this should be achieved through the teaching of these traditional skills. Thus, the National Curriculum in the context of primary English as circulated to schools in the Orders of 1990 was not that kind of curriculum which was advocated by the New Right papers of 1987 and 1988 - although attempts had been made to ensure that it would in fact be so.

What then are the implications of this process for educational policy study? The first is that there was a clear resistance to the imposition of an ideologically driven policy by those who were responsible for the formulation of that policy. There is no doubt that the Government wanted the imposition - or perhaps the reimposition - of grammar as it was traditionally taught in schools at the time when members of the Government were subjected to it. There is no doubt equally that this kind of rote and practice teaching was advocated by the New Right and that in educational matters as in other areas of national life, the New Right and groups such as Hillgate and No Turning Back had the ear of Ministers at the time that education policies were being formulated for one of the most significant reforms of the past one hundred years. And yet at the end of the day, the reforms were much less fully realised than the politicians who attempted to drive them intended. Perhaps there is a strong suggestion that the policy community with respect to the actual teaching of English language was indeed stronger than the politicians suspected, and indeed that the members - and certainly the chairman - were 'pluralistic' themselves. It might also be the case that the Government made serious errors in the implementation of this particular policy. It made the decision to constitute a Committee which it thought would produce the kind of English teaching which it wanted, but faced with the intellectual burden of evidence before it, the Committee could not deliver. The opportunity was again there for reform along the preferred lines, and attempts were made through the membership of the Committee to ensure that the required curricula were delivered. But errors were made in

understanding the nature of the membership of the Committee and indeed in understanding the position of its Chairman. Confronted with the evidence of modern research into language, Cox could not sustain the neat, uncluttered idea that a return to Latinate grammar would automatically change things for the better. Cox had changed, and with him, any hope of the successful implementation of a return to the kind of teaching which was advocated. It is therefore contended that in the case of England and Wales at least, the policy community through the two Committees -and also through those who submitted evidence to them - were successful in filtering policy and ultimately decision making: but that this was successful partly because of Government miscalculation in the composition of the Committees and indeed in the formulation of the remits. It is clear that there was a highly politicised view of language, and that that view was different from the views of the academic and teaching communities. This political view was filtered and adapted by those working within the policy community - specifically, in this instance the Kingman and Cox Committees - and the resultant guidelines were more in line with current linguistic and educational thinking than the Conservative Government actually wanted or thought would appear as a result of the process which they had set in train²⁷ .

There is one further piece of evidence to suggest that the teaching of English was a political hot potato in England and Wales. Prior to the publication of the National Curriculum Orders,²⁸ in 1988, the Government, conscious of what was perceived as shortcomings in the linguistic skills of the teachers themselves - it will be recalled that part of the Kingman remit was to report on the education and training of teachers in respect of English language - decided to implement the Kingman recommendation that all teachers should have in service training in English language, and that a National Language Project be established. This project came to be known as LINC - Language in the National Curriculum. A budget of £21 million was allocated to the INSET programme and to the production of training materials for use with teachers and in the classroom. LINC was a three year in-service programme established to develop knowledge about language the teachers "need to

²⁷ That teachers of English in English primary schools would welcome Cox is maintained by Tricia Connell, writing in "English, meaning More, Not Less"; in "The National Curriculum and the Primary School"; edited by Jeni Riley; The Bedford Way series, Kogan Page; 1992

²⁸ The Kingman Report, Page 65 and Page 66

deliver the National Curriculum effectively.” The LINC project was designed to operate from April 1989 until March 1992. From April 1989 until April 1990 the LINC professional development materials were prepared as a basis for the training of key project personnel. There were twelve units in the package, arranged around the concept that teachers should be supported in terms of developing language in their own schools and in their own professional situations. Units had texts drawn from recognisable classroom contexts. The activities

“promote analysis of language but scrutiny of decontextualised language is normally eschewed.”²⁹

A survey of the materials and of the LINC Reader gives a rapid insight into the thrust which was pursued.

Part of the concern of Kingman and Cox was that pupils would be required to have a knowledge of text, both written and spoken and that they would need to know how text was constructed and how it was used. This was the context for the concern with the abilities of teachers - that they themselves would not be in possession of the skills to deal with these advanced concepts of textuality, not that they would through the shortcomings of progressive education, be unable to teach traditional grammar. The latter was the view held by those in Government. Therefore the LINC materials were devised around the concepts of textuality and how text operates, just as the earlier “Language in Use” materials (see Chapter Six) had been in the 1970s. The concept of Knowledge about Language was seen as remote from the formal exercise³⁰ and tied in with the child’s own experience of language and how language is used. This is made extremely clear in the introduction to the LINC Reader, where Professor Carter makes the relation of LINC to the theories of Halliday and Britton quite clear. The model of LINC is compatible with the Kingman model and is functionally and educationally relevant to the needs of pupils. The articles in the Reader itself relate to key issues in Knowledge about Language and to Language in the Curriculum. They include articles by modern linguists such as Katharine Perrera (who was

²⁹ “Knowledge about Language and the Curriculum - The LINC Reader”; edited by Professor Ronald Carter: Hodder and Stoughton; 1990; Page 3

³⁰ see “The LINC Reader”; op cit; Page 4

coopted on to the Cox Committee), Frances Christie, a leading genre theorist from the Australian school; Beverly Derewianka, author of the genre-based text "Exploring how Texts Work" and Ronald Carter himself. The views of the Reader are therefore centred around concepts of text, genre and discourse and how these operate in practice.³¹

What happened was that the LINC materials were never published. In 1991 the Government announced that it would prevent publication of the materials to which it had committed an Education Support Grant of £21 million. Education Minister Tim Eggar announced

"Ministers have taken the view that the LINC Units should not be published because they are not suitable for classroom use. Their purpose is to advance teachers' own professional development and understanding of the use of English rather than to provide material for school lessons. If they were to be published there is a real risk that they would be misinterpreted and used as classroom teaching materials. They were not designed and are not suitable for that purpose"³²

The clear implication of this is that teachers are unable or incapable of distinguishing between professional development materials and class teaching materials. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter Seven, that on the views of teacher professionalism which emerge from consideration of national curricular documentation and from the processes of implementation and construction. It is in fact suggested that there was another agenda here altogether, one with which we are already familiar. The Government saw LINC as precisely that mechanism by which it could promulgate its politicised view of language teaching and of language learning. Teachers would be retrained in the traditional methods of teaching grammar according to the Latinate formula, since these represent the best ways of educating school pupils in the description and correct usage of grammar. Methods which are descriptive are fine for the academics, but they are much too advanced for schools and teachers and they do not prescribe

³¹ see also "In Service Materials from the LINC Conference"; Birmingham, November 15th 1991; unpublished.

³² in "The Missing LINC"; Sylvia Winchester; Junior Education; December 1991

rules of correctness.³³

In this context, reinforcement is also provided by Mr Eggar;

“Putting teaching about grammar - the structure of language - back in its proper place in the English curriculum is not an easy enterprise. But I am wholly unconvinced that the material which Professor Carter and his collaborators have produced can stand up as an independent teaching resource. It is too sophisticated by far - certainly way above the head of the lay reader with an interest in how his children will be taught about language. And it is probably pitched at the wrong level for most teachers unfamiliar with linguistic theory.”³⁴

These are essentially the same arguments as Marenbon advances. The difference is that Eggar does not make explicit the traditional Latin grammar argument. Perhaps four years had seen things move on too far. And once again the Government had set up a device to advance its own view of language teaching - this time through the inservice training of teachers, with the potential to have a direct influence in advancing its ideologically driven perspective on English language right into the primary classroom. It had seen itself defeated in this purpose once more, through the action of the policy community in interpreting the remit according to its own tenets and according to what it perceived as more academically and intellectually sound guidelines. This time, however, there was the possibility of recouping the situation through the refusal to publish the materials - an option which had also been taken with Cox, where the targets alone were in fact finally published. That the teachers themselves wanted the LINC materials is beyond doubt - they were subsequently made available by those who produced them, often informally and via the photocopier. The spirit of LINC lives on.

What is clear from Kingman, Cox and LINC is that New Right ideology with respect to the teaching and learning of English, had in fact a far less permeative effect than it might have on the actual curricula which were

³³ “English our English”, Pages 33-35 discusses this in depth. The suggestion is also made that those who teach English should have a Classical education since they need to know correct Latin usage.

³⁴ Tim Eggar, “The Times Educational Supplement, June 28th 1991; in Winchester, op cit.

subsequently imposed on schools through the National Curriculum Orders for the primary sector. This study has attempted to show that the reasons for this were concerned with the unacceptability of that ideology to the policy community which was concerned with the implementation and interpretation of Government remits in this area, and with the Government's own miscalculation of the strength of conviction which existed within that community. This holds true for not just the style and content of English teaching which is represented by the New Right model, but also for the underlying and fundamental principle of control which is represented by that model. It is perhaps an axiom in power that he who controls language holds control of thought³⁵ : the times of the teaching of traditional grammar were the times when critical thought were not encouraged within schools. Recent curricula have attempted to encourage learners to engage in precisely this process, through scrutiny and understanding of text and textuality. A reversion to traditional methods might also be a reversion to unquestioning obedience. Language is not just a subject; it is the means by which we operate as thinking individuals. That was not lost on Kingman, Cox or Carter: the fact that they and their colleagues were not prepared to revert to the kinds of learning models which had characterised the past in spite of a clear direction that this was the direction which they should take³⁶ implies that the transition from ideology to curriculum was one which was marked by the filtration process carried out by the policy community.

Scotland - the 5-14 Development Programme

The situation in Scotland bears certain similarities to that in England and Wales, but also marked differences of emphasis and approach. Firstly, Chapter Three has shown that the tradition in Scotland was for a continuous line of development, rather than for a very large formal report marking a change in direction or perhaps, as in the case of the Plowden Report, marking a formalisation of changes which were already happening. That line of development in the 1980s had its culmination in the 10-14 Report.

³⁵ see also Chapter Eight (Conclusion).

³⁶ see Kenneth Baker's comments to Cox in "Cox on Cox": also Margaret Thatcher's views in "The Downing Street Years" pp 595 and ff.

However, Boyd³⁷ has shown how the line was stopped in its tracks by the advent of a new, reforming Right Wing Minister of State in Mr Michael Forsyth. Mr Forsyth was, however, not the only influence for change; the process of the politicisation of the SOED was already under way before the arrival of Mr Forsyth. Mr Forsyth was the catalyst which made the process overt. In an interview, Boyd records the fact that previously policy was determined through reference to HMCII and to agencies such as the CCC³⁸. However, in publishing "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland - a Policy for the Nineties" no reference was made to the policy community: this was what the Government wanted. The policy was announced on 20th November 1987, the same day as the announcement of the Education Reform Bill. It is therefore reasonable to assume that education reform in both Scotland and England were part of the same Government agenda.

Michael Forsyth was, as Humes³⁹ has shown, an extremely influential figure in Scottish education. As a member of the No Turning Back Group, he had the ear of Margaret Thatcher, whom he resolutely supported.⁴⁰ He had a penchant for getting things done, for achieving what he wanted, even in the face of the united opposition of the educational establishment. As Humes demonstrates, it is not easy to locate him precisely within the ideological constructs of Thatcherism or Monetarism: what is however beyond doubt is his commitment to the New Right view of the world, and his commitment to see Scotland benefit from it.

The implications of the ideological stance adopted by Mr Forsyth in terms of education reform are interesting. He is of course the 'onlie begetter' of the School Boards and is responsible for the raising of the profile of parent and therefore, consumer power during the latter years of the 1980s. In curricular terms, his position is perhaps a little less clear at the outset, because his statements are of course issued in the name of government departments. There is little doubt that he was committed to an agenda similar in political

³⁷ "Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom"; Brian Boyd; unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1992

³⁸ see interview with Brian Boyd: Appendix 8; Page 296

³⁹ "The Significance of Michael Forsyth in Scottish Education"; Walter M Humes; Scottish Affairs; No 11; Spring 1995

⁴⁰ "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Pages 620- 623; Page 856

terms to that which his colleagues in the South were advocating. Indeed, Boyd reminds us that the latter years of the 1980s were a period when the EIS was concerned about the “Englishing” of Scottish education and the importation for ideological reasons of features of the English system which were alien to the situation and traditions of the Scottish educational system.⁴¹ However, we can access strands of his thought through these documents and through interview with key players in the implementation process.

It is perhaps also important to present a balanced view of the Minister: much contemporary and subsequent commentary could lead to the construction of a diatribe. But there is also little doubt that Mr Forsyth was - and is - an extremely shrewd, astute and able politician, who made a great impression on those who had dealings with him. For example, Louise Hayward, who as National Development Officer 5-14 for Assessment and Reporting had contact with Mr Forsyth, comments that the Minister was extremely sharp, and in complete understanding of his brief.⁴²

The Minister’s document “Curriculum and Assessment on Scotland: a Policy for the Nineties”⁴³ is a document which was influenced strongly by considerations which were relevant for the National Curriculum. The concepts of Programmes of Study, Attainment Targets, Levels of Attainment and Attainment Tests on a national basis are examples of that influence. But there were significant differences between the situation in England and Wales and that in Scotland. The first and perhaps most obvious of these was that whereas in the South there was to be imposition of the National Curriculum by law through a series of Orders, this would not be the case in Scotland. The Secretary of State did, however retain the right to legislate in the light of inadequate progress being made towards implementation of his proposals⁴⁴. The implications of this for teacher professionalism will be discussed later. The second is that in the case of Scotland, there is clear

⁴¹ see Interview with Dr Brian Boyd, Appendix Eight

⁴² see interview with Louise Hayward, Appendix Ten

⁴³ “Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the Nineties”; a consultation paper; SED November 1987.

⁴⁴ see paragraph 54.

reference to the curriculum substructures such as the CCC and the SEB:⁴⁵ these were to be utilised to create the new curricula.

There is no sense here in which the review will be carried out in terms of other than those of the existing channels - at least in terms of the rhetoric of the paper. But what are clear are the concerns of the Secretary of State - via Mr Forsyth. These are that there is a lack of direction and uniformity in the curriculum in Scottish schools: that the transition from primary to secondary education is unsatisfactory and that the priority subjects are those in the core of the National Curriculum - English, Mathematics and Science (the last within the context of Environmental Studies). There are to be National Tests in English and Mathematics to allow the transmission of attainment to parents, pupils and teachers. Parents are to be better informed on the progress of their children than has been the case in the past. But the document also indicates that the new curricula will build upon the existing ones and are to be seen as an extension of them rather than as an attempt to start off all over again. There is to be consultation with the profession, parents and other interested bodies. However, as Dr Gatherer has shown, analysis of the discourse of the paper reveals not only the rhetoric of consultation and involvement, but also a strong rhetoric of control and imposition.

“In this paper the A voice arrogantly lays down the new rules and controls, while the C voice provides a plausible context in which the new curriculum and tests can be presented as if they merely carried forward already developing policies. It is easy to imagine a third voice (in some text hidden from public view) formulating the new political scheme. This voice is forceful but also foxy, cloaking its fanatical determination in the cosy cadences of C. Because it is fatuous but fatal, and ‘as false as dicers’ oaths’, let us call it the voice of F”⁴⁶

One of the interesting comments is the reference in Paragraph 13 to the 1980 COPE Position Paper, which was an extension of the basic principles of the 1965 Memorandum and an updating of them. In the 1987 document

⁴⁵ see paragraphs 48, 49 and 63

⁴⁶ “The Two Voices”; Dr WA Gatherer; Scottish Educational Review; Vol 20 No 2; 1988

this advice is seen as lacking structure and clarity: the CCC is to advise on what is to be done. The summary conclusion might be that the intention of the 1987 Consultation Paper is similar and the agenda similar, but the process by which these ends might be achieved is different. It might also include the fact that by cutting across the consensus in a way which would endear him to many in the Conservative Right, Mr Forsyth was establishing his own credentials in a very significant way.

We can also, as has been pointed out, gain access to Mr Forsyth's views through those who had contact with him. HMI No 1 points out the central role in policy formulation of the groups with which Mr Forsyth was associated:

“.... (certain documents) voiced the Right-wing concern about a perceived falling of standards and the need to put this right. Also of importance are the DES 1984 Curricular Matters booklet on English 5-16; produced on the instruction of Keith Joseph, who took a very close interest in their content; and the responses document of 1986. The right wing used these as a lever. They felt that they paid lip-service to the importance of traditional values but underneath they were really only the left-wing responding to concerns in the documents in a superficial way. The policy community became these people - the Centre for Policy Studies, the Salisbury Group and the No Turning back group became the ears of the Ministers - and Michael Forsyth spoke of that way of thinking. They regarded the Bullock Report as the start of the rot.”⁴⁷

This speaks further of the engagement of Mr Forsyth in the debate and of his concern to align himself with New Right thinking. His actions in his 1987 paper may be seen in the context of that process, cutting across the Scottish consensus and establishing a new agenda. When the topic of testing is considered, there is further evidence as to this alignment. Professor Bart McGettrick, Convener of the Committee on Assessment in the 5-14 Development Programme is in no doubt as to the Minister's interest in a testing-driven curriculum:

“The Secretary of State and in particular the Minister for Education Mr Forsyth had an interest in testing. He wished the Department (the SOED) to

⁴⁷ Interview with HMI No 1, Appendix Six

drive what happened in assessment..... I was given an account of the interest of the Minister in testing in education.”⁴⁸

Further, the Secretary to the Committee, Mrs Louise Hayward, is of the opinion that the Committee

“.... did not try to be politically clever. The arguments were not essentially political arguments at all - they were educational arguments..... The only clear political intention was that related to national testing.”⁴⁹

Another piece of evidence comes from HMI No 2, who confirms from within, Brian Boyd's assertion that the SOED was becoming - or had become - politicised. He refers to the situation during the 1980s where there was a change from the situation where the views of HMII drove policy (as in McPherson and Raab) although there was always a consciousness of the political view, to one where these positions were reversed and the political view came to the forefront.

“Senior SED - ie not HMI - administrative personnel became increasingly interested in the curriculum. They became more directly interested in initiatives, and the question has to be asked - did they become politicised? An example of this might be the School Board Training Manual. Senior officials were conveying the views of inspectors, EAs and schools. Decisions were being made on a more political basis than in the past.

There was a change in the style of curriculum development. In key people, such as Mr Forsyth - there was, I believe, a distrust of the SCCC, of advisers, college lecturers - perhaps even of teachers..... In terms of the style and content of initiatives, the Department was becoming increasingly proactive, with some people perhaps influenced by New Right thinking. Michael Forsyth did not appear to be tremendously interested in what was actually happening now in schools. He was more driven by what was happening in England, so that we here in Scotland did not 'fall behind'.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Interview with Professor Bart McGettrick, Appendix Seven

⁴⁹ Interview with Mrs Louise Hayward, Appendix Ten

⁵⁰ Interview with HMI No 2; Appendix Nine

These last words are critical, because they reinforce the impression that much of what happened in Scotland was not actually driven from the needs of the system itself, but from the sense that Scotland had to fit in with what was happening elsewhere. This view is supported also by evidence from within the Department in the interview with HMI No 1;

“ The Secretary of State for Education, Mr Michael Forsyth, indicated that he wished to follow the same general direction that was being followed in England. Both the proposals in Scotland and those in England came from policy decisions taken by the Government.”⁵¹

It is contended that evidence suggests that this had as much to do with Mr Forsyth’s personal agenda as it had with any other factor, maybe more so.

Lastly, Willis Pickard’s excellent summary in Roger and Hartley is worthy of inclusion:

“For a young minister to take such momentous decisions in the teeth of apparently universal opposition (certainly over testing and opting out) showed great self-confidence - or overweening arrogance. Whether it was the one or the other depends on how one views politicians. Mr Forsyth had a sense of mission. He came to office with set convictions, as set as those of the Prime Minister. The belief that he was right and that he had an opportunity (unexpected in the coming) of carrying through the reforms which he and other young Conservatives had dreamed about for years previously was the spur which drove him on.”⁵²

And this spirit of reform carries on, though with perhaps a different agenda, some eight years after the advent of the original proposals:

“The best guardian of an Open Society is a level of education and training which gives everyone access to their true potential, and to all that society has to offer. In short, our Britain of the new millenium has to be not only an Open Society, but an educated, even super-educated society. We must take

⁵¹ Interview with HMI No 1; Appendix Six.

⁵² “Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 90s”; edited by Angela Roger and David Hartley; Scottish Academic Press; 1990; Page 60.

measures now which will guarantee a high quality of education to every child..... The purpose of education is not to impose a false equality upon people of unequal abilities. It is to equip people for life with the tools which they will need to educate themselves, no matter what their abilities..... Let our second goal for Britain's future be to make it the best educated country in the world, and to implement the reforms which can bring that about."⁵³

Clearly the zeal for reform remains unabated and the language of the New Right largely unchanged. There is reference to "Britain" and the appeal to patriotism couched in very similar terms to those of other documents; the discourse of vision, the appeal to the emotions. Plus ça change.

Having thus established the impeccable New Right characteristics of the Minister who was responsible for the initiation of 5-14, what subsequently happened to the initiative? And what influences finally came to bear on the national curricular guidelines as we have them? To answer those questions, we have to look at the mechanisms by which the 5-14 curricula were implemented. The 1987 Paper remitted the development of the new curricula to the SCCC, revised in format and no longer a quango set up with the express purpose of advising the Secretary of State on curricular matters: rather a company limited by guarantee with a wider remit including the production and sourcing of teaching materials. The Secretary of State, having invited comment on his 1987 proposals, made a statement on 3rd October 1988, in which he invited the SCCC to consider the balance of the primary curriculum. The reaction to the 1987 paper was one of almost universal condemnation. The standards debate had not surfaced to nearly the same extent in Scotland as it had south of the Border - as HMI commented,⁵⁴ this was because Scottish primary schools were still in many ways traditional in their approach and some of the more extreme features of progressive education (such as had arisen in the William Tyndale case in London) had not been a marked feature of the Scottish situation. The "almost" in "almost universal" related mostly to matters of the curriculum itself. In offering a cautious welcome to the White Paper, John Stocks pointed out that there need not be threat in seeking clearer guidance on

⁵³ Rt Hon Michael Forsyth; speech to the Scottish Conservative party conference; May 10th 1995

⁵⁴ see Brian Boyd, op cit; Page 249

matters relating to the curriculum and in particular to curricular content.⁵⁵ In particular, testing came in for almost universal condemnation. But testing remained after the “consultation” process was through: it was because of ‘misunderstandings’ by the educational establishment that its true value had not been recognised. Boyd comments upon the almost breathtaking arrogance of this statement. But perhaps its real significance is that it cuts right across the educational consensus which had guided Scottish education and supports Angela Roger’s thesis⁵⁶ that the period of consultation and consensus was over to be replaced by one of control and imposition - in other words, much of what the discourses of the New Right in fact circumscribed.

The decision was taken by the SCCC to establish a number of Review and Development Groups, mirroring the requirements of the 1987 paper that there should be clear guidance on all aspects of the curriculum. These Groups would be under the supervision of a 5-14 Executive Committee reporting direct to the Council, which was in possession of a remit which it had been given by the then still SED. The first paper to be produced was the March 1989 Paper on the Balance of the Primary Curriculum⁵⁷. This paper covered key skills and outlined the aims of primary education, the first of which was knowledge, skills and understanding in literacy and communication, numeracy and mathematical thinking. One cannot avoid the feeling that this would have struck a chord with many of the educators in Scotland across most of this century. The rest of the short paper is committed to the balance between areas of the curriculum - which owe a great deal to earlier statements on the nature of the primary curriculum in the COPE Paper and indeed in the 10-14 Report⁵⁸. But perhaps the greatest significances of the paper are not just the advice which it affords, but the facts that it announces the process of working paper, followed by consultation, followed by the publication of a Circular; and that the point of divergence from the model being posited in England is marked here. ⁵⁹ The Circular was to be

⁵⁵ “Two Cheers for the White Paper”; John Stocks; Scottish Educational Review; Volume 20 No 2; 1988

⁵⁶ “Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland”; op cit; Pages 10-13

⁵⁷ “Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland; a Policy for the 90's: Paper No 1; a Working Paper; The Balance of the Primary Curriculum: Scottish Education Department; March 1989

⁵⁸ “Education Scotland 10-14”: SCCC Edinburgh

⁵⁹ HMI No 1 comments that there is no parallel for Working Paper No 1 in England and Wales.

published when the curricular guidelines were in place and when presumably the process of review was complete.

The remit of these Review and Development Groups was of great significance, too, in understanding how the national curricular guidelines evolved. It is at this point that the Department would indicate its desires in shaping the new curricula in each area. Since this was to be possibly the most thorough going overhaul of learning and teaching in Scotland ever attempted, the opportunity was certainly there for a political will to be imposed. But the Review and Development Group in English Language, which was the first RDG to be formed, was not formed in the way the Committees and Commissions were formed in England. Membership consisted of a Director, 2 Primary Head Teachers, 1 Secondary Head Teacher, 1 Primary adviser, 1 Secondary Specialist adviser, 1 College Primary Specialist, 1 College Secondary Specialist and a Learning Support Specialist. To this, the RDG subsequently sought and obtained permission to add a Principal Teacher of English and a Primary Teacher. HMI were present in the role of assessor, but also on a consultancy basis as requested by the RDG. There was furthermore officer support from within the SCCC. What is immediately apparent from the composition of this group - and it must be recalled that the remit was an official one, specifying the composition of the RDGs and that RDG One of English language would set the pattern for subsequent Groups - is that the consensus, the policy community and the profession were to be the very agencies which were to produce the new guidelines. In this sense, there is a complete contrast with the situation which obtained in England. As if that were not enough, the first requirement of the Group is that it shall

“With regard to the needs of 5-14 year olds in the areas of language and communication in the medium of English, review and build upon existing curriculum guidance prepared under the auspices of the CCC, COPE, COSE, SCOLA, SCC English, JWP English (Standard Grade), by HM Inspectorate, education authorities, colleges of education and other bodies in and outwith Scotland;”

Thus, those who had been responsible for working within the consensus

were to have regard to the good practice which that consensus had established - and were effectively to continue the tradition and line of development which is described in Chapter Three of this study.⁶⁰ Professor Wilson, Convener of the RDG comments on this:

“The concept of a Review and Development Group was obviously not that of the members, but they were happy with their role and with the nomenclature which was applied. They were what the title suggests, a group of practitioners reviewing the current situation and forming proposals in the light of their remit and what they perceived. I do not think that the Inspectorate could have fulfilled that sort of consultative role. The Local Authorities could not have done it either - lack of coherence in what emerged was a real risk”⁶¹

A further telling comment is that by Mr Robbie Robertson, SCCC Officer and Adviser to RDG 1. Commenting on the nature of the group, he says:

“The roots lie deep in the culture. The appointments ensured that people were chosen who would in the end produce what was required. A Review and Development Group is a fabrication to articulate a particular point of view. The SOED know the correct horses to run in particular courses. It was not ultra prescriptive, but not ultra left wing either.”⁶²

Thus, the perception was that the summit of power lay within the SOED itself. Decisions were made within the Department about the appropriate people to produce appropriate results. But this appears to have been much more effective than the Government’s attempt in England and Wales with the appointment of Cox.

Taking this evidence it is perhaps reasonable to assume that the guidelines in English Language were produced not just because the English-teaching consensus wanted that they should reflect what was going on - ie should reflect the consensus; but also that the Department wished this, too. This is

⁶⁰ see Review and Development Group One; Draft Remit and Composition; SCCC/SOED internal paper.

⁶¹ Interview with Professor Gordon Wilson; Appendix One

⁶² Interview with Mr Robbie Robertson; Appendix Two

not obvious solely from Mr Robertson's comments, but also from the Remit of the Committee. Therefore, at the point of process, the option of a Marenbon - Lawlor style curriculum in English was blunted and the option of continuity was heightened, and this might suggest that the Department had a different vision of the operation of Scottish primary education than the Minister had. Yet there is also evidence that the RDG was in possession of the Marenbon and Lawlor papers and was well aware of New Right thinking on the teaching of English language⁶³. Gordon Liddell, National Development officer to the RDG makes a significant comment:

"As NDO I undertook to find Sheila Lawlor's papers and to distribute them to the members of the group. The committee knew that Mr Forsyth was influenced by what she said. Sheila Lawlor was in the Conservative think-tank with a rigid view of what education should be. She had a clear vision and view of education. In that way we knew the background thinking. Although we knew the background, we basically decided to ignore it and to develop our own document - for example, we included some genre theory. We developed what the committee thought would be a document of value to teachers and would shape thinking about language in terms which would be beneficial."

This perceived freedom from Departmental or indeed any other pressures to produce a particular kind of document is a striking feature of the interviews with respondents, and this does not solely relate to RDG 1. HMI No 1, asked if the RDG was under pressure to follow the same road as the National Curriculum, replies:

"This was not the case. They were briefed by the English documents - the Cox reports on English 5-11 and English 5-16 and these were very useful..... but (the group) was under no pressure to follow either Cox or the National Curriculum. Gordon Wilson and I tried to persuade the committee to combine Talk and Listening because that was the pattern at Standard Grade. It was also the Approach taken by the Cox Report in Chapter 8. But the primary school teachers were not impressed by the pattern which had emerged at Standard Grade. In this case the advice of the Chair and the HMI Assessor

⁶³ See Interview with HMI NO 1

was rejected. The RDG had independence and autonomy.”⁶⁴

Similarly, Mr Gordon Gibson, National Development Officer (Primary):

“There were guidance documents to ensure that all the committees worked in the same way - that they had a common framework. But after the issue of the remit there was no pressure to ensure that the RDG produced any particular version... There was no overt steering of the deliberations or of the report..... There was no pressure for any particular aspect of language of any particular grammar.”⁶⁵

The Convener of the RDG takes the matter further:

“5-14 was seen as an entirely different initiative from the development of the National Curriculum. It was quite separate from the National Curriculum. For a start, we were designing Guidelines - not a set of Orders which were to be legally enforceable. We were happy with that situation. More than that, we were conscious that there was professional support for what we were doing and for the proposals when they emerged..... There was never any pressure on the RDG to conform to any English national model.”⁶⁶

It is also relevant that Professor McGettrick comments:

“A philosophical stance was expressed by the Minister in terms of the products and outcomes. He then asked his officers to use normal channels to produce the programmes in curriculum and assessment. In that process he had to go through the process of the consensus within education and there was no consensus for his view. We weren't given a clear steer when we were given our remit - there was no agenda handed down. Mr Forsyth may have been horrified to see this latitude! What it boiled down to was a statement that 'we want practical advice - now go and do it'. Ministerial thinking just did not figure in the group's week by week thinking and deliberation. We had an agenda driven by concern for children which was

⁶⁴ Interview with HMI No 1; Appendix Six

⁶⁵ Interview with Mr Gordon Gibson; Appendix Five

⁶⁶ Interview with Professor Gordon Wilson; Appendix One

quite genuine.”⁶⁷

This is a significant statement, because firstly it confirms that the educational policy community in fact took charge of the initiative and interpreted it in its own way, and secondly it adds to the impression that the same ‘mistakes’ which were made in England in terms of misinterpreting by those who wished to see the New Right thinking put wholeheartedly into action were also made in Scotland. For all that Mr Forsyth wished to promote a particular way of thinking about the curriculum and particularly on testing, which was a fundamental part of the strategy for raising standards, the way to set about the realisation of these aims was to change the consensus and not to attempt the implementation of policy through those who supported it. English reforms, such as the ability of schools to opt out of local authority control and adopt self-governing status; the adoption of curricular content by schools according to statutory obligations and the incorporation simply did not happen to nearly the same extent in Scotland as they did in England and Wales. As Professor Sally Brown comments:

“The most striking difference between the packages north and south of the border is the meagre and permissive Scottish legislation in comparison with England and Wales”⁶⁸

This statement applies not only to the legislation itself as evinced in the various policy statements, but also in the ways in which policy was enacted through the policy community into actual curricular and assessment proposals.

What then, may we conclude about the reform of curricular guidelines in England and in Scotland? Firstly, there is a common strand in the influence of New Right thinking. This was permeative in the formulation of Conservative education philosophy and policy in the nineteen eighties. There were two missionary ministers in the shape of Mr Baker and Mr Forsyth, intent on the spreading of this particular gospel. Secondly, there is another common strand in the spread to Scotland of what were perceived as

⁶⁷ Interview with Professor Bart McGettrick; Appendix Seven

⁶⁸ “The National Curriculum and Testing: Enlightened or Imported?”; Professor Sally Brown; Scottish Educational Review; 1990

essentially English features in the education system - there is ample evidence to support this. The question is; were the features so much English as simply New Right Conservatism? Thirdly, the policy communities who operated in the area of English language both north and south of the Border interpreted the policy directives and changed them according to the different situations which contextualised them. In England and Wales, neither Kingman nor Cox produced the reports which had been expected of them, and LINC continued as an underground movement in spite of the attempts to suppress it. In Scotland, the RDGs responsible for English language and Assessment were composed of personnel who represented the consensus and furthermore, were given no constraints to produce a particular kind of report - although as we shall see, there were perhaps hidden constraints which operated in terms of curriculum nonetheless. This occurred, too against a background of increasing politicisation of the Department itself, related by those who operated within it. However, it is in the freedom which operated in Scotland that the greatest contrast may be observed - there is no comparison to this south of the Border. The reasons for this may relate to conceptions of the professionalism of the teaching profession, and this will be investigated. It may relate also to the regard in which education in Scotland has been traditionally held, and to the contrasting disregard for ideas which were perceived as alien and imported. Or it may simply relate to an almost baffling political naivete on the part of Ministers, and there is some evidence to support this view. Mr Baker was not aware that Cox's views on language were not the same as his and were not going to produce the kind of report he wanted. Mr Forsyth used the "normal channels" to implement his new curriculum and assessment proposals, and in this decision - made either by him or perhaps for him - lay the inevitable result of a curriculum other than that which he wished to see for the teaching of English.

It will be the task of the subsequent chapters to examine the curricula themselves, and to evaluate them against certain criteria.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PEDAGOGY OF PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Analysis of national curricular guidelines in English language in the primary school

This chapter considers the guidelines, the artefacts produced as a result of the working through of the policy into curriculum process, in terms of their analysis against three indices. These three indices were defined in Chapter Two as orientation towards the needs of particular systems, towards the tenets of particular ideologies and towards particular views of language and how these might influence pedagogy when translated into the primary classroom. The guidelines to be scrutinised in this way will be, as defined in Section One, the 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language (1991) in the case of Scotland and the National Curriculum Orders (1990) in the case of England and Wales. Additionally, reference will be made to the Kingman and Cox reports, since these were the vital antecedents of the Orders, and assisted in the construction of the final form of the Orders themselves by the National Curriculum Council. Further, they constitute the officially sanctioned advice given to teachers on the teaching of English language. Such analysis will inevitably produce points of similarity, alignment and contrast between the two sets of guidelines.

The first two of these indices, dealing with the orientation of national curricular guidelines towards systems needs and towards particular ideological constraints, will be covered in this chapter. The remaining index, concerned with educational linguistics and how the insights derived from that discipline influence the pedagogical approaches implicit in the guidelines and orders, will be the subject of the following chapter.

Part One - The Needs of Systems

In analysing the needs of particular systems, one of the first tasks facing the researcher is to undertake the definition of what is meant by the term

'system'. Clearly one definition might be the macro-system as a whole; ie the entire system of education in England or in Scotland¹. There is, of course, a very real sense in which guidelines are produced for exactly this purpose, to meet the needs of exactly such a system, so that statements about the teaching of primary English language in the various subsets of that system might be made at a national or political level. Thus, it would be possible to articulate a statement to someone from overseas which is a description of how English language considerations operate in all the primary schools of England and Wales. This is in a sense the purpose of these guidelines, or indeed the Orders themselves: to draw together the ways in which schools should address the progression of this particular part of the National Curriculum or 5-14 Development programme.

Moreover there are, at this level, clear links to various policy communities, as defined in Chapter Three above. The major policy community is that which formulates policy at the macro-political level and which decides matters nationally. But it has also been identified that there are other policy communities at work who decide policy or interpret it in discrete areas - such as English language. A system can be either an extremely complex entity, or a monolithic structure which on the face of it is relatively simple, with clearly drawn lines of communication and responsibility. Such a monolithic system was perhaps to be found formerly in countries such as France and perhaps the Soviet Union.² Yet even within these unitary systems there were to be found nuances, flavours and interpretations of guidelines by individuals and groups of individuals. In the United Kingdom, the systems have been in these terms far from unitary or monolithic.³ In spite of what the Hillgate group or others might say, there has never existed such a thing as the British system of education. There are separate macrosystems in Scotland and in England; the National Curriculum has different emphases and even subjects to cater for the

¹ "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland"; 1987; is an example of documentation operative at this level.

² The process of change in highly centralised systems is described in, for example, "Curriculum Change in Eastern Europe" by Nigel Grant; in "The Curriculum; Context, Design and Development"; edited by Richard Hooper; The Open University Press; 1975

³ There are observable differences between Scotland and England in this respect, with the Scottish system often seen as more centralised than the English one. See, for example, McPherson and Raab,(1986) ; Hunter (1972); Barnard (1969) and Dent (1971)

needs of Wales, and in Northern Ireland there exists yet another version of the National Curriculum. So in these terms, the National Curriculum is not really 'national' at all. Prior to the Education Reform Act of 1988, there were even more layers and greater complexity in the system, in that local considerations loomed much more largely in curriculum design and there was not the imposition of a 'national' pattern other than perhaps the provision of general advice through documents such as Plowden and Bullock and advice from HMII. 4

However, it might be argued that even after the imposition of the National Curriculum and the cognate 5-14 Development Programme in Scotland there still exist a large number of interrelated subsystems within the national macro-system. These might be seen as including the level of local authority provision, including the role of LA advisory services; the training of teachers in universities, colleges and now increasingly schools; the primary schools themselves, whether as individual institutions or in groups or local clusters; and lastly the classroom world of the individual teachers. Within each primary school and perhaps too at all these other levels, there might be seen to exist a 'system' of the teaching of each subject or curricular area, including English language.⁵ Such systems will comprise the network of skills, knowledge, understandings, concepts of text and the repertoires of these which teachers and pupils experience and share in the teaching and learning of English.

For the purpose of this section of the study, however, it will be perhaps best to restrict discussion of the term 'system' to the macro-level, although cognisance will be taken of the other ways in which concepts of 'system' might operate within the realm of primary English language. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, discussion in the previous sections has been concerned with the macro-level, the national level. Concepts of ideology and policy and their relation to curriculum have been examined in these terms and it is therefore necessary to continue the debate thus in

4 cf "The Educational System of England and Wales"; H C Dent; 1971; Unibooks; Page 65 and ff

5 In some respects, these systems might be seen to relate to separate policy communities. See Chapter Three for description of how there might exist different policy communities for different areas.

order to obtain continuity of discussion and analysis. Secondly, national guidelines are precisely what they claim to be: curriculum guidance intended to be applied at national level: a unifying and guiding force for all primary (and secondary) schools. It is thus with regard to macro considerations that the analysis has to be conducted. And thirdly, language is in itself such an important and extensive field that it has to be examined as a national priority - the importance of English language to ideologues⁶ has already been pointed up. Thus, it is with the national macro-system that this section will be concerned.

The System in England and Wales

Mention of the National Curriculum and the concept of such a curriculum introduces consideration of the system as operative in England and Wales. Systems maintenance factors - such as the ability of the system to cope with the impact of innovation without serious dislocation - may be operative in the construction of national curricular guidelines. This is important because it may reveal the extent to which previous systems are continued, or whether in fact a 'clean break', or a new era is ushered in with the publication of a new set of Orders. In fact, the use of the term 'orders' will have to be subject to scrutiny since this in itself is an innovation: teachers in England and Wales had never hitherto been subject to a legally enforceable National Curriculum⁷ but were allowed to develop their own interpretation of the broad directions given by major reports and documentation such as Plowden, etc. This of course was subject to further modification in the light of Local Education Authority guidance and the development of local programmes. The consideration of this issue will be revisited in the section of this study which is concerned with aspects of teacher professionalism.

⁶ It is important to recognise that this term is intended to be read in a neutral sense, as a shorthand for those who are involved in the formulation and transmission of ideology. There is no sense in which it is intended to be pejorative.

⁷ Dent (op cit) points out that in England and Wales:

"In writing about control of education in England and Wales, it is necessary to say at the outset that there is all the difference in the world between the letter of the law and the way in which this is often interpreted in practice." The Educational System of England and Wales; Page 65.

The question might well be asked: to what extent do the new sets of guidelines relate to previous guidance issued by the government in terms of the publication of major landmark reports such as Plowden and Bullock, reports which had framed or circumscribed the teaching of English language in primary schools for a generation? In Chapter Four the transition from government policy to curriculum was examined, and this included consideration of the ways in which the ideologically driven stance of the original proposals and specifications were modified by the policy communities. Were these modifications simply to allow the system to perpetuate itself? Were they, in fact, a sort of systems maintenance in which the policy community sought to soften the impact of proposals and ideas which would not fit with the kind of teaching and approaches to teaching which had characterised the previous twenty or so years?

There is a real sense in which any set of curricular guidelines needs to be practical - that is, it needs to be operable by the schools and teachers for whom it is intended. If it is impractical, then it will fail, or at the least, alienate those who are charged with its implementation and therefore be less likely to succeed in terms of the quality of courses produced through it. Therefore, there is at once a conflict between what might be desirable in curricular terms from the point of view of the innovator and what is realistic and feasible. Some might well argue that one of the sources of angst in the teaching profession and in schools in England and Wales in the early nineteen nineties was exactly this tension between what was seen as ideologically desirable by policy formulators and what was feasible in terms of what the profession could accept: the ideologically desirable might well be that which is ultimately not feasible. The system has to maintain itself. If it does not do so, then it will collapse. In that sense, how do the Orders and the preceding reports help the system to maintain itself?

It is perhaps necessary at this point to distinguish between systems maintenance and the perpetuation of a set of ideas which were appropriate at one time, reflected the spirit of the age and which might not be so appropriate at another. Thus it could be contended that the era of the sixties and seventies with the emphasis of the liberal progressive 'doctrines' of child centredness and creativity were simply appropriate for

that era and were no longer so in the much more hard-headed eighties and nineties with the emphasis on the performance of schools and on the acquisition by pupils of discrete skills, amongst the most important of which is seen to be familiarity with and knowledge of 'correct' English grammatical usage. Systems maintenance does not imply simply the continuance of sets of ideas *ad infinitum*. What it does imply is the ability of the system to cope with innovation: to change and yet to remain coherent and cohesive with features which would be identifiable and recognisable by major systems users such as school teachers and parents. This might entail the retention of some aspects of a set of ideas but rejection of others in order to maintain stability sufficient for the system to continue to operate effectively.

To attempt to address some of these questions previously posed one has to look at the previous sets of guidelines, or in their absence, to accepted recommendations and advice and examine the extent to which there is major shift, either in emphasis or in substantial replacement of major components. Would the 1990 National Curriculum Orders be recognisable to a system user who had trained and been a classroom practitioner in the post-Bullock era? The response to that has to be a qualified 'yes'. There is no doubt that the filtering effect of the Kingman and Cox Reports, referred to in the previous section, had modified the initial thrust of the government's back-to-basics and traditional grammar stance. There is in these reports evidence of the continuance of a four-mode model of English language⁸, of process as well as content⁹, of an interactive model of teaching and learning¹⁰ and other features which are a common thread in Bullock and indeed Plowden. Yet there is clear evidence, too, of another agenda. There is, for example, the specification of targets which should be attained by children at a certain age and stage and which can be measured by assessment through Standardised Attainment Tasks. There is the grouping of these targets into specified attainment levels and the

⁸ 1990 Orders; "English in the National Curriculum" ; Page 23 etc

⁹ For example : "Through the Programmes of study, pupils should encounter a range of situations, audiences and activities which are designed to develop their competence, precision and confidence in speaking and listening, irrespective of their initial competence or home language" ;1990 Orders; Page 23

¹⁰ For example the role given to class and group discussion. 1990 Orders, Page 25, etc

specification of particular tasks. Further, there are Programmes of Study¹¹ which are designed to allow children to achieve these levels.

Perhaps it is in these last that the evidence is most clear of the intervention of the English language policy community. The teaching of formal traditional grammar does not bulk largely, although children are expected to be familiar with linguistic terms. But these terms are there to enable children to use and to describe language so that they might then have a better understanding of their own use of it. There is not an awareness of the decontextualised exercise, of the return of rote learning. It could therefore be contended that, in this sense, the National Curricular Orders of 1990 do in fact enable the system to maintain itself, and for continuity to be observed. The break, the deviation from past practice, is in the way in which there is specification and structure built into the guidelines. This is a form of standardisation in itself - a way of ensuring that the English language taught in Brent is the same as that taught in Buckfastleigh or in Byker - at least in terms of the concepts which are involved. And once that form of standardisation is established, there is the means of control in the future¹².

It must now be asked: what exactly are the needs of the system? Again, the response might well lie in the ideological or even the linguistic stance which is adopted by an individual. Thus, from the point of view of a reformer/traditionalist, the needs of the system might lie in a complete overhaul, with a reversion to the methods and standards which were perceived as having been achieved in former times. There is adequate evidence (eg Hillgate, Marenbon, Lawlor) to assume that this stance was adopted by some of those who were driving educational reform in the nineteen eighties. Other views of the needs of the system might be seen in terms of the practicability of reforms and in terms of the end products of curricula which would emerge from these reforms. Yet another aspect would be the relationship of developments in understandings about

¹¹ 1990 Orders, Page 21 and ff

¹² It should perhaps be noted here that Andrew Philp's view is that the English approach to the teaching of primary language was always much less centralised than that adopted in Scotland and that this situation was particularly the case during the nineteen sixties following upon the Schools Councils' Regional Boards pamphlet on English.

English language, such as genre theory or the theory of discourses, to the curricula which are being advocated, and this will be discussed later in this section. In any event, one group of system users whose views are crucial to the success of any system reforms are the end users of the curricular proposals - the teachers.

Access to the views of these may be obtained through a number of sources - contemporary publications, for example; and also the publications issued by interest groups. Perhaps one of the most respected of these is the journal 'English in Education', the academic organ of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE). Additionally, there are various house magazines and newsletters which deal with contemporary issues. These will be used as source material in the following discussion.¹³

The pre-eminence of Bullock and the Barnes/Britton view of language was very much a feature of thinking in the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties. James Britton, Harold Rosen and Nancy Martin founded the London Association for the Teaching of English and this quickly became the core of the National Association with the same personnel. There is no doubt that the Association heartily endorsed this view and recommended it to its members, at times with almost inordinate enthusiasm, as the best way in which to progress the language learning of children. In an article questioning the foundations of this view, Peim comments:

"NATE's preferred version of English remains thoroughly liberal and stands for values that are culturally and theoretically highly questionable and politically conservative, excluding social, cultural, political implications, excluding other versions of the subject. Theoretical choices and exclusions operate in the comfortable assertions of what are presented as 'truths' about the fundamental categories of English, and these accepted definitions deny alternatives and discount the institutional

¹³ It is necessary to state here that it is appreciated that the NATE view is not the only view which was widely discussed in contemporary publications. The Leavisite "literary" view is widely aired in "The Use of English". The reason for the basis of this argument on the NATE view is primarily that NATE is the organisation which most widely may be seen to represent the views of teachers as distinct from those with a specifically literary or linguistic interest.

constructions of the subject"¹⁴

Peim calls for a theoretical analysis, aware of the politics of discourses which will unmask these liberal pretensions, but he does not posit any particular counter view to challenge these assumptions. Rather, he is concerned with the bases upon which he sees the foundations of NATE thinking being constructed. A further insight into what that thinking is is revealed in the discursive framework to the debate which was current at the time when Kingman was published. This framework is revealed in a number of publications. In a symposium responding to Kingman, Jones, Ogle et al comment on such features as the relief felt by commentators when Kingman did not produce the reversion-to-Latinate-grammar script which was feared by many. Thus Jones:

"In these deeply threatening times I did welcome it because it has not called for a return to the sterile and discredited approaches to the teaching of English of the 1950s: clause analysis, parsing, grammar exercise..."¹⁵

Similarly, although there is criticism of the Report as a middle way, effectively a compromise between the extreme outlined above and the other extreme of "progressivism"; and although there is criticism of the model offered by Kingman on several grounds - lack of contextualisation in classroom reality, limitations in its references to multilingualism, etc, there is nevertheless welcome for the "lucid early premises" and for the fact that English teaching was not to be taken back to a recital model. One of the Committee, Richard Knott, offers interesting insights into its working :

"By June we were inescapably impaled upon a long list of 'contentious issues'. My own list included:

- How much of the Bullock Report are we still prepared to stand by?
- We should not ignore language acquisition and how children learn

¹⁴ "NATE and the Politics of English"; Nick Peim; English in Education, Volume 24 No 2; Summer 1990. Interestingly, Harold Rosen also saw Kingman as conservative and the progressive school as excluded in a political sense.

¹⁵ "Responses to Kingman - A Symposium"; Jones, Ogle et al; English in Education, Volume 22 No 3; Autumn 1988

-We must not be tempted to defer discussion of 'Benchmarks and Testing' until it's too late...

-We're not in danger of neglecting primary and nursery education are we? (We were!) "16

It should not at this point be forgotten that NATE itself was a major contributor to the written evidence received by Kingman. But the view is clear - Bullock was still in the background, and very largely looming. There were questions about the attention paid to primary and nursery education, and these were of a serious nature, since language acquisition was obviously a major issue. Therefore, NATE and its philosophy were well represented during the formation of the Kingman Report. And it was not ill received either: Chandler comments:

"There is so much that is good in the Kingman Report that it seems almost churlish to devote a whole article to criticism: the lure of a prescriptive model has been resisted; Latinate traditional grammar has been rejected; the emphasis throughout is on language in use; the call for a National Language Project is sensible and its eventual existence potentially indispensable;...."17

It would appear, therefore, that at the Kingman stage there was a qualified welcome for the English language proposals. Partly this was because the return to a former system (that of Latinate traditional grammar, requested by Kenneth Baker) had not in fact occurred and partly because teachers - at least those who could associate themselves with the NATE view - were able to identify with the model which had been put forward¹⁸ At this stage, systems concerns of maintenance were being met. But what would happen when Kingman was to become Cox and English to be taken forward into the National Curriculum Orders?

16 "Heart of Darkness: The Making of the Kingman Report"; Richard Knott; English in Education, Volume 22 No 3; Autumn 1988

17 "Unproductive Busywork"; Richard Chandler; English in Education, Volume 22 No 3, Autumn 1988

18 Philp comments that his impression at the Nottingham conference on Kingman was that teachers had only a rudimentary appreciation of the Kingman model and its significance. "Responding to Kingman"; Proceedings of a National Conference on the Kingman Report held at Nottingham University, Tuesday 21st June 1988.

Again, it would appear, there is a qualified welcome. Phillips and Shreeve comment:

"In the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for English 5-11 there are a significant number of proposals which reflect current good practice. The National Curriculum Council, which drafted these proposals for the Secretary of State, has clearly taken account of comments made by professional groups, and has incorporated many practical suggestions. As most teachers of English have for years been operating within a set of educational principles similar to those which seem to inform the Programmes of Study, they will have little difficulty in delivering this part of the National Curriculum"¹⁹

In this sense, then, it would appear that there was support for the way in which the proposals were perceived as practical and thus able to maintain the system. (However, Jones questions this perception of a consensual welcome for the National Curriculum, concerned that the National Curriculum becomes "an equal opportunity for all to be taught an unproblematised national culture and Standard English.")²⁰ There was less support for the idea of targets²¹, and less still for the idea of testing to see if they were achieved.²² This will be reviewed later in this section. However, reference was made earlier to the National Language Project, which as we have seen was given some support by commentators on Kingman. This was seen as a welcome form of systems support in that it was perceived as offering teachers worthwhile classroom referents when dealing with the vexed question of the teaching of English language. The collapse of LINC would have, in this sense caused dismay if the support for it was widespread, and the available literature seems to indicate that

¹⁹ Terry Phillips and Ann Shreeve; Editorial to English in Education, Volume 23 No 2; Summer 1989

²⁰ "Revolution and Restoration - A Critique of English in the National Curriculum"; Ken Jones; The English and Media Magazine; Summer 1991 Page 4

²¹ see, for example, "Ten Levels of Response"; Robert Protherough; English in Education, Volume 24 No 3; Autumn 1990. The view here is that there is insufficient research evidence to support what is seen as an arbitrary layering of progression, and that the stagings themselves are arbitrary and ultimately impractical.

²² see, for example, "Enough is Enough - The SATs Campaign"; J Marks; The English and Media Magazine; Autumn 1992

this was indeed the case; certainly amongst those who were close to the materials themselves.²³ Perhaps the greatest problem was that there were in the end too few who were sufficiently close and therefore able to comment in an informed way about their suppression or indeed their content and relevance to classroom needs, and therefore the literature is biased in that sense. What emerges is the fact that an important systems needs feature was taken out of the operative equation in that teachers were denied the opportunity to put the LINC materials into practice. Staff in schools were therefore denied the support offered by these materials.

In terms of systems considerations, therefore, it appears that after the intervention of various factors in Kingman and Cox, (described in Chapter Four) the proposals as they emerged did in fact contribute to the maintenance of the system. They were related to previous models of language and did not constitute a volte face. The Programmes of Study in English 5-11 were well, almost warmly, received. The principal areas of contention were the targets and the idea of targeting (described by Denis Lawton as 'reducing all subjects to a checklist of skills' ²⁴) which many found alien, and the concept of national testing to reinforce the targets. Overall, in systems terms from the users, the evidence suggests a qualified welcome. Perhaps more importantly, in terms of the pedagogy of primary English language, the processes of review and development in England and Wales did not suggest a volte-face, did not suggest that what teachers brought up in the post-Bullock era would have to rethink their pedagogy in markedly different ways. They faced the challenges of levels, targets and SATs, but the underlying fundamentals were recognisable to them and rooted in the developments which had characterised the previous two decades.

²³ For example, "How We Live Now"; Alastair West; *The English and Media Magazine*, Spring 1992; or "Unstable Materials - the LINC Story"; John Richmond; in the same publication. The Kingman debate is also covered in "Some Pawns for Kingman" Ronald Carter; *Applied Linguistics in Society*; *British Studies in Applied Linguistics* 3; Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research; 1988

²⁴ Denis Lawton, 1984, quoted in "The GCSE: Birth Strangled Babe?"; Don Salter; *English in Education*, Volume 20 No 3; Winter 1986

The system in Scotland

In the case of Scotland, there would appear to be perhaps a different thrust of development in systems terms. Nevertheless, examination of the systems requirements reveals that reforms were calculated to enable the system to continue to perform. The similarity in government agenda, the nuances in policy difference and the interpretation of policy by the policy communities responsible for the construction of the English language guidelines have already been described in previous sections of this study.

Further differences in the construction of the actual guidelines themselves in systems terms are likewise observable, and it is worth tracing these. Firstly, in Scotland it is quite clear that there was an agenda oriented towards systems maintenance concerns from the outset, as soon as the Review and Development Group embarked upon its task. Scotland had already undergone a fairly major overhaul of the examination and curricular systems at the S4 stage in terms of the implementation of the reforms which had followed the publication of the Munn and Dunning Reports. This had represented a building upon identified good practice and from the outset had involved the teaching profession in consultation, in piloting of the courses and assessment systems for the new Foundation Level at Standard Grade, and further had involved substantial teacher representation in the Joint Working Parties set up by the Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum and the Scottish Examination Board.

The author of this study was involved centrally in all of these stages, and later locally as a staff tutor to Renfrew Division of Strathclyde Regional Council in terms of the actual staff and course development leading up to the proposed first examinations in 1986. Although it is true to say that there were the inevitable pockets of resistance and that there were some who espoused the reforms in a half-hearted way, it is also true that there was an ultimate acceptance of them by the English teaching profession in general, and it seems that this espousal was in no small way due to the involvement of the teaching community. ²⁵

²⁵ Also commented upon in interview by Dr James McGonigal, Appendix Three

However, it should be noted here that what is being discussed is the content of the reforms, not the time scale or even the mechanisms of their implementation, which were much more contentious as Northcroft has pointed out.²⁶ Nevertheless, when the dust of Standard Grade finally settled, there was in place a unified national syllabus for Secondary English from ages 14-16, as the Munn Report had advocated. Further, it lay within a framework of unified national syllabi for other subjects, too. That the driver for this unification lay in the assessment procedures is another matter to which this section will return shortly.

In discussing the 5-14 proposals, it is clear that a major consideration in the deliberations of the RDG was an easy end-on articulation with the Standard Grade courses which were by the time of the RDG's operation, fully implemented throughout Scotland in the Phase One subjects, which included English. This was a major systems consideration. Clearly, a revised primary and S1-2 English language programme which then had to turn on its head in order to dovetail with the certificate courses which followed, would not maintain the system. This influence of Standard Grade is commented upon by a number of RDG interview respondents, including HMI No 1, Mr Robbie Robertson and Gordon Liddell. Liddell's observation is acute.

"The development of strands in the Group's thinking became inevitable because the key players in the group had been through Standard Grade where we had the purposes in language and they wished to produce a model which would be consonant with Standard Grade. There was a consciousness in HMI Jim Alison and in both NDOs that we needed to create a smooth system to link with Standard Grade. In this respect, the purposes at Standard Grade could be linked with the strands at 5-14. The basic aims were the same. They were different in kind, but they do translate easily."²⁷

This is in fact making quite a subtle point - that the model of language espoused in Standard Grade was that which the group wished to see

²⁶ "The Teaching of English in Scottish Secondary Schools 1940-1990; David J Northcroft; PhD Thesis, University of Stirling; May 1991; Page 277 and ff

²⁷ Interview with Gordon Liddell, Appendix Four

incorporated into the 5-14 National Guidelines. This model of language is described by Northcroft.²⁸ It owes much to the post-Bullock developments of the 1970s; is liberal in its nature; involves children in the rehearsal of skills and the use of contexts for learning and is much influenced by the Barnes-Britton based NCC Bulletins, and research in linguistics and the use of language by children²⁹. The point can therefore be sustained that in terms of the maintenance of the system, those responsible for the development of the National Guidelines in 5-14 English language clearly had considerations of practicality in mind. This is also borne out by the extent to which interview respondents - HMI No 1, Gordon Liddell, etc - point out the essentially practical nature of the proposals.

A further refinement of the systems maintenance argument in Scotland is the extent to which it was accepted that overhaul of the primary curriculum was necessary and perhaps even overdue. This may have been a tacit acceptance, but it was nevertheless one which was evident to members of the Review and Development Group. Robbie Robertson comments:

"What is really interesting... is that in Scotland the Government's vision received a broad degree of support. They correctly identified the mismatch between primary and secondary education. Essentially primary education is child centred and springs from a 19th century egalitarian view of education centred on cooperation and closeness. There are within the primary sector perhaps aspirations of power - Head Teachers for example may have this - but there is not the associated bureaucracy. In contrast, the secondary sector is based on what seems to me essentially a mediaeval view of education and epistemology - the idea that knowledge comes in chunks. This extends even to the managerial constructs with the idea of Principal Teachers in charge of the various chunks. Most in Scottish education agreed with this perception of a mismatch. The primary curriculum was largely undefined - it required to be focussed. This was widely acknowledged within even the primary sector in Scotland, even if at

²⁸ DJ Northcroft; op cit; Pages 244-314.

²⁹ Indeed, Northcroft comments that the SED Foundation Feasibility exercise involved precisely this kind of research carried out by the teachers in the first-line pilot schools: that teachers acted as researchers for the Department, exploring the extent to which programmes of study and work based on these fundamentals could be successful with children of lesser ability.

times this acknowledgement was implicit rather than explicit. Therefore there was a lot of support for the work of the RDGs and for the 5-14 programme in general within the education system." 30

This view of Robertson's is explicitly accepted too, by other members of the RDG, who, it must be recalled, were all interviewed separately and were not aware, unless told, of the response of other members. Thus, Gordon Liddell:

"I agree with Robbie Robertson when he says that the profession needed and indeed was ready for guidance of this kind and for a structure, and also with his view that this is part of the reason 5-14 has had a positive reception in general." 31

Further evidence of the contact between those responsible for the framing of the proposals and those responsible ultimately for their delivery comes from Gordon Gibson, National Development Officer (Primary):

"We visited the schools, and we saw a responsible group of teachers - teachers who were committed teachers. We also sent out drafts for a response from the teachers. For example, we had a group of infant teachers in Moray House for a day to get their perceptions of the management implications of what we were proposing. It was the same with the Programmes of study - all members of the Committee were bouncing them off the schools and colleagues. In this way we spoke to teachers and to groups of teachers all over Scotland. We took heed of realities and we did as much as was possible within the time scale which we were given. This business of letting teachers see the drafts resulted in the even tone of the document."32

The above suggests that in the Scottish situation there were at least three major system-oriented concerns which were met by the development process and by those involved in it. Firstly there was a concern to achieve

30 Interview with Robbie Robertson, SCCC; Appendix Two

31 Interview with Gordon Liddell, Appendix Four

32 Interview with Gordon Gibson, Appendix Five

an even articulation with previous developments which were in place and which appeared to have gained the approval of the profession. This extended not merely to physical arrangements but to the extension of the model of English language teaching which these previous developments had encapsulated - a model which was based on liberal concerns, was interactive in nature and largely child centred, founded on the language learning needs of the individual. Secondly, there was within the recipients of the guidelines, those responsible for making them operate, an acceptance - even an implicit one - that the revision which was being undertaken was necessary, and that there was a need for a structure enabling a more even articulation between the primary and secondary sectors to take place. In this respect, the task of the innovators was made perhaps that much easier. And thirdly, there was extensive consultation with the system at all levels, thus going as far as possible to ensure that the system's needs were met by the national guidelines which ensued from that consultative process. In these three vital respects, it is contended that there was in Scotland a far greater degree of integration of 5-14 into the existing way of doing things: that the National Guidelines in English Language achieved a greater closeness with the system and a greater empathy with it than the publication of the National Curriculum Orders in England and Wales, where ideological concerns may have bulked much more largely.

The Role of Assessment

When systems considerations are under review, it is well to bear in mind that one major driver in this respect is the role of assessment. Assessment goes hand in hand with curriculum. It is the means by which curriculum success or otherwise is measured, not just in terms of whether or not learners have achieved certain specific learning outcomes, but also through this, in terms of how well the system as a whole is functioning. In the way assessment links to curriculum, we may also have an insight into systems considerations. To exemplify this statement let us consider the following dichotomy. If a system contains assessment which drives the curriculum, then a situation may obtain where the assessment tail wags

the curricular dog. On the other hand, if the assessment is curriculum driven, then the curriculum dog wags the assessment tail - the basic comparison is between an assessment driven curriculum and curriculum driven assessment. This dichotomy is felt to be important by a number of commentators ³³ , because it can affect curriculum in a number of overt and more subtle ways. To exemplify this, scrutiny of the role of assessment with regard to curriculum in the two macro-systems is required.

In the system in England and Wales, it is possible to take the view that the Standardised Attainment Tasks (SATs) or National Tests form one of the drivers of the curriculum. This view is supported by Gipps and others³⁴ , and is entirely in line with the basic premises upon which the National Curriculum is founded and with the rationale that a national curriculum is required as part of a market-driven education system, in which the parent is consumer³⁵ . If the parent/customer is to make informed choices as to which parts of the market to patronise (eg which school to choose), then it is necessary for that parent to have information on the performance of schools in comparable activities. The SATs and the publication of their results provide that information. Thus, it is now possible to see a situation where the pedagogy of the teaching of primary language is driven, at least partially, by the need to prepare pupils to perform well in SATs. In terms of assessment, there is an important principle to be clarified here, and that is that the SATs represent the official means of assessment of performance in the National Curriculum: and that that assessment refers not only to pupils, but to the schools themselves³⁶ . These are important systems considerations, and ones which have to be held in mind. There are clearly implications for the natural and normal assessment of day to day work of the primary English language teacher in the national Guidelines³⁷, even

³³ For example, David Northcroft, op cit; Sally Brown; "The National Curriculum and Testing: Enlightened or Imported?" ; Scottish Educational Review, 1991

³⁴ Caroline Gipps, quoted in Brown, op cit.

³⁵ The requirement of a national curriculum is therefore twofold: to provide a basis of comparison between the performance of schools, and to assure the content which is taught by teachers.

³⁶ Richard Pring; "The New Curriculum"; Education Matters; Cassell Education 1989; Page 92 and ff

³⁷ For Example, "English 5-11"; DES 1988; Chapter 7, Page 30 and ff states "Assessment should be a continuous process which reinforces teaching and learning.... assessment should pay attention to the process as well as the product of the task.... etc" (Page 31)

though there is continued reference to targets and levels, but the fact is unalterable that this assessment is subsidiary to the influence of the SAT which therefore becomes a significant influence in the pedagogy of the primary school.³⁸

On the other hand, the situation in Scotland is different. There are for the teacher of English language in the Scottish primary school, effectively, three separate sets of guidance on assessment which are all labelled with the status of National Guidelines and which all form intrinsic parts of the 5-14 Development Programme. These sets of guidance are not intended, however to be either agglomerative or contradictory. They constitute different angles of approach to the concern of the assessment of the primary pupil in the language arts. In the first instance there are the National Guidelines on Assessment themselves³⁹. A previous chapter noted that there was no pressure on the Committee on Assessment 5-14 to produce a particular set of guidelines other than that which would constitute practical advice to teachers - and this, as Professor McGettrick, Convener of the Committee, notes in spite of the wishes of the Minister:

"Testing is... only one sort of evidence, and does not have the pre-eminence which perhaps the Minister wished it to have."⁴⁰

Likewise, Mrs Louise Hayward, National Development Officer on Assessment, adds

"National Testing had a comparatively low profile within the discussion of the Assessment Committee. There was a perception that the Committee on National Testing was where the standards debate would take place. In reality there were two debates. There were to us clear linkages between curriculum development, staff development and institutional development. That meant that if we wanted things to happen, to improve children's

³⁸ Further evidence of unease as to the nature and role of SATs is provided by "National Assessment: Complacency or Misinterpretation?"; Desmond Nuttall; in "The Education Reform Act: Choice and Control"; edited by Denis Lawton; Hodder & Stoughton Educational; 1989; Page 44 and ff.

³⁹ Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland. National Guidelines on Assessment 5-14; October 1991; SOED

⁴⁰ Interview with Professor Bart McGettrick, Appendix Seven

learning experiences, you simply couldn't tell teachers what to do without supporting them through the advice.... " 41

From these and other comments, there is clear evidence that the concerns in Scotland at the time of the construction of the 5-14 National Guidelines were related to children and to the centrality of their progress in school - with curriculum as the driver. The National Guidelines, as Mrs Hayward avers, were constructed to provide a framework within which primary school teachers could carry out a task which - the Committee was quick to recognise - 42 they were already performing thoroughly and with competence - even if they (the teachers) could not admit that.

The second source of assessment advice available to the primary teacher of English language in Scotland is the assessment section of the National Guidelines 5-14 in English Language⁴³. This fits in to the general pattern of assessment advice by providing the technical information discrete to the discipline of English language teaching, which teachers require to carry out effective assessment in the subject or more accurately, curricular area. Given the framework of Planning, Teaching, Recording, Reporting and Evaluating, the National Guidelines are designed to provide specific advice on how to see some - but not all - of these processes through within the context of the subject area. One of the principal exceptions is the role of Reporting, which is subject to a separate set of National Guidelines, related to the others, plus a package of specific support materials in this area.

It is only within this context, in fact, that the third element in the assessment guidelines in Scotland comes in to play. This is the element of National Testing⁴⁴ - but even here there is a different emphasis from that in England. Whereas in England and Wales the term Standardised Attainment Tasks is used to describe exactly that, in Scotland the purpose of the National Tests is to set the teacher's judgement of the pupil, which

41 Interview with Louise Hayward, Appendix Ten

42 see Interview with Louise Hayward, Appendix Ten

43 Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland; National Guidelines on English Language; June 1991; Page 60 and ff; SOED

44 Assessment 5-14; Guide to National Testing in Primary Schools

has primacy, against the benchmark of the national standard for any particular level. Teachers in primary schools choose test materials in reading and writing only from catalogues of materials which themselves are designed by practising teachers to replicate good classroom practice. The National Test confirms the teacher's judgement that a pupil is operating at a particular level within the 5-14 framework, and is only administered when the teacher feels that the progress of the pupil concerned indicates that the pupil has consistently achieved that level in class work. This different emphasis, together with the centrality of the child in the assessment framework suggests that in Scotland there is a distinct perception of the curriculum as the driver of assessment and that assessment is the servant of curricular concerns in contrast with the situation in England where the SATs become a major driver in dictating the curriculum.⁴⁵

These are important concerns for the systems in macro terms and in terms of how the systems operate at the level of individual institutions, because they may say much about the pedagogy of the teaching of English language in primary schools. There is a world of difference between a curriculum which is constructed with one eye on success in the test, and another which is constructed in such a way as to build in assessment as an integrated and perhaps even integrative, part of the educative process. Orders and National Guidelines play an important part in deciding which model operates in a system and therefore in how teachers view and construct the experiences which they offer to their pupils.

⁴⁵ However, it is worth recording at this stage the view of HMI NO 2:

“Some view the language document as not being assessment led. For example, the Programmes of study might lead you to that conclusion. But my view is that it IS assessment led, certainly in its perception. Perhaps it is down to the speed with which the initiative had to be got into place. Assessment moves curriculum development faster. There may have been political points concerned with an early publication of the document, and therefore an earlier implementation”

Part Two - Concerns of Ideology

The second index of analysis of the national guidelines or orders in England and Wales and in Scotland is that of ideology, and whether or not a principal driver of the construction of these guidelines was ideological concerns. The relationship between ideology and policy has already been discussed in this study, in Chapter Three. The difference here is that what is under discussion is not the process by which a particular ideology penetrates curriculum or is modified by the policy communities into a form which is more acceptable to these communities, but rather the extent to which these ideological concerns have actually manifested themselves in terms of what is intended to happen in the schools after the process of policy into national curriculum has been completed. In order to gain access to these ideological concerns, two tasks require to be undertaken. Firstly, it is necessary to identify and isolate these ideological concerns and to describe them. Secondly, it is necessary to look closely at the actual curriculum documents which specify the teaching which schools have to implement and to ascertain the degree of penetration of these ideological concerns. In terms of the 1991 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language in the case of Scotland and the 1990 National Curriculum Orders for English in the case of England, the prevailing ideology - at least in the political process which directly brought these documents about - was that of the New Right and the ensuing debate about standards in schools. However, elements of liberal-progressive ideology have also been observed - for example in Part One of the current section - and where these can be identified in similar terms, they will be offered for comment.

Chapter Three examined the basis of the New Right thinking on English Language in terms of the discussion of documents such as those by Marenbon and Lawlor. In this examination, basic principles began to emerge. However, these documents, although of great importance in the construction of the New Right position on English in schools, are by no means the only articulations of right wing thinking on the teaching of English. In describing his view of the genesis of the educational changes under review, HMI No 1 says, in reply to a question about the

Government's view of the teaching of English language:

"This (*the view*) can be found in the Palmer lecture by Kenneth Baker in 1986..... Also of importance were essays in the Spectator in the 1980s by PJ Kavanagh (replied to by Anthony Adams), Ferdinand Mount and Valerie Grove, and similar journalism in the Telegraph. These voiced the right wing concern about falling standards and the need to put this right..... They regarded the Bullock Report as the start of the rot."⁴⁶

In fact, concern about standards in education and the perceived evils of permissiveness can be found earlier than the Palmer Lecture. David Jackson quotes Norman Tebbit thus:

"The permissives scorned traditional standards. Bad art was as good as good art. Grammar and spelling were no longer important. To be clean was no better than to be filthy. Good manners were no better than bad...."⁴⁷

It would also appear to be useful to examine these keynote articles, and this will be done in chronological order. The first is that by Grove, entitled "From Grammar to Glamour."⁴⁸ This appeared in August 1986, therefore in the period leading up to the publication of the Education Reform Act and while questions of standards were under review. In this article, Grove deplores the perceived fall in standards, giving examples of pupils' work to illustrate this. The evidence is largely anecdotal, certainly not research-based. It is a perception, a gut feeling that things have got worse and that somehow or other we have to get back to the situation which obtained in former days. Grove calls, quite unequivocally, for a return to traditional, Latin based teaching of English. This is the prescription required to put the mess to rights. Speech is marginally relevant and the concentration of English teaching should be on the forms of written expression.

Ferdinand Mount is a kindred spirit. Commenting on the publication of the Kingman Report, Mount sees that

⁴⁶ Interview with HMI No 1, Appendix Six.

⁴⁷ Norman Tebbit, Disraeli Lecture of 14th November 1985; quoted in "School based Enquiry and Teacher Appraisal"; David Jackson; English in Education; Volume 20 No 3; Winter 1986.

⁴⁸ "From Grammar to Glamour": Valerie Grove; The Spectator, August 30 1986.

“The report rehabilitates and revives, in the most uncompromising and irrefutable fashion, the rigorous study of formal, correct, Standard English. It is the grammarian’s resurrection.”⁴⁹

One wonders quite how Mount manages to avoid reading the statement on Page 3 of Kingman that the Committee did not see its task as

“to plead for a return to old-fashioned grammar teaching and learning by rote”⁵⁰

Mount sees the Kingman model as “unashamedly prescriptive”: this in spite of Kingman’s own assertion that

“We have recognised the concerns, expressed in much of the evidence that a detailed and prescriptive model could constrain the scope of the experiences of language to which pupils would be exposed, and the freedom to experiment and to adapt teaching to the needs of particular classes and individuals. This freedom is, in our opinion, essential for the practice and development of the teaching of English”.⁵¹

Bullock is selectively dealt with and comprehensively rubbished. Kingman is seen as the salvation of the profession because of the concentration which is unquestionably there, on the need to teach Standard English forms. What is forgotten is that Kingman saw these as an essential part of a pupil’s linguistic repertoire, and as complementing rather than entirely replacing, other more dialectal - or bilingual - forms . PJ Kavanagh, one of the Kingman Committee, sees the report, in its concentration on targets, levels and the importance of testing, as bringing back much needed structure; and identifies its strengths as principally in these terms.

From the writings by Marenbon, Lawlor, Grove, Mount and Kavanagh, it is therefore possible to tease out the principal concerns of the right wing

⁴⁹ “The Grammarian’s Resurrection”; Ferdinand Mount; The Spectator, April 30th, 1988

⁵⁰ Kingman Report, 1988, Page 3, Paragraph 11

⁵¹ Kingman Report, 1988, Page 4, Paragraph 15

ideologues where the teaching of English is concerned. These may be seen as

- The need for a return to the teaching of formal, traditional Latinate grammar
- The need for children to learn the forms of Standard English and for a concentration to be made upon these by the teacher
- The need to teach specific texts and to adopt particular concepts of text in order to impart cultural concerns to the learners
- The need for structure in progress and for testing to validate the teaching undertaken within that structure.

It now will be the task of this chapter to evaluate the extent to which these concerns have penetrated the Guidelines and orders and therefore the extent to which they will impinge upon the pedagogy of primary English language.

The National Curriculum in England and Wales

In discussion of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, it is necessary to repeat the dual nature of this entity as far as English Language is concerned: the first element being the Cox Report and the second the National Curriculum Orders of 1990. In terms of the ideological concerns above, it is perhaps fair to say that some were imposed on the Committee with its remit. For example, the concerns about structure were articulated in the requirement that the Committee should come up with the goods as far as the objectives of the National Curriculum in English were concerned and in terms of the Programmes of Study.⁵² It is also worth noting that Cox was obliged in Paragraph 7 of his Remit, to take account of the framework for national testing under construction by the Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) at that same time. Thus, New Right

⁵² "English for Ages 5-11"; (The first Cox Report); DES; November 1988; Page 66

concerns about lack of structure in the curriculum as a whole were being addressed by the Remit which was imposed upon the Committee charged with the development of English Language. Standard English was also given a chapter by Cox, and the view of the Committee was that Standard English was an entitlement to children; that is, that they should not be jeopardised in life, employment and social situations by not being able to employ standard English forms with success.

In this respect, Cox is concerned with the entitlement curriculum, and thus aligned with one strand of thinking espoused by the New Right in this area. But Cox was a language specialist, and as was noted earlier, his committee also included from September 1988 the distinguished Manchester linguist, Katharine Perera. Therefore, it is only natural that the connections between Standard and non-standard forms are explored and the whole area of repertoires in speech and writing would be opened up. Likewise, the relationship between language and social class is discussed, and the conclusion is that schools have a responsibility to allow children to access Standard English forms, but that regional, dialectal and cultural variants should not be denigrated by teachers.⁵³ The result is that the hard-line insistence on Standard forms for all, as articulated in the ideological approach of the New Right, is modified to a great extent and the curricula offered to children is much more humane.

Similarly with concerns about linguistic terminology. Cox recognised⁵⁴ that a lot of the press concern with lack of knowledge about language by pupils and teachers was no more than mythological. The Committee argued that terminology was essential if pupils were to be equipped with the critical tools to enable them to describe language and to understand the language which they themselves were using. They further argued that it was necessary for this language to be taught in a systematic way, accepting the view of Kingman. But they did not recommend a wholesale return to formal traditional grammar, and the forms found in clause analysis and parsing and which are insisted upon by some New Right analysts are not a feature of the report. At the end of the section on

⁵³ "English for Ages 5-11" Pages 13-15; op cit

⁵⁴ "English for Ages 5-11, Page 17; op cit

linguistic terminology, the Cox Committee was concerned that

“...teachers themselves know enough about language to use this knowledge confidently, and not to reduce knowledge about language to the mechanical teaching of terminology”⁵⁵

The implications of this statement for the training of teachers are recognised, but it is clear that Cox had faith in the profession on this point.

In terms of the argument that the teaching of English should transmit the culture, or perhaps more truly, a vision of what the culture⁵⁶ might be, Cox offers a list of authors who the Committee felt would enable children to grow through the enjoyment of literature and at the same time, develop as readers. It is an eclectic list⁵⁷, and by no means one which would be recognised instantly by the “visions of greatness” school of thought, although there are unquestionably “great authors” such as Dickens, CS Lewis and Hans Christian Andersen included. But so are Michael Bond and Roald Dahl, Roger McGough and Arthur C Clarke. There is a sense of roundness, with all tastes represented, rather than a particular prescription aimed at transmitting any particular view of the culture to the exclusion or denigration of others

The situation in the 1990 National Curriculum Orders in England and Wales, which developed from Cox, is that there would appear to be an uneven coverage with regard to these concerns of ideology. Firstly, there is a four mode model of language posited, not a concentration on reading and writing skills alone. Due regard is had to speaking and listening, although these two modes are conflated into one section. The statements of attainment for oral skills are interesting in that they do not see Standard English becoming an automatic feature of speaking and listening until

⁵⁵ “English for Ages 5-11” Page 26; op cit.

⁵⁶ There is, as Peter Griffith points out on Page 9 of “English at the Core - Dialogue and Power in English Teaching”; Open University Press, 1992; a tradition of this view that English literature of perceived quality should be used to improve the thinking of English pupils which stretches back to the Newbolt Report of 1921

⁵⁷ See “Cox on Cox”; Page 68 and ff for the rationale for the selection of the texts.

Level 7.⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, the phrase “where appropriate” is used, thus recognising that there might be situations where Standard English is inappropriate. In writing, the use of Standard English is a feature from Level 4, where pupils should

“begin to use the structures of written Standard English and begin to use sentence structures different from those of speech”⁵⁹

Again lip-service, at least, is paid to the sense of language growth developing from the pupil’s own language, and the use of standard forms becoming a taught feature - assuming, of course, that the pupil is not using these forms in the first place. An interesting feature, in terms of the ideological approaches described above is the target at Level 5, for pupils to be able to

“Show in discussion the ability to recognise variations in vocabulary according to purpose, topic and audience and whether language is spoken or written, and use them appropriately in their writing.”⁶⁰

This could almost have come from one of the 1970s Schools Council leaflets or from “Language in Use”. It certainly owes little to New Right dogma and a great deal to the kinds of things which were being said by such progressives as Barnes, Britton or Nancy Martin. However, one feature which would not have been so recognised is the separation of Spelling into a separate Attainment Target from Writing. This is an attempt to point up the importance of what was described by Bullock as a ‘surface feature’ and therefore, this would be recognised by the ideologues of the political right as a move in the right direction.⁶¹

The acceptability of the Programmes of Study to teachers brought up in the tradition of Bullock, and the views of language enshrined in that report,

⁵⁸ English in the National Curriculum, Attainment Target 1; Speaking and Listening; Page 3 (DES 1990)

⁵⁹ English in the National Curriculum, op cit; Page 13

⁶⁰ English in the National Curriculum, op cit, Page 13

⁶¹ There is some attention given to knowledge about grammar, but in a discovery mode, learning elements of clause structure, particularly where Bruner is quoted, saying that pupils must come to see abstractions for themselves.

has been documented. What is obvious from an examination of these Programmes is that there is no sense of a return to traditional grammar, but rather the use of language in context and an understanding being given to children of how language operates in different situations. However, the right-wing concern for structure is manifest in the classification of English into Attainment Targets, Levels and Statements of Attainment within these Levels. Nevertheless, this is a generic feature of the National Curriculum, and not one which is unique to English. The influence of Sir Keith Joseph in the movement towards such Statements of Attainment is well documented and supported by the interview with HMI No 162. Nevertheless, this feature of a much greater degree of structure and frameworking than had ever been the case previously in the curriculum in the primary school in England and Wales was one which in many ways was alien to the perceived prevailing ethos of progressive liberalism⁶³ in English primary education. It owes a great deal to right wing ideology (although it also reflects some aspects of behaviourist theory) and it has been perhaps the greatest success of that ideology in the penetration of the national provision for the teaching of the primary curriculum in England and Wales.

The 5-14 Development Programme in Scotland.

In Scotland, as has been outlined previously, there was a different approach to the development of the curriculum, much less oriented towards the big bang reports and much more evolutionary in its nature. This process of gradual evolution was, as we have seen and as Boyd⁶⁴ has shown, interrupted by the alignment if not identification of the 5-14 Development programme with the Education Reform Act and with the Development of the National Curriculum in England and Wales. But the principle of *festina lente* does not seem to have been unduly disturbed in the English language Review and Development Group. We have observed the way in which due regard was taken to this process of evolution in the

⁶² Interview with HMI No 1, Appendix Six.

⁶³ see "The Primary Curriculum"; Geva M Blenkin and AV Kelly; Harper and Row 1981; Chapter 1, Pages 15- 37

⁶⁴ "Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom"; Brian Boyd, op cit

SED submission to Kingman, and how there was concern to link in the new development programme to existing reforms at Standard Grade. In some respects, there was the same cautiousness over the incorporation of ideological concerns in the new English language programmes. Some features which would be welcomed by the ideologues⁶⁵ are unquestionably present: but as it is hoped will be shown, these were not incorporated as a sop to politicians, but rather for other reasons - much more practical reasons - altogether.

In this respect, It is proposed to deal with each of the principal New Right ideological concerns in turn. Firstly, there is the desire for a return to the teaching of traditional grammar, and for pupils to be able to recognise the traditional Latin-derived terms of linguistic description. There is no doubt that these terms figure in the 5-14 National Guidelines in English language, and that they principally figure in the Attainment Outcome of Writing.⁶⁶ Thus, we find that in the strand of Knowledge About Language, children operating at Level C should be aware of the difference between a noun and a verb; that adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and conjunctions should be familiar to those operating at Level D, and the major sentence components of subject , predicate and apostrophe (in the sense of punctuation marker or declamation?) should be known to those at Level E.⁶⁷ A child entering an S2 class should in theory, if operating at the appropriate stage and Level, have a fairly sound command of the parts of speech in Latinate terms. A similar etiology of development may be found in Reading, where by Level E some terms of rhetoric such as simile and metaphor should be known⁶⁸ . The knowledge of these terms is prefixed by a statement that children should be able to show that they know, understand and can use the appropriate terminology where that terminology is introduced.

⁶⁵ See earlier footnote concerning the neutral use of this term.

⁶⁶ At this point it is perhaps useful to clarify terminology. In the National Curriculum 1990 Orders, what might be called a MODE of language (eg Writing, Speaking) is termed An Attainment Target. In 5-14 It is known as an Attainment Outcome. The specified performance at each Level in the National Curriculum is known as a Statement of Attainment; whereas in 5-14 it is known as an Attainment Target. This confusion and indeed proliferation of terminology makes analysis of the guidelines less easy than perhaps it might otherwise be.

⁶⁷ 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language, Pages 18 and 19

⁶⁸ 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language, Pages 16-17

On the face of it, then, there would in Scotland appear to be a greater reversion to the kind of Latinate approach to the teaching of English language than is the case in England and Wales. Is this then evidence of the Review and Development Group taking on board the concerns of the New Right expressed through the Minister of State for Education at the Scottish Office, and in fact positing the return of traditional grammar? The evidence suggests otherwise. Firstly, there is the evidence of the document itself. There are clear and unequivocal statements about the kind of English which is to be taught and the models of teaching which are seen as most desirable. These are articulated in the Aims, in the Rationale; in the Purposes and Conclusion; and in the Programmes of Study. What is in fact offered is the process model, a humane, fairly liberal vision of the ways in which English should be learned through the sharing of experience, through the growth of the individual provided in Reading, through the rehearsal of skills learned. There are few signs of a return to a traditional view of the decontextualised learning of English, to exercises and drills. The view of English in the Guidelines would not be one which would be unrecognisable to the authors of the Primary Memorandum of 1965 or indeed to the authors of the Scottish Central Committee on English *Bulletins*. Why, then, it may be asked, is the terminology associated with the traditional vision of the teaching of English language used at all?

The answer is found in the way in which the RDG went about its task. Firstly, its remit was different from Cox's. Instead of being asked to prepare programmes to a tight specification, it was asked to

“Review and build upon existing curriculum guidance prepared under the auspices of CCC, COPE, COVE, SCOLA, CCC English, RJW (Standard Grade), by HM Inspectorate, education authorities and other bodies in and outwith Scotland”.⁶⁹

Further, the Remit continued, it was enjoined to produce ‘advice’ and ‘guidelines’ which would ‘assist’ teachers. The language here is not that of

⁶⁹ RDG 1 Remit issued by CASC.

prescription or compulsion, but very much that of the recognition of the good work which had been done, and the desire to ensure the continuity which had been attained over the preceding years. This sense of producing guidelines, not orders, was firm in the minds of the Review and Development Group. For example, the Convener states

“5-14 was seen as an entirely different initiative from the development of the National Curriculum. It was quite separate from the National Curriculum. For a start, we were designing guidelines - not a set of orders which would be legally enforceable. We were happy with that situation. More than that, we were conscious that there was professional support for what we were doing and for the proposals when they emerged.”⁷⁰

The use of this professional support in terms of the continuity needed by the system has already been pointed up. So how does this connect with the employment of a Latinate, traditional terminology in the Strand on Knowledge about Language? The answer lies in the fact that this was the terminology with which Scottish teachers were most familiar and which they were employing in their classrooms. Thus, Gordon Liddell;

“We had difficulty in deciding about the Knowledge about Language strand. Questions were asked like; What terminology would we use? Would we include parts of speech? Would we use older terms? Would we go for the subject - verb - object approach? Or on the other hand would we go for one or possibly a combination of more than one of the new ways such as scale-category grammar? In the end the old terms were used simply because they were familiar.

I was not aware of any Government pressure on Knowledge about Language. It was not a giveaway in exchange for something else except, perhaps, in the presence of the strand itself. We accepted that we could not win that particular battle. Part of our remit instructed us to identify and use best practice, and so we went out to do that. The problem was that what we encountered out there used only the old traditional terms - we

⁷⁰ Interview with Professor Gordon Wilson, Appendix One

were not aware of anybody using the new terminology.”⁷¹

This is amplified by Gordon Gibson, the National Development Officer, with responsibility for the Primary Sector:

“The Knowledge about Language strand really only says that there are certain metalinguistic terms which children should learn to use. Examples of these are ‘word’, ‘letter’. The Latinate terms are used in this metalinguistic way. Metalinguistics are seen as an important part of learning about language and how to use it. There is a political dimension in the language awareness approach - it is seen as contrary to ‘real’ grammar. I believe there is a sense of this in England. We had a feeling that Knowledge about Language would be a good thing: but the list of terms is arbitrary. We drew upon other parts of the document but tried to avoid a sense of projection towards grammar exercises.”^{72 73}

Thus, it would appear that the use of Latinate terms is in fact a further piece of evidence of systems maintenance - of the RDG not wishing to introduce new and alien terms - because the evidence that they had (and it must be recalled that they consulted widely with teachers and visited schools) suggested that the Latinate terms were the ones most widely in use. There is no sense in which a return to traditional methods is being advocated by the presence of these terms - which are to be used in any event in a metalinguistic rather than a decontextualised context. A return to traditional methods appears to have been specifically rejected by the Group. The fact that the development officers found that the Latinate terms were still in use in schools in Scotland some fifteen years after Bullock is in itself intriguing - and would appear to refute the assertions made by Marenbon that teachers would have to be retrained in the older terminology because of their apparent unfamiliarity with it. A fascinating glimpse of the reasons for this conservatism is provided by Robbie

⁷¹ Interview with Gordon Liddell, Appendix Four

⁷² Interview with Gordon Gibson, Appendix Five

⁷³ It is worthy of note that although both NDOs were interviewed separately about this matter and neither was aware of what the other had said to the interviewer, there was unanimity about the presence of traditional terms in Scottish schools. However, Andrew Philp does not agree with the NDOs, and sees a situation where teachers are unaware of grammatical terms to any marked degree.

Robertson:

“I don’t think that Knowledge about Language was a reversion to older Latinate terminology simply in order to provide a base for consideration in this area - to give a shorthand which teachers could use to fill a vacuum. I think it is a much older thing than that. I think it really goes back to an 18th century view that the only worthy descriptors were Graeco Latin in origin. It’s really a precursor to the evolution of English - another discourse thing.”⁷⁴

Perhaps that comment by Robbie Robertson ties the two strands together . Scottish teachers clung to the Latinate terms because of a reluctance to part with elements of their courses which they thought valuable - the need for children to be equipped with the necessary tools to describe and to use language, and, in the absence of any other equipment of which they were aware which might be thought to be superior for this task, the clinging on to the use of the traditional terms which had an impeccable pedigree rooted in the Scottish Enlightenment. On the other hand, the ideologues of the New Right clung to the same terminology, but for entirely different reasons - because they were concerned with a context of class and control and structure, suggested earlier. But the nexus of these two strands, the use of the same terms for different reasons, is fascinating in itself.

The second element of the New Right vision of the teaching of English language was the need to have Standard English forms taught in schools. Curiously this does not appear ever to have been a major feature of the deliberations of the 5-14 Review and Development Group. Did the prescription for “British” education announced by Marenbon, Lawlor and the Hillgate group not therefore extend to the north of the kingdom? Robbie Robertson comments:

“Knowledge about Language was a key aspect ... but there was no pressure or directive on Standard English as there was in England and Wales.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Interview with Robbie Robertson; Appendix Two

⁷⁵ Interview with Robbie Robertson, Appendix Two.

This is amplified by Gordon Liddell:

“In terms of the fact that we did not have to give priority to the teaching of Standard English, but were able to view it as one of a number of repertoires which Scottish children might use, the theoretical position on which we based our proposals resulted from research into bilingualism. This research suggests firstly that if you want to promote Standard English within a dialect area you do this by promoting both together so that you can contrast the two and increase understanding through this comparison.... Cox influenced the committee on this and other matters. The RDG felt that Cox reinforced their positions and drew strength from this.”⁷⁶

This awareness of the dual nature of Standard English and dialect forms as equally admissible has percolated through to the national guidelines themselves, but strangely enough only in Listening, where at Level D pupils should be able to distinguish between Standard and dialectal forms.⁷⁷ What seems to be given much more prominence in the Guidelines is the place of Scottish culture⁷⁸, and that is linked to the next discussion on the vision of culture which the ideologues desired to see taught in schools. Certainly there was a separate section devoted to the advancement of Scottish - as opposed to the vision of “British” culture advanced by the New Right, and this view of its importance was shared by the RDG. But the link to Standard English and the awareness of the background was also there. Gordon Wilson comments:

“We had no difficulty about our recommendations that Standard English was part of the repertoire of a child, and that that repertoire should include Scots accent and dialect. There was a consensus within the group on this. We took the view that competence on Standard English was an entitlement for children and we wanted to set this beside Scots - we wanted to support Scots but not to go too far. If we had done that we could easily have become embroiled in debates about what constituted Scots,

⁷⁶ Interview with Gordon Liddell, Appendix Four.

⁷⁷ National Guidelines 5-14 English Language, Page 13

⁷⁸ National Guidelines, op cit, Pages 67-8

what kind of Scots to teach and learn and how it should be taught. I think in this respect we went as far as we could. There were consensus views about Scots but in no way was there external pressure on us either to play the Scottish card.”^{79 80}

It seems then that the RDG took the Kingman line of the entitlement curriculum in terms of Standard English, but that there was no requirement of them to do so. Thus, the New Right concern about correctness in spoken English, about the use of standard forms again surfaces, but this time as part of a contextualisation about the various repertoires of speech, and in consideration of aspects of Scottish culture.

To revert to the culture debate, there is no sense of textual prescription in the guidelines whatever. There are no lists of authors who might be included, eclectic or otherwise, in terms of the reading to be undertaken by children at whatever stage. Indeed, the only pronouncements on cultural matters which appear are those concerned with Scottish culture and a short section on cultural and linguistic diversity⁸¹ which recognises the multi ethnic backgrounds of many schools and the different languages spoken by their pupils. Thus there is no sense at all in which the New Right concern with the promotion of “British” culture⁸² or the exposure of pupils to texts which convey the vision of greatness has percolated through the ideology-policy-curriculum filter as far as Scotland is concerned. Rather, the guidelines are concerned with pedagogical constraints and appear to leave matters of culture to the individual teacher and her sensitivity to the needs of her pupils in this respect.

The final concern of the New Right was for structure in the curriculum⁸³ , and the structure was presented to the RDG, as to the Cox Committee, as a given feature:

⁷⁹ Interview with Professor Gordon Wilson, Appendix One.

⁸⁰ The sometimes uneasy relationship between Scots and English - including the question of whether Scots is a corrupt version of English - is addressed by “Towards a Trilingual Scotland”; Professor Magnus Fladmark; ‘The Speak’ Journal of the Scottish Association for the Teaching of English; Issue 2, October 1995 .

⁸¹ National Guidelines, op cit, Page 59.

⁸² For example, Hillgate, 1987; op cit; Marenbon 1987; op cit

⁸³ Marenbon 1987; op cit; Lawlor 1988; op cit

“..within such guidelines specify the aims and objectives of study with knowledge and skills to be covered, and advise on the progressive levels of attainment in relation to these, which children may be expected to achieve within the 5-14 years..”⁸⁴

Further, members of the group have commented on the fact that the profession in Scotland seemed to be ready for such structure, and were prepared to welcome the idea of a specification of what should be covered in the primary and secondary sectors. Robbie Robertson and Gordon Wilson’s comments on these aspects have already been discussed. Initially, it appears, there were some misgivings within the group about this kind of structure. Gordon Gibson adds

“There were some difficulties - with the Attainment Targets for example - and these were difficult issues. They were a focus for awkwardness. The RDG was not happy at this stage with the remit. It wanted a map of attainment but balked at the tie to age and stage. Other parts of the remit lacked clarity...”⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there was a perceived need for structure and a balance within the primary curriculum, and this extended to each subject. It was particularly true in the case of primary and secondary school considerations, where the primary sector had never had, or been used to, the kind of structured advice which secondary colleagues had become used to through Standard Grade. Whether or not the advice which was in fact received was what the teachers were looking for is another matter and one which will doubtless be the subject of further research. The comment of HMI No 2 on this area is, however, quite illuminating:

“Why did 5-14 go the way they did? Was that degree of detail thought necessary for primary teachers? Is a person who is not secure about language better with a great deal of detail or not? I have talked with hundreds of primary teachers who see these lists as a forest. It is not

⁸⁴ RDG1 Remit from CASC

⁸⁵ Interview with Gordon Gibson, Appendix Five

intellectually sound to look at writing in this broken-up way: certainly Andrew Stibbs did not. I have doubts as to whether all primary teachers will assess using the targets in this way. I have the impression that the degree of detail causes worry in primary schools”.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, it would appear to be the case that the structures, coming from the SOED Remit through CASC, were imposed and were perhaps the filtering down through the policy into curriculum process of these New Right concerns with structure in the curriculum. They would certainly appear to have more to do with the views of say, Sir Keith Joseph than with the thinking of SCOLA or the SCCC on these matters. They are not, however, used to drive the kind of ideologically rooted curriculum which is espoused by Hillgate, Marenbon and Lawlor, but to provide a structured framework for the development of language skills in a post-Bullock way. In Scotland at least, the effects of the ideologically driven curriculum were to a very large extent, ultimately mitigated.

⁸⁶ Interview with HMI No 2; Appendix Nine

CHAPTER SIX

THE PEDAGOGY OF PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Analysis of national curricular guidelines in English language in the primary school

Part Three - Models of Language

The third index of analysis in this section is the models or theories of language which appear in the guidelines or orders. It would not be particularly helpful to examine individual sections of documents in a highly detailed fashion, identifying a bit of genre theory here, a bit of traditional thinking there. Such an approach would lead to a fragmented and piecemeal view. Rather, it is much more useful to look at the national curricular documentation in a more global way and see the extent to which particular theories emerge. It is proposed to examine the curricular documentation of each of the systems concerned in this section together, in order to effect any similarities and comparisons and in order to move the section to a conclusion by tying the two strands together.

What is important for our present purpose is to be aware of the background in the development of linguistics against which national curricular guidelines may be set. If we do not do this, then we cannot be aware firstly of the degree of reaction or proaction which these guidelines may contain¹.

Secondly, we cannot be aware of the dynamics within the recommendations

¹ John Sinclair, in "Linguistics and the Teacher" ed Ronald Carter; Routledge and Kegan Paul; 1982; argues that

"The methodology of English mother-tongue teaching now looks distinctly backward, compared with other branches of language teaching. Many of its central tenets, particularly the accent on the individual's development of creative and critical skills, are well worth cherishing and are valuable correctives to methods which define narrower aims. But the unwillingness to admit new concepts from linguistics has impeded progress substantially". (Page 17)

Sinclair raises four main objections to the introduction of linguistics in teaching - its abstraction, the impossibility of teaching it in a simplified form, its public image as a pseudo science and its impracticability in terms of its technical nature. He then tries to demonstrate that these objections are either invalid or of very limited validity.

of these guidelines and the kind of learners and learning experiences which they aspire to produce as a result of their implementation. Empirical investigation of the political/structural background of the committees and working groups which produced the guidelines can be revealing about their origins, but the much deeper effects will only be revealed by subjecting them to the kind of juxtaposition which has been described. Hence the rationale for this section of the thesis.

It will be useful at this stage, perhaps, to define what is meant by 'models of language' in the context of this section. It has previously been outlined that this study is not a study in linguistics², although clearly, theories of language will be of great importance in informing it. The linguistics which are discussed here are those associated with language in the educational domain - the theories of language which teachers use and see as useful in helping children to describe and to use language. Linguistics is an area in which research and understandings have burgeoned in the last thirty years, and perhaps there has come a point where the discursive frameworks of the linguists themselves have become less and less mutually comprehensible. If that is the case, then it is possible that teachers and linguistic theory have drifted further and further apart, as Sinclair says. The results of this alienation might well be the shape of the curricular guidelines themselves, and this section will establish the extent to which this process has occurred.

Language Teaching and Language Learning in Schools: the background of developments in linguistics.

It is necessary to look at the background in the development of linguistic thought against which these guidelines are developed. The function of this section of this chapter therefore, is to sketch in that background, and to attempt to describe the development of thinking in educational linguistics which have taken place over the last forty years or so, in order to assess the effects of national curricular guidelines in English language and the rationales for their development. The section will look closely at the main strands of development, and investigate these in sufficient detail in order to

² See Chapter Two - the linguistic dimension

achieve subsequent investigation of linkages between the guidelines and current developments and by implication, to observe and comment on the juxtaposition of the guidelines against these developments.

The methodology employed in the writing of this section, as outlined in Chapter Two is dependent upon three main sources. Firstly, personal reading and research has informed thinking. Secondly, there is the debt owed to Andrew Philp of the Department of Language and Literature at St Andrew's College, who not only provided several primary sources, but has also assisted with insights into the development of linguistics in education through several fascinating hours of informal discussion. Thirdly, the importance of the interviews granted by Mr Gordon Liddell, Head of English at Moray House Institute of Heriott-Watt University, Edinburgh, and Dr. James McGonigal, Head of English at St Andrew's College must be recognised. These interviews are recorded in the Appendices of this thesis.

The starting point for this survey is more problematic to determine than those for the investigation of the development of the national curricular guidelines themselves. Whereas in the case of the latter it was possible to determine pivotal documents which reflected the articulation of then current educational debate, such as the 1950 Memorandum³ in the case of Scotland or the Hadow Reports⁴ of the late 1920s and early 1930s in the case of England and Wales, it is perhaps in some ways more difficult to discern similar staging posts in the case of the development of linguistic thought. Rather, there is evidence of a process of evolution through action and reaction from the prescriptive Latinate grammar of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the systemic linguistics and genre theories of the late twentieth.

In terms of the educational linguistic, it was assumed throughout the nineteen forties and the nineteen fifties that the tenets of prescriptive Latinate grammar were part of the assumed knowledge about language which it was the right of every child to possess and the duty of every primary teacher to inculcate in her charges. This approach, which Philp (1993)⁵ and other

³ 1950 Primary Memorandum; op cit.

⁴ The Hadow Reports; ops cites.

⁵ Andrew Philp; "English Grammar in British Schools"; from the Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics; Pergamon Press, 1993

writers refer to as the Traditional Grammar approach, was very much the meat and drink of language teaching in both the primary and secondary school and largely remained unchallenged as a description and as a prescription of language, as many contemporary documents witness.⁶ At this point, it is perhaps useful to attempt some kind of definition of what Traditional Grammar is.

Bullock, writing in 1975, comments;

“The traditional view of language teaching was, and indeed in many schools still is, prescriptive. It identified a set of correct forms and prescribed that these should be taught. As they were mastered the pupil would become a more competent writer and aspire to a standard of ‘correctness’ that would serve him for all occasions. Such a prescriptive view of language was based on a comparison with classical Latin, and it also mistakenly assumed an unchanging quality in both grammatical rules and word meaning in English. In fact the view still prevails.”⁷

Likewise, David Crystal, writing a year later, offers us;

“The weaknesses of the traditional approaches to language study are well recognised ... But it is worth remembering that many of the difficulties encountered in studying language have arisen directly out of the inadequacies of the earlier approaches. For instance, traditional grammars dealt with a very restricted amount of language. On the whole, they concentrated on describing the written language, providing very little information about the forms of speech, which are often markedly different. There were restrictions on the style of language dealt with, too: plenty of descriptions of the more formal and literary styles of English; next to none of the informal, colloquial styles. Thus we find rules of usage formulated and applied to the language as a whole, whereas in fact they are appropriate for

⁶ Examples of such documentation would be the guidelines offered by local authorities to primary school staff, as well as national items.

⁷ “A Language for Life” Report of the Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science under the Chairmanship of Sir Alan Bullock.; HMSO; 1975. Paragraph 11.15; p 169.

the formal styles only”⁸

Texts which encapsulated the kind of thinking represented by formal Traditional Grammar were to be found in most primary and secondary schools. The skills required for writing - and it was, as we have seen mostly writing with which Traditional Grammar was concerned - were largely taught through pupils completing exercises and repeating drills . The underpinning theory was that the concepts - and perhaps more importantly patterns - of correctness which were learned through this process would be transferable into the individual’s speech and writing, which would then conform to the accepted norm. No cognizance was taken of social patterns of language which diverged from the model, since these were thought to be wrong or inferior. In some ways, the greater part of an English course could be seen as teaching children to communicate according to these concepts of correctness, to the extent that generations grew up with the inherited view that this approach through Traditional Latinate Grammar was the proper way in which the subject English was taught and that grammatical drills and exposure to correct patterning were the correct methods for teaching it. That this approach lasted into the 1970s - and may even have survived longer is evidenced by the Bullock survey finding that a substantial proportion of the time spent by 9 year olds in England was spent on grammar and punctuation exercises⁹ - a time exceeded only by poetry! In order to sustain this teaching, a range of texts, exemplified by such as “An Approach to Standard English”¹⁰ were produced. In these texts, the concepts of correctness, of Latinate description, of prescription and of the concept of English language as a body of knowledge to be learned, assimilated and then rehearsed in differing contexts according to the same set of rules were writ large. The contribution of Traditional Grammar to the long term development of English

⁸ “Child Language, Learning and Linguistics”; David Crystal; Edward Arnold, 1976.

⁹ “A Language for Life”; The Bullock Report; op cit; Pages 466 and 467. This fact is rehearsed also in Philp (op cit) 1993

¹⁰ “The Approach to Standard English”; Barclay and Knox; Robert Gibson; 1950. This text, which ran to nine impressions by 1950 and was originally published in 1942, was a junior edition of the famous “A Study of Standard English” in which the authors collaborated with GB Ballantyne. Ballantyne was engaged in military service and was thus unable to participate in the writing of “An Approach”. Although intended for use with junior secondary classes, the text was widely used with those in the upper primary, too, and found wide acceptance throughout the teaching profession. The author of this thesis well remembers it in use during his own primary school days! As a description of the rudiments of Traditional Grammar and an illustration of the approach common in many schools at the time, it could scarcely be bettered.

language teaching in the primary school has however been the provision of a set of terminology. Nouns, verbs, adjectives adverbs etc have become part of the common parlance of the primary classroom and, as we shall see, this has had a significant effect on the shaping of certain crucial aspects of national curricular guidelines.

Research, such as that by Harris,¹¹ cast significant doubt upon the value of formal grammar teaching in the enhancement of pupils' performance in the writing of essays. The work of Elley and his collaborators in New Zealand ¹² substantiated these findings by research on a longitudinal basis. By the nineteen seventies, sufficient doubt had been cast upon the value of the teaching of Traditional Grammar to cause teachers to question the basic assumptions of exercise, drill and transferability.

But thus made to doubt by the evidence of research which reached them through the publication of official reports and professional documents, teachers were also aware of the evidence of their own eyes. They found a rising generation who were not quite so prepared to accept the imposition of activities which they perceived as boring and decontextualised simply upon the word of the teacher. They also found from the evidence before them in the classroom that there was little to suggest that standards of performance in written English were in proportion to the amount of grammar and language work which the pupils were given to do. Indeed, there was some evidence that the reverse was the case¹³: that the more demotivated the pupils became because of the administration of seemingly pointless and decontextualised written grammar exercises, the less likely they were to perform well in written English tasks.

This sense of disillusion with Traditional Grammar teaching may be seen to have manifested itself in two ways: the rise and spread of interest in "creative writing" and the distinction in language study between operational

¹¹ An Experimental Inquiry into the functions and Value of Formal Grammar in the teaching of English; R J Harris; 1964; quoted as a reference in Bullock op cit Page 186 and referred to in the main body of the text on Page 170.

¹² "The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School Curriculum"; New Zealand Council for Educational Research; 1979

¹³ "A Language for Life"; op cit; Paragraph 11.18; Pages 170-171.

knowledge and what Philp calls 'explicit' knowledge of language.¹⁴ In the case of the former, perhaps most closely associated with primary education in England and Wales, there was a fairly violent swing away from decontextualisation and restrictive ideas of grammar as structure imposed to the notion that the written artifact produced by the learner was the end of greatest importance, and that the expression of feeling in language styles from the functional to the poetic was the greatest good. Considerations of correctness and precision in expression were seen as restrictive. During the later nineteen sixties, allied to a more liberal trend in primary education generally, there was a tendency to see "creative writing"¹⁵ as either an elixir or an anathema, depending upon your point of view. Doubtless in some schools it was as extreme as the description above and minds were allowed to rove unfettered by constraints of grammatical, syntactical or spelling correctness. But the reality of the situation was that this movement never attained the excesses with which it was attributed, in terms of what was happening in the majority of cases in the schools. There is evidence to support this view, too: neither the 1965 Memorandum nor Plowden in 1967 saw fit to record a seismic swing in the classroom towards this kind of teaching nor to recommend its adoption. In 1975, Bullock, commenting on the public perception of English teaching in the light of the liberalisation of primary education stated;

" It is commonly believed that English in most primary schools today consists of creative writing, free reading, topic or project work and improvised drama and that spelling and formal language work have no place. When certain teaching methods attract a great deal of attention it is understandable that people should assume them to have become the norm".¹⁶

As is stated above, Bullock's survey did not reveal this perception to hold water. Nevertheless, on the topic of "creative writing" the Committee went on to say:

"The truth is, of course, that 'creative writing' has come to mean many things.

¹⁴ A Philp, op cit., 1993.

¹⁵ cf Holbrook.

¹⁶ "A Language for Life"; op cit; Section 1.8, Page 6.

At best it is an attempt to use language to recreate experience faithfully and with sincerity. It draws upon all the resources of language inventively yet in a form which is organic with the feelings or experience from which it grew. From this point there is a sliding scale of interpretations."¹⁷

The second strand in the movement from Traditional Grammar is the distinction between knowledge about language as operational or explicit. In the first case, children are introduced to grammatical terms as they need to know them. Often this process will occur while the teacher is discussing a piece of work with the pupil, hence the use of the term operational. This approach is called the "grammar of mention" in the early seventies by the then Scottish Central Committee on English.¹⁸ The authors discuss various approaches and techniques which will be used in a process which is essentially formative in nature, and go on to state:

“ The sorts of language work described above will be facilitated by the use of a suitable grammatical vocabulary, some of which will have been acquired earlier by means of ‘mention’ ”¹⁹

This document may still, some twenty years after its initial publication, be seen as a key text in the shaping of a definition of this approach. The definition may be seen as a statement that children already possess basic grammatical knowledge, innately gained. If they did not do so, they would be unable to speak in a coherent way or make meaningful articulated sentences. However, in order for the pupils to understand the world of the language they use and to explore it most fully, they have to have a more systematic knowledge of its construction. In imparting this systematisation, teachers will draw upon grammatical terms. Another interesting aspect of the text is that it expands upon the advice and approach advocated in the 1965 Primary Memorandum, and offers a chapter on “Language in the Primary School”²⁰ which takes as its starting point the role of talk and the part which

¹⁷ "A Language for Life; op cit; Section 11.5, Page 164. See also Pages 163 and 165 in this context.

¹⁸ "The Teaching of English Language"; The Scottish Central Committee on English; Bulletin 5; HMSO 1972

¹⁹ "The Teaching of English Language" ; op cit; Page 22

²⁰ "The Teaching of English Language"; op cit; Page 15

talk plays in enabling the child to come to terms with his world and to explore it - as well as recognising that

“With such as basis of experience in free conversation, creative expression and directed language activity, the child is equipped to expand and develop his competence, and consequently his interest and pleasure, in language.”²¹

In the case of explicit knowledge, the child will study the terminology and the forms for their own sake and not necessarily in an operational situation. This teaching is seen as necessary in order that the child should be able to use the forms. The difference from the Traditional Grammar approach is that the terminology used might not necessarily be Latinate in nature - it might, for example, include the use of the terminology associated with transformational scale/category grammar or indeed any other variety for that matter, and the key point is that the teaching of the form precedes its usage in an operational situation.

Mention of the use of terminology leads on to consideration of one of the other reactions to Traditional Grammar in its Latinate forms. In the nineteen fifties, there was, especially in the USA, an upsurge in the interest in structuralism, or the ways in which patterns of language may be observed. This interest was part of a scientific interest in language, which attempted to move linguistic thinking away from the traditional rhetorical approach deriving from Latinate grammar. Thus, these patterns need not relate to prescriptive statements about language but more to the observed and observable patterns which occur in speech as well as in writing and which take account of the important dimension of usage. This was realised in terms of school materials in the work of Paul Roberts, which found expression in Scotland ²² and ultimately in the set of teaching materials produced by Hugh Fraser of Jordanhill College. In these materials, Fraser codified and classified the patterns which he observed in the work of pupils. For example, a simple sentence was classified as "S1" and a more complex one as "S2" and so on. But the approach suffered from many of the same problems as the traditional one: it in many ways simply substituted one set of terms for

²¹ "The Teaching of English Language"; op cit; Page 16

²² "Patterns of Language"; Paul Roberts; 1959

another; it did not address the problem of context; and it did not fully address the difficulty of equating patterns in speech with those in writing. This kind of concern for substitution does not bulk large in the curricular guidelines of either England or Scotland.

Philp, who studied with Halliday during the formative period of the nineteen sixties, describes this as part of what he terms 'Linguistic' approaches to grammar. Another of these which had comparatively little impact on schools in Britain was transformational grammar. One approach which did have a great influence on language in education in the United Kingdom was the work of Michael Halliday and the Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching. The Hallidayan approach saw language as a 'seamless garment' in that it attempted to move away from the decontextualisation of the past and to see language in terms of its meaning in relation to social contexts. In this approach was the origin of the strand defined by Philp as the 'explicit'. A series of materials were produced as a result of the Schools Council initiative, and the best known of these were "Breakthrough to Literacy" and "Language in Use". In the former, the influence of the London socio linguists was felt. Language was seen as not merely the domain of the individual but also the domain of social man.²³ In "Breakthrough to Literacy",²⁴ units of work, aimed as the title might suggest at the primary school, but still influencing the thinking of educational linguists at other stages, were targeted on the nature of language as experimentation in a social context, in the sense that it allowed social interaction in the reading process. The materials offered children the opportunity to experiment with language and with patterns which under traditional teaching would be considered as mistakes. The point concerning experimentation and the fact that it depended upon a whole language approach in meaningful contexts come first: then social discourse relates to the encouragement of social interaction, through talk, by the teacher. The key point is to foreground experimentation in meaningful contexts by a device which allows all four language skills or modes to operate holistically.

²³ "Language and Social Man"; MAK Halliday; 1974; Longman.

²⁴ "Breakthrough to Literacy"; The theory and practice of teaching initial reading and writing; The Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching; Longman; 1970. This text represented a fairly radical departure from previous practice in that it took forward the ideas of systemic linguistics and allied them to new understandings about the nature of language and the nature of early childhood.

One of the major implications of this approach was that for the training of teachers: it was essential that teachers were trained to talk with children in terms which would allow them to access these processes of experimentation and to enable them to undertake this exploration. Through this medium, the aim was to give children essential insights into language - into context, meaning and experimentation. The 'grammar of mention' was intrinsic to this approach: it was not about direct teaching as was the case with Traditional Grammar, but about enabling children to use and to talk about language.

The Hallidayan tryptich of field, mode and style or tenor (of the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual) was the foundation of this; and indeed Andrew Philp believes that the "Breakthrough" materials helped to hone Halliday's views on language as social semiotic.²⁵ There was not only a need to look at the nature of language itself, but also at the ways in which ideas were generated in a social context and at the language which was used in expressing them: this would involve consideration of the patterns of language involved in this process. In this sense, the socio linguists moved away from the idea that you studied language simply to understand language: they said that you studied language in order to understand language and its role in the mediation and creation of social experience and their social implications.

The implication of such a statement was profound. It served to raise language study from consideration of the linguistic alone to consideration of social dynamic. Thus, to understand language you had to look at all the forms in which it appeared - not just the written, reading and writing; but also the spoken, listening and speaking. And, more than that, you had to understand the situational and operational contexts within which language is used, and their social implications. With this movement, we have come a

²⁵ "Language As Social Semiotic - the social interpretation of language and meaning" ; MAK Halliday; Arnold; 1978. This text examines the construction and use of meaning in social contexts, including the context of education.

long way indeed from prescription.²⁶ Perhaps also we are seeing part of the process of alienation which was outlined at the start of this chapter: of linguistics and the world of the school moving further from each other.

Another result of these linguistic insights was the production of the "Language in Use" materials.²⁷ This volume of materials gave teachers the opportunity to teach language in situations which required consideration of the form appropriate to the situation. Through consideration of these factors, the pupils were encouraged to learn about form and to think about the nature and purpose of the language which they were studying and, importantly, using. Concepts of function and audience became important. But this was social language, not a new grammar - prescriptive or descriptive. At much the same time as the appearance of "Language in Use" - incidentally, a pack of materials which although widely valued and now seen as a landmark in the teaching of language in schools, was somewhat alien in appearance and construction to a teaching profession accustomed to the grammar textbook and the coursebook - a companion volume entitled "Exploring Language" appeared, as an introduction to the thinking behind "Language in Use". This was followed several years later, by "Using Language in Use"²⁸, which was a kind of commentary for teachers on "Language in Use" .

The movement was also marked by the writings of linguists such as Peter Doughty, John Pearce and Geoffrey Thornton. They published under the aegis of the Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching.²⁹ Doughty followed this with a text which was influential in relating the thinking of the systemic linguists to the English language

²⁶ Text such as "Readings in Systemic Linguistics"; Halliday and Martin; Batsford Academic 1981; show the extent to which systemic linguistics had developed from transformational grammar over the period of two decades. But although there is a clear movement from prescription of language to description of language, there is a much closer and more complex analysis, and this complexity in many ways militates against the widespread use of such description in schools - not least from the point of view of teacher education and awareness of the implications.

²⁷ "Language in Use"; The Schools Council; 1971; Arnold.

²⁸ "Using Language in Use"; Anne and Peter Doughty; Edward Arnold;1974. This text, although not itself an intrinsic part of the Schools Councils programme was published with the involvement of that body and with its blessing to enable teachers to make more effective use of the Schools Council's materials.

²⁹ "Exploring Language"; Doughty, Pearce and Thornton; Edward Arnold for the Schools Council;1972.

curriculum as a whole, and in pointing out the permeative role which language had in the learning process in that curriculum. ³⁰ An important part of Doughty's work in this text was the relation of the theoretical to the practical, and the production of a set of aims for specific classes, thus repeating the practical slant of "Language in Use". This text was also important in that it offered insights into the relationship between language and meaning and the complex ways that learners marshal meaning.

The second main strand of educational linguistics which might be determined in the nineteen seventies is that which centred around the work of Douglas Barnes, James Britton, John Dixon, Nancy Martin and Harold Rosen. One of the key texts in this respect is "Language, the Learner and the School" ³¹ which appeared in 1969. This text arose from concern about the nature of the languages used by the teacher and the learner, and from Barnes' research which showed that these languages were in many instances separate and incompatible within the education system of the time. Barnes suggested that teachers needed

"...a far more sophisticated insight into the implications of the language which they themselves use"³².

The implication of this statement for the study of the linguistic background is that teachers need to understand the language which they use before they can give their pupils insights into language processes and functions. Britton, in the extension to the research by Barnes, questions whether assumptions made by teachers about the effectiveness of their work are in fact valid;

"..... of course, the relation between their learning and our teaching isn't by any means a constant one."³³

³⁰ "Language, 'English' and the Curriculum"; Peter Doughty; Edward Arnold for the Schools Council; 1974.

³¹ "Language, the Learner and the School"; Barnes, Britton and Rosen; Penguin Papers in Education; 1969.

³² "Language; the Learner and the School"; Page 74

³³ "Language, the Learner and the School"; Page 81.

and goes on to investigate the role of language in the teaching of science. It was in fact Britton and his collaborators who developed the three dimensions of language - the expressive, transactional and the poetic - which went on to underpin much of the work of the Schools Council in the nineteen seventies, particularly in the area which became known as "language across the curriculum". The approach advocated by Barnes and Britton was to encourage the learner to find and to use an individual voice. There were to be clear linkages between talk and writing: learners should not come cold to a task or situation, but should rather be encouraged to explore ideas in talk, to share them and to chew over them before they committed themselves to paper. An important aspect of the development of language studies in both of the main strands of the seventies is that the idea that the knowledge of traditional grammar in some way equipped learners to deal with the complexities of expressing themselves in writing was thoroughly discredited. Instead, concepts such as context, meaning, intention, and the links to spoken language assumed much greater importance.

The two strands - Doughty, Pearce and Thornton and Barnes, Britton and Rosen - were both recognised in The Bullock Report,³⁴ which as has been shown, constituted the most serious and consistent investigation of the teaching and learning of language undertaken in the British Isles: this is arguably still the case, and the Report is one which is still referred to in documentation and discussion about the teaching of English language.³⁵

³⁴ "A Language for Life"; op cit

³⁵ see King man and Cox ;ops cits.

The Doughty strand was considered in the section on written language³⁶ - a section which itself rejected the approach through Traditional Latinate Grammar and the assumption that rules derived from Latin could be taught and through that teaching transferred to the writing of English. Bullock recognised the value of the "Language in Use" approach, although he also noted the difficulties which teachers might face in utilising these materials. In terms of the Barnes-Britton strand, this was recognised in the section on Language Across the Curriculum ³⁷; and the role of the teacher's own language in the educational process, so fundamental to the argument in Barnes, was pointed up.

In a sense, the two strands were also brought together in Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson.³⁸ Although the main thrust of the text is perhaps most concerned with aspects of patterning, as the title suggests, there is nonetheless a substantial section which is concerned with language for the teacher her/himself, - although in the context of the teacher of English, rather than of the teacher across the curriculum. It is interesting that the value of the "Language in Use" approach is recognised by the authors, although they note that

".....the new work is still in its early stages, and much has yet to be done to interrelate it harmoniously with other central concerns in the teaching of English"³⁹

Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson go on to sketch out a proposed course of

³⁶ "A Language for Life"; op cit; Page 174, Section 11.27

³⁷ "A Language for Life"; op cit; Page 188 and ff; Section 12.

³⁸ "Patterns of Language" - Explorations of the Teaching of English"; Leslie Stratta, John Dixon and Andrew Wilkinson; Heinemann, 1973

³⁹ "Patterns of Language"; op cit; Page 137

language study for the English teacher and it is interesting to note that this course includes the relationship between language and thought, the language in use in the classroom, varieties including talk, and the relationship between language and society. One of the strengths of this text, as with many of the others, especially perhaps Barnes, Britton and Rosen, is that actual examples of classroom interaction are used as evidence and as sources for the points which the authors wish to make. This is indeed a considerable distance from considerations of prescription and transferability. Wilkinson went on to develop the work in "Patterns of Language" in "Language and Education".⁴⁰ This text looked at much wider language issues than the development of language in the classroom, and considered the topic in the light of communication, language acquisition, and language development. In some ways again, this text may be seen as an attempt to provide the course of language study for teachers which was advocated in the previous text. However, the approach of the systemic linguists in the 1970s was attacked by several commentators, perhaps most notably David Crystal⁴¹. Crystal was concerned about the place of linguistics and an understanding of them in not only teaching but also in other 'therapeutic' professions. He argued that it was necessary for teachers and others to know which aspects of learning could throw light on linguistic problems; that professionals had to be aware of hypotheses of learning which related to language and that there was a need to be aware of

"... the crucial interpenetration of the study of child language with that of the adult language, and in particular, the language used by the individual teacher or therapist..."⁴²

Crystal then argued that the mere consideration of the world of the classroom was not enough to give teachers awareness of and sensitivity to the world of linguistics. There was a need to develop a knowledge of linguistics per se, and this was the substance of his text. In this respect, he

⁴⁰ "Language and Education"; Professor Andrew Wilkinson; Oxford University Press; 1975

⁴¹ "Child Language, Learning and Linguistics - and overview for the teaching and therapeutic professions"; David Crystal; Edward Arnold 1976; second edition 1987.

⁴² "Child Language, Learning and Linguistics; op cit; Page 5

aligns himself in purpose, if not in execution and emphasis, with Wilkinson.⁴³

The period up to and just after the publication of the Bullock Report may be seen as one where the teaching of language, within the subject area of English and across the curriculum, in both primary and secondary schools, was given considerable attention. Indeed, the whole rationale of the Bullock Report was to consider the question of standards in the light of the interest in, and in the light of concerns about the “creative writing” liberalism which had marked the latter years of the previous decade and the first years of the seventies. It is perhaps not without coincidence - or irony in the light of later events - that the whole inquiry was constituted by the previous Minister of Education, a certain Mrs. Margaret Thatcher. That Bullock effectively endorsed the approach of the modern linguists and advocated a contextual approach to the teaching of language rather than a prescriptive one attracted a note of dissent⁴⁴ from a member of the Committee. Mr Stuart Froome, one of the “Black Paper” authors, was unhappy about standards in reading, mixed ability teaching and the emphasis on talk. However, his dissent was balanced by a note of extension from Professor James Britton,⁴⁵ who repeated his distinctions between the expressive, the transactional and the poetic and who advocated even greater reliance on the personal language of the learner as a starting point for learning and teaching. Even though Bullock may be regarded as a watershed document which has had a profound effect⁴⁶ on the teaching of language, there have nonetheless been considerable developments since its publication, some twenty years’ previous to the time of writing of this thesis.

The significance of the approaches outlined above and of the Bullock Report will be explored at the end of this chapter. However, it is worth noting that these were developments of great significance for the guidelines under analysis. The importance of social language, of the four mode model, of contexts for the rehearsal of linguistic skills under conscious development, of the importance of function and audience all largely date from this period, and there was a growing sense of their value, even if the incorporation of the

⁴³ “Language and Education”; op cit.

⁴⁴ “A Language for Life”; Page 556

⁴⁵ “A Language for Life”; Page 554

⁴⁶ As acknowledged in, for example, Kingman.

approaches themselves into the curricula of primary schools was very uneven.

One of the most significant of these developments is the growth and development of genre theory. This can be seen as post Hallidayan in that it developed from the 'field mode and text' tryptich which Halliday advocated. 'Field'⁴⁷ was defined as the ideational - the institutional setting within which the language or the topic is placed. 'Mode' was the channel of communication or the way the communication was organised - was it written or spoken; was it one-to-one or a group dynamic, for example. 'Style' or 'Tenor' was concerned with areas such as the relationship between participants and other qualities which affected the nature of the communication. Aspects of this tryptich clearly related to the textual, and Halliday went on to develop this in a general socio linguistic theory which included meaning as an element of text, text in relation to situation, situation as semiotic structure and the relationship to semantics of these elements; register and code (in the sense that Bernstein⁴⁸ used it); language and the child and the social system.⁴⁹ This could be seen as an attempt to achieve a match of purposes which were social and linguistic. However, there were commentators who felt that that had not been satisfactorily achieved, and James Martin developed the Halliday thesis with the concept of genre as the social purposes of register. The key term here was 'social' and the consideration of language and text at the social level - previous linguistic studies had tended to see language as individual, but used in social contexts. In genre theory, it was recognised that every text might be defined in relation to register features, but the key identifying features constituted genre, and genre was located on the social level.

As Kress⁵⁰ states:

“...while the discourse of talking or writing provides the operative categories

⁴⁷ eg “Language as Social Semiotic”; op cit; Page 33

⁴⁸ “Class, codes and control: theoretical studies towards a sociology of language”; Basil Bernstein; Routledge and Kegan Paul; 1971 and 1973

⁴⁹ “Language as Social Semiotic; op cit; Pages 108 and ff.

⁵⁰ “Language as a Social Activity”; Gunther Kress; in “Language and Learning - an interactional perspective”; edited by Gordon Wells and John Nicholls; Falmer, 1985.

in the formation of texts, it does not determine the form that texts will assume. That form is provided by a particular genre. At any point in the history of a social group there exists a repertoire of linguistic textual forms, spoken and written. These are the genres which determine the textual form in which a specific discourse finds its expression. Genres are intimately tied into the social, political and cultural structures and practices of a given society, and arise as expressions of certain fundamental meanings of these structures and practices. In other words, textual genres are themselves not simply empty vessels but enshrine specific social meanings.”⁵¹

Kress goes on to examine genre in the context of exemplars such as scientific writing. He then looks at text in the context of interaction;

“The co-presence of a number of discourses in the same text is the rule rather than the exception. given that individuals participate in a variety of social groups, occupy various social positions, and frequently have complex social histories, then even those texts which do seem to have single authorship involve all the differences and contradictions of which the social experience of any one individual consists.”⁵²

The application of this statement to the present thesis might be a matter of some interest!

Although in the UK, systemic linguistics had never really caught on in schools in terms of replacing traditional grammatical terminology or structures,⁵³ it did not die out after its time in prominence in the sixties and early seventies. Indeed, Halliday continued to teach and to research in Australia⁵⁴, and there has been a revival of interest in systemic linguistics in that continent which has spread to the educational sector. There he took his

⁵¹ Kress; “Language as a Social Activity”; op cit. Page 142.

⁵² Kress; “Language as a Social Activity”; op cit; Page 146.

⁵³ See footnote 22 to this section for opinion on some of the reasons why transformational grammar may not have had as much success as it might have in replacing traditional approaches.

⁵⁴ eg “How do you mean?” MAK Halliday; in “Advances in Systemic Linguistics”; edited by Martin Davies and Louise Ravelli; Pinter Publishers; 1992. This volume considers the areas of metalanguage, lexicogrammar, Functional sentence perspective and theme, and text studies. This last uses the language of the game of bridge as exemplar of the use of technicality in register.

theories into the area of genre studies in publications such as that in collaboration with Ruqaiya Hasan.⁵⁵ In this book, Halliday and Hasan argued that ALL language could be construed as text, even activities such as social discourse, and that since this was so, it would be possible to apply the principles of genre and text analysis to it. This interest has returned to the UK, so that the linguistic school is still functioning in the country where it originated some thirty years previously. But it is in Australia, in the work of the Sydney school of linguists that genre theory has perhaps had the greatest impact. Of particular interest to the discussion in which this section is involved, is the work of Frances Christie. Christie, in a paper delivered on Genres as Social Processes⁵⁶, makes specific the link between Hallidayan linguistics and genre theory.

"Those of us working in genre theory in Australia derive our theories from the systemic linguistic theories of MAK Halliday. Three things only I shall mention from Halliday's theories..... Firstly I shall note that Halliday sees language as a resource or a tool that we use to build or make meaning. Children learning their language are in his terms 'learning how to mean', and a necessary function of an education will be that it assist children to learn to mean in new ways. Secondly, language is to be understood not as something learned as so many words or vocabulary items. On the contrary, language is understood as text. When we use language we create text - a meaningful stretch of language in which meaning is constructed. Thirdly, there is an intimate relationship between text and context. In fact, so the theory holds, texts are only comprehensible because of the contexts in which they come into being. It is quite impossible to imagine the one without the other."⁵⁷

Christie goes on to further refine her concept of genre as going beyond the major ones which have become well known over the years, such as sonnet, novel, etc. Genres are

⁵⁵ "Language, Context and Text: Aspects of ;language in a social-semiotic perspective"; MAK Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan; Deakin University Press, Victoria, Australia: 1985.

⁵⁶ "Genres as Social Processes"; Frances Christie; A Plenary paper delivered to the Meanjin Reading Council Regional Conference - Literacy Education: Dreams and Reality: Brisbane Lennons Hotel, 23-25 March 1990

⁵⁷ "Genres as social Processes": op cit; Page 3.

".... ways of getting jobs done in language, and they are as much a feature of spoken as of written language"⁵⁸

The process by which genre theorists use schematics to identify genre features in a text is then shown and aspects of grammar such as Theme and Transitivity are described. Christie demonstrates that in her two examples of text, created by child learners,

"...in order to achieve the ordering that is a feature of both genres, thereby achieving the goals involved in each case, choices have been made in the grammar and quite different linguistic patternings have been produced"⁵⁹

Christie also expounds the distinction between genre and register: for the Australian genre theorists, the two terms are distinct, although Halliday and Hasan ⁶⁰ view them as synonymous. Christie makes the important point that teachers require to be enabled to identify the genres which their students need to use for success in school learning, and that once this has been undertaken, teachers can then teach these genres to their pupils. She further refutes the criticism which has been levelled at genre theory that genre theorists teach for conformity and the perpetuation of the status quo. Christie argues that it is only through empowerment by the understanding of genres and their roles that people are enabled to use the correct situational discourses and thus to achieve. This, as we shall see, is an important point to consider in examining national curricular guidelines in the teaching of language.

Teaching about language is then considered, and is seen as an essential feature of all writing programmes. The genre theorists have prepared materials for use in achieving this aim, and examples such as the Metropolitan Midwest Literacy and Learning Program illustrate the basic process. The teaching and learning process is illustrated diagrammatically,

⁵⁸ "Genres as Social Processes"; op cit; Page 4.

⁵⁹ "Genres as Social Processes"; op cit; Page 12.

⁶⁰ "Language, Context and Text"; op cit; 1985

with its three sequential poles of Content/Language - Structure/Writing - Grammar/Editing. The examples of activities which follow this structural diagram are all heavily dependent upon the class knowing the genres which they are using and being able to identify the features of these genres and to use them in the appropriate context. The important points that this article make shed light upon the Australian school of systemic/functional linguistics. As the interview with Gordon Liddell shows⁶¹, this school has had influence in informing the thinking behind members of the Review and Development Group which was responsible for the National 5-14 Guidelines in English Language in Scotland. It constitutes an important branch of language study in the educational context, and as such, figures in the debate about national guidelines, their formulation and foundations, and the effect which they will have when used in schools.

The other main strand of current linguistics which seems to have been influential is that of discourse studies. This field of study is one which has burgeoned over the last twenty years or so, and which is deeply concerned with issues such as changing concepts of text; the erosion of the differences between spoken and written forms; the effect of the mass media on the previous phenomenon; the scientific analysis of language and in particular, the analysis of language through computer techniques and its paradigmatic description and analysis. Although the field is vast - and increasing - this section will restrict itself to a summary of discourse studies and the effects which they have had on education and language teaching and learning. At this point it is necessary also to separate discourse studies as defined below from the concept of *critical* discourse analysis which stems from the work of Foucault, Gramsci⁶², Kristeva and others, and which is the tool utilised in earlier chapters in this study to relate the use of language to the use of power; this concept is however mentioned further below.

Rosen and Britton had started to examine talk in the nineteen seventies, but the major impact of the decade was probably made by Sinclair and

⁶¹ See Appendix Four

⁶² see "Antonio Gramsci - Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics"; Harold Entwistle; Routledge; 1979

Coulthard ⁶³ In this work, the authors attempted to produce a structural linguistic analysis of spontaneous conversation. It is important to look at this if briefly. Firstly, it relies upon the definition of text which has been raised when considering genre theory. That is, the concept includes both spoken and written utterance. But spoken utterance is subject to influences other than those which can be identified from examination of the verbal features of the text. It is, for example, subject to intonation, to interactional considerations and to paralinguistic features such as gesture and facial expression. The definition offered by Graddol, Cheshire and Swann is a helpful one.⁶⁴

"Discourse analysis is based on speech act theory and assumes that, within discourse, there is a set of identifiable functions that utterances can perform. Sinclair and Coulthard suggest that these functions can be reliably correlated with specific linguistic items or non verbal events (that is, it should always be clear exactly how to categorise an utterance); that sequences of functional units occur in a restricted set of possible combinations; and that any discourse can be exhaustively described in terms of its component-functional units and their patterns of combination." ⁶⁵

Graddol, Cheshire and Swann go on to look at exchanges in classroom talk as exemplars, and demonstrate that Sinclair and Coulthard claimed that twenty two acts could be identified which described all classroom talk. Clearly if this were the case, then there would be serious implications for the teaching and learning of language, particularly where that language were of the spoken variety.

The difficulty with discourse analysis is that the systems of coding which it develops are not generally suitable for the analysis of spoken discourse which takes place in a situation which is not highly structured. Therefore, there will be, as Graddol, Cheshire and Swann note,

⁶³ "Towards an Analysis of Discourse"; J M Sinclair and RM Coulthard; Oxford University Press; 1975.

⁶⁴ "Describing Language"; David Graddol, Jenny Cheshire and Joan Swann; Open University Press, 1987

⁶⁵ "Describing Language"; op cit; Page 194

" a limited notion of function" 66

In particular, discourse analysis is concerned with structures and sequences within the discourse itself ie, the actual recorded facts of the discourse. It can say, therefore, little about aspects such as intention. A school which is related to that of discourse analysis but perhaps is somewhat less tightly concerned with highly structured situations is conversation analysis. This is, as Graddol, Cheshire and Swann note, a movement born of the concern of sociologists to investigate and explain certain behaviours which indicate understanding in a conversation.⁶⁷ However, recent research and theory has taken the investigation of oral discourse into much wider social contexts, and has looked at these social contexts across cultures. The central theme that seems to emerge from texts such as that edited by Hill and Irvine ⁶⁸ seems to be that the construction of meaning in oral texts is dependent upon a much wider range of factors that was previously understood to be the case. These factors include, for example, specific social and cultural contexts and go beyond the relationship between the speaker and the audience. Since national curricular guidelines in both England and Scotland are concerned to a large degree with situations in which conversations and other forms of spoken discourse take place, it is worth asking whether or not teachers are aware of the implications of these forms of understanding of language to adequately manage the curricula with which they are entrusted. In a sense, this is to duplicate the point made in the discussion of genre studies, since genre theorists too believe that the teacher has to possess this sort of knowledge to enable them to empower linguistically their pupils.⁶⁹ And in consideration of national curricular guidelines, the knowledge which teachers themselves require to make the guidelines work successfully is an important issue, as we saw when systems considerations were discussed in the previous chapter.

However, discourses need not be spoken in nature in order for them to be

66 "Describing Language"; op cit; Page 198.

67 "Describing Language"; op cit; Page 185

68 "Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse"; Jane Hill and Judith Irvine; Cambridge University Press 1993

69 Some genre theorists take this much further, and examine exploitation, 'positioning' etc by those in authority through the medium of language.

analysed. We may in a certain respect be returning to the point at which this section commenced, since Traditional Grammar was concerned solely with the written forms of expression, reading and writing. However, there have been massive developments in the description and analysis of written discourse since Traditional Grammar was the norm for the teaching of native language in schools. For example, transformational grammar has been mentioned⁷⁰, and the approach deriving from the work of MAK Halliday. In terms of the analysis of texts, the importance of cultural factors and indeed cross cultural factors has been pointed up by commentators such as Bransford, Barclay and Franks⁷¹ and these currents have been recently investigated and developed by the Australian linguist David Lee,⁷² who links aspects such as grammar, gender and ideology in an overview of world factors in language analysis. He also compares the two strands of linguistics which see languages as discrete and homogeneous and the more recent view of them as linked by world factors in the context of the changes inherent in such movements as the assimilation of cultures through technology. The relationship of language and power has been investigated by many scholars, perhaps none less than Chomsky, in texts such as "Language and Responsibility"⁷³. It is a relationship to which this thesis will return in a later section.

This relationship also lies at the heart of political discourse analysis, which seeks to relate language use to the reflection and sustenance of cultural values⁷⁴ and through these, the sustenance of political viewpoints. The school known as critical linguistics examines the relationships within texts in terms of identification of the ideological or values sets inherent within them. A good example of texts which instantly suggest themselves as suitable for this kind of linguistic analysis is newspaper articles. Critical linguistics seeks to identify and describe the power-sets within texts in social, interpersonal

⁷⁰ Transformational grammar and the work of Chomsky and others has not been featured in this account since it has in fact had very little impact on the thinking behind the development of the educational linguistic in the United Kingdom.

⁷¹ "Sentence Memory"; JD Bransford, JR Barclay and JS Franks; Cognitive Psychology, Vol 3; 1972: quoted in Graddol, Cheshire and Swann, op cit.

⁷² "Competing Discourses: perspective and ideology in language" David Lee; Longman, 1992

⁷³ "Language and Responsibility; Noam Chomsky with Mitsou Ronat; Harvester Press, 1979

⁷⁴ "Describing Language; op cit; Page 205

and ideological terms. It is this theory which the present study has drawn upon earlier in describing the discursive frameworks within which policies relating to the teaching of English language are formed. Linguistics has indeed come a long way from dependence on Latin and the structures within that language for its terminology and purposes in describing language.

Pedagogical Approaches

Having outlined the principal developments in the educational linguistic, it may be useful to look back at traditional grammar and to ask why it is so important to New Right educational thinking. The discursive framework of this has been examined in Chapter Three, and it gives us some insight into why the New Right wish so wholeheartedly to see a return to traditional grammar. It is associated with the return to a mythical golden age⁷⁵, to an era when there was a perception of social stratification and social control by an elite who used language in a particular way, and who were educated in a particular way. There is also a suggestion that this pattern of education had a currency and an acceptance which went beyond the ruling elite themselves and had influence in the education of the working class. But there is more to it than that. Traditional grammar is associated with concepts of prescription - indeed of all the linguistic theories mentioned above, it is the only one which identifies certain patterns of utterance as "correct" and others as therefore "wrong". The use of terms such as "correct grammar"⁷⁶ in their writings on education located within the framework of a discourse which is about controls suggests that this is a further extension of the control dialogue into the prescription of language. The argument might be seen in the following terms:

- we subscribe to the concept of an elite;
- the country needs elites since they marked its greatest days;
- we have been educated in a certain way and taught that certain types of

⁷⁵ see Chapter Three for discussion of this issue

⁷⁶ Marenbon, 1987, Hillgate 1987; ops cit

utterance are correct and others are wrong;

- the education system has ceased to employ these methods and thus standards have declined;
- to raise standards you have to teach all children the way that we were taught;
- this therefore implies that prescribing certain types of utterance as the correct grammatical pattern is necessary.

It is within this context that traditional grammatical concepts link to New Right thinking. And it is because of this concept of prescription and correctness, of some forms of utterance being “better” than others that linguists have moved away from traditional views of language. Research⁷⁷ had shown that there was, for example, little linkage between the teaching of a particular grammatical concept out of context and the ability of pupils to use these concepts in their own work. There was a growing acceptance that there could be more than one form of utterance which was equally valid for the purposes of communication. In schools, there was the feeling that concentration on one fairly narrow “correct” form of expression could inhibit children from using language for one of its major purposes - self-expression. Therefore, there was a rejection of the tenets of traditional grammar as a prescriptive form, even if, as the previous discussion has shown, there was not a rejection of its usefulness to the teacher as a shorthand for the description of language itself.⁷⁸

This rejection of course caused a vacuum; and this took some time to fill. Philp⁷⁹ comments upon the way in which teachers struggled to find a new grammar or a new set of terminology; how the importance of talk grew and eventually by the time of the implementation phases of Standard Grade,

⁷⁷ see above for references to the appropriate studies . There is further evidence in “Book Flood”; Nightingale and Morton; English in Education; Volume 20 No 3; Winter 1986.

⁷⁸ The author’s own research in Glasgow in 1974 showed that a majority of primary teachers still clung to usage of the terminology of traditional grammar, if not to its employment in a prescriptive way.

⁷⁹ See above

there was a much more holistic approach to the teaching of English language which went beyond the teaching of reading and writing and sets of rules which then had to be rehearsed. The influence of the Bullock Report in this context is difficult to overemphasise: either as a work of intellect in its own right, or because it crystallised the thinking which had been done in the Schools Council and by the approaches of Barnes and Britton and Doughty, Pearce and Thornton⁸⁰ ; and acted as a catalyst for the translation of these into practice in schools. This is further reinforced by the comments of HMI No 1 about the 'rot' commencing with Bullock. The theories of language which were thus advocated concerned

- the operation of language in its social setting
- the importance of talking and listening as modes of expression and reception in their own right
- the acceptance of the critical nature of the linkages between talking and writing
- the critical nature of the purpose of a discourse and the audience for which it was intended
- the interrelationships between language and learning and language, thought and expression.⁸¹

These concerns are articulated by both Kingman in his model:

forms
communication/comprehension
acquisition
variation⁸²

⁸⁰ This view is shared by Gordon Liddell, who saw Bullock as the Bible for those concerned with language in the 1980s. Appendix Four.

⁸¹ See "The Quality of Language"; Andrew Wilkinson; English in Education; Volume 21 No 2; Summer 1987

⁸² The Kingman Report; 1988; Chapter 3 and Appendix 8

and are repeated by Cox⁸³, who rejects the prescriptive model for the teaching and learning of grammar. Indeed, it is true to say that in his book “Cox on Cox”, the Chair of the Committee debated the very meaning of grammar itself at some length⁸⁴ . Grammar was, as we have seen, a concept which could have only one meaning to the ideologues. Therefore, the view or model of language which emerges from the documents⁸⁵ through consideration of Kingman and Cox has a lot to do with the concerns of the Bullock and post-Bullock years. In this, the influence of Barnes, Britton; Doughty, Pearce and Thornton is evident and detectable.

But it should not be thought that this constitutes the only view or model of language which can be seen in the national curricular guidelines in English language. A growing area of development in language theory has been the theory of genres, which as we have seen, developed out of the social language theories of Halliday⁸⁶ and which has been most fully developed in Australia. There are in both Scottish and English guidelines references to the importance of genre. Thus, in English 5-11, there are tantalising references to language varieties, to forms and functions, and to the role of language in its social context. None of these, however, on its own could be said to constitute a genre-led approach to the teaching and learning of language. It is as if there was at the back of the committee’s thinking an awareness of the need to consider genre theory, but an equal awareness that to posit a genre led approach would be to go too far away from *a)* what the Government wanted and *b)* what the profession needed and was most familiar with.

In Scotland, there was a similar awareness. This is referred to by Gordon Liddell. Commenting on the major advances in language theory since the work of Barnes and Britton, Liddell says:

“In terms of 5-14, there was a new element, and that is Halliday’s work in

⁸³ Cox on Cox; op cit; Page 45

⁸⁴ Cox on Cox; op cit; Pages 34 and ff

⁸⁵ It should be recalled that the 5-14 Review and Development Group were aware of the Kingman and Cox Reports and of their importance and had them always in the background during their deliberations (see interviews with Robertson, Liddell, HMI No 1) Therefore, taking the documents from Scotland and England together at this stage would appear to be justified.

⁸⁶ see above for detail

Australia with the Sydney school. Genre ideas were emerging from this work. It seemed to make sense and it would make sense to teachers. Genre was a good device for helping teachers to make sense of the teaching of reading - and also listening and talk and writing. But reading came first, and the chief impetus was from reading. Genre theory was also most obvious in reading. As far as the RDG is concerned it was first accepted as a viable strand in listening and was extended from that to reading - both receptive skills. It did not extend to talk and writing.”⁸⁷

Thus, the RDG was aware of genre theory and its role in helping teachers to make sense of language. But the RDG restricted its use of genre theory in the National Guidelines to the receptive modes⁸⁸ , and genre theory goes much further than this into the active use of language and links to expression and empowerment. ⁸⁹

There is adequate evidence to hand that such active teaching of genres can take place. For example, the work of Beverly Derewianka and her colleagues in Australia and the teachers’ material which has emerged from that research suggests strongly that genre theory and a functional approach to language teaching can be incorporated into the primary school classroom⁹⁰ . In terms of the national guidelines in England and Scotland, the omission of this kind of guidance suggests that there were other priorities, because the committees responsible for the production of the guidance, as we have seen, were in no sense unaware of the existence of the genre led approach⁹¹ .

Finally, there is the theory of discourses - the view that there are certain

⁸⁷ Interview with Gordon Liddell, Appendix Four

⁸⁸ 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language, Pages 12, 13, 16 and 17.

⁸⁹ The potential of genre theory in explaining different readings of the same text is discussed in “Changing Practices”; Bronwyn Mellor, Marnie O’Neill and Annette Patterson; English in Education; Volume 25 No 2 Summer 1991. Similarly, both Gunther Kress and Katharine Perera comment on the usefulness of genres in helping young children to gain knowledge of non-narrative contexts and learning organisational principles in writing (Myra Barrs; “Mapping the World”; English in Education; Vol 21 No 1; Spring 1987)

⁹⁰ “Exploring How Texts Work”; Beverly Derewianka; Primary English Teaching Association (Australia); 1991. This work was the result of research among a number of primary schools in Woolongong.

⁹¹ It should however be noted that the LINC work clearly espouses a genre led approach - possibly a reason for its eventual suppression.

discourses which are used in different social contexts and that it is through our knowledge and use of discourses that we interpret and confront the world. In the emphasis on purpose and audience, found in both Scotland and England, there is evidence that there is a background awareness of the importance of discourses. This is also shown in the use of language for different purposes - for example, to convey information, to talk in groups, to express a point of view. There is appreciation of spoken and written discourse in the sections dealing with concepts of text, electronic, spoken and written. This goes far beyond ideas of 'correctness' and the curriculum posited by the New Right. It also goes far beyond the 'creative' school of the nineteen sixties. What is being offered here to children is in fact the opportunity to learn the rules of particular discourses and to have opportunities to rehearse those discourses in differing contexts with differing audiences. Thus, it is true to say that there are, in both sets of national guidelines, aspects of discourse theory. But it is equally not true to say that the guidelines are discourse-based, although that may be more true in Scotland than it is in the case of England⁹² .

A question which might be raised at this point is that of the criteria which are used by those responsible for the production of national guidelines for the incorporation of some aspects of language and the omission of others. Liddell has given his view that the price which had to be paid for the incorporation of some aspects of genre was the inclusion of traditional grammar terminology, although there were also other reasons why this was retained. The data available to the researcher does not lead to the forming of conclusions on this, other than those aspects of policy which have been discussed. However, this could well be an area for future research, building on the findings of this thesis.

Thus, to summarise, there are aspects of traditional grammar in the terminology of the Knowledge about Language strand in the Scottish guidelines, although this terminology is not suggested as the basis of anything other than a shorthand for children to describe language. There are aspects of genre theory perceptible, perhaps more visibly in the Scottish guidelines, which again may make aspects of discourse theory more

⁹² See, for example, the interview with James McGonigal

recognisable than in England; although discourse concepts may be identified in both sets. But the principal debt in terms of the language theories which are reflected in the national guidelines is undoubtedly to the Barnes/Britton and Doughty schools, and to the view of language which is enshrined in the Bullock Report.⁹³

It remains to discuss the implications of leaving out aspects of language theory and the effects which this would have on pedagogy in the English language curriculum in the primary school. Of those omissions, perhaps the most obvious is that of genres, because other theories which simply substitute one set of metalinguistic terminology for another are of limited practical use to the primary teacher. Liddell has already commented upon the usefulness in a pragmatic context of genre theory to the teacher, and how aspects of genre were incorporated into the receptive modes. But there are, as has been mentioned elsewhere, other aspects of genre theory which are to do with the active modes of writing and talking, and which link to the empowerment of pupils to be able to use the correct discourse in a given social situation. Therefore, if a genre based programme is present in some aspects, and the teaching of genres is, as its research suggests, linked to empowerment, one is entitled to speculate as to whether pupils are effectively being denied empowerment in the omission of genres from the active modes. Similarly, one can ask if genre theory sits well with the insistence in the Knowledge about Language Strand of the 5-14 document on traditional Latinate terminology and certain traditional grammar concepts, although it is possible to use traditional terminology in genre work - it is the use of these terms which is significant in the teaching of types of writing.

Ultimately it remains a matter of conjecture as to whether this disempowerment was what was intended by the New Right dismissal of modern trends in language theory. It could perhaps equally well be argued that the task of the RDG in Scotland was to produce a system of primary language which would articulate well with existing arrangements and the

⁹³ Philp's view is that there is undoubtedly more emphasis on the traditional grammar than there is on the above aspects and that the removal of references to "where these influence meaning" in the Knowledge about Language strand in the final version of the Guidelines is a small but significant lurch to the right.

abilities of teachers, in both primary and secondary schools and concerns about the niceties of linguistic theories were secondary to pragmatic concerns in the task. In that they have succeeded.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASPECTS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM IN NATIONAL CURRICULAR GUIDELINES

Models of Professionalism

Discussion of the guidelines in previous chapters, of their underpinning ideologies, of the policies which produced them and of the curricula themselves, has raised issues concerned with the professionalism of the primary school teacher; and with the way in which that professionalism is constructed within the guidelines themselves; as well as within the communities which were responsible for their production. The concept of the professionalism of the teacher and how it is constructed is an important one, as it has a serious influence on the authoring of curricular guidelines. To exemplify this, if the construct of the primary language teacher held by the authors of guidelines is that of the independent autonomous expert who has knowledge of and responsibility for her pupils, then a different set of advice might be produced for such a teacher than would be produced for a teacher constructed as a technician whose sole task is to carry into practice the advice or instructions of others, and who has little or no input or discretion where the framing of the curriculum is concerned¹. It must further be borne in mind that the orders or guidelines, both in England and in Scotland, carry over the divide from the primary sector, where with very few exceptions the teacher is in charge of the whole curriculum across all subject areas, to the secondary where the employment of specialist subject teachers is the rule.²

In discussing these aspects of professionalism, then, it is the intention of this chapter to define a possible model of teacher professionalism against which the guidelines and orders, or constructs of professionalism in the reports

¹ This distinction is made by David Carr in "Four Dimensions of Educational Professionalism"; Westminster Studies in Education; Volume 15, 1992. Carr uses the terms "classroom technician" and "classroom mechanic" to distinguish between the view of the teacher as a fully autonomous professional and the teacher as someone who simply operates designs and plans made by others. The distinction is taken much further by Ball (1995) who relates the whole construct to policy studies and the frameworks within which policies are formulated.

² It should however be noted that in England and Wales, not all secondary English teachers are specialist teachers of the subject, although this has to be the case in Scotland. See Kingman Chapter 6 and Bullock Chapter 23.

which were their antecedents, can be offered up; and from which comparison it may be possible to draw conclusions. It is however, important once again to note that this is not a study of teacher professionalism *per se*. Rather, the task is to analyse the guidelines in terms of this important aspect and to investigate the extent to which these concerns are instrumental in shaping the final advice or orders which are to be put to use in schools.

There are a number of models of teacher professionalism which are available for the student to utilise in this connection. Perrenoud³ suggests ten characteristics of the professional which include the ability to change strategy after evaluation, the ability to overcome obstacles, and other aspects of professional flexibility which are important as coping strategies. A similar model in some respects is offered by Gordon Kirk, in five areas.⁴ These areas include the multiplicity of teacher activity, the range of theoretical understandings possessed by the teacher, the different perceptions of aims, a commitment to self-evaluation, and commitment to self development. The traditional model of professionalism is expounded by Popkewitz, who makes the important point that:

"The Anglo-American conception of profession is not a neutral term that can be incorporated easily into other national vocabularies. It imposes an interpretative 'lens' about how occupations work. The American discussion about the teaching profession, for example, identifies an ideal type of altruistic occupation that is separate from the functions of state. The autonomy of the professionals, technical knowledge, occupational control of the rewards and a noble work ethic are identified as characteristic of a profession."⁵

This traditional view of the characteristics of professionalism is echoed by, amongst others, RS Downie, who examines concepts of professionalism and attempts the same task as this chapter, the offering of a model and the

³ "Competences, Habitus et savoirs professionnels"; Phillipe Perrenoud; European Journal of Teacher Education, Volume 17; Nos 1/2; 1994

⁴ "The Professionalisation of Teaching and its Frustration"; Gordon Kirk; Scottish Educational Review; Vol 20/21/ 1988

⁵ "Professionalisation in Teaching and Teacher Education; some notes on its history, ideology and potential"; Thomas S Popkewitz; Teaching and Teacher Education; Vol 10, No 1 ,1994

juxtaposition of teaching against it.⁶

Downie's model includes a knowledge base, service through the use of relationships - the social role -; the professions as business and as public commentators, the independent role, education and training and the legitimacy factor. Downie makes one point which is of considerable relevance to the present argument:

"Whereas it is plausible that the legal profession might pronounce from on high and advise the government on technical aspects of government policy as they are affected by the current operation of the law; and it is (almost) plausible that the medical profession can speak with authority on matters of health, it is less plausible that teachers can expect to pronounce on matters of education without being involved in controversy."⁷

This point is also taken up by Carr, commenting on the social role played by teachers and on "the elaborate network of public duties, obligations and responsibilities in which teaching as a social role is implicated".⁸ Dawson, writing as a practising teacher, cites equality of value, conveying attitudes, the avoidance of indoctrination and effective teaching as the four principles upon which the professionalism of the teacher rests⁹ .

The above is intended to demonstrate that this whole area has been subject to intense scrutiny by commentators in recent times, and that they have approached it from a number of different angles - the philosophical, the sociological, the managerial. Indeed, Avis¹⁰ expresses his misgivings about writing once more on the topic, in a paper which explores the professional argument as a defensive strategy aimed to resist Conservative education policy. He further argues that in this context the traditional model of professionalism no longer fits, and that a new model has to be constructed, although the paper does not assume a definitive position on what that particular model might be.

⁶ "Professions and Professionalism"; RS Downie; Journal of Philosophy of Education; Vol 24 No 2; 1990

⁷ RS Downie, op cit.

⁸ "Four Dimensions of Educational Professionalism"; David Carr; op cit, 1992 Page 21

⁹ "Four Professional Principles"; Peter Dawson; Education Today, Volume 39, No 2; 1989

¹⁰ "Teacher Professionalism: One More Time"; James Avis; The Educational Review; Vol 46 No 1; 1994.

It is perhaps useful at this point to take cognisance of some of these models of professionalism in a wider context and to look at others in order to see how they might assist in the exposition of this area. All of those described above go beyond the realm of language teaching, and therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, are lacking in specificity in some ways, and are too specific in others. Examples of this would be the consideration of general concerns such as the ability to be flexible and evaluative or to establish and maintain motivation, and the use of organisations such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland to maintain professional standards. Humes offers us a five point model of teacher professionalism based on knowledge and training, the extent to which the service teachers provide is valued by society, the development of an ethical code and the need for self regulation; and the exercise of autonomy in complex situations. ¹¹

Similar considerations are argued by McPherson and Raab, albeit from a rather different perspective. McPherson and Raab comment:

"As the secret gardeners of the curriculum, they had long enjoyed a considerable degree of classroom autonomy" ¹²

They go on to argue that teachers have had an ambiguous view of this professionalism: it has been at times highly valued as a status indicator, particularly in bargaining over salaries and conditions, but it has become a burden when the need to enhance these brought about actions which might not be associated with a professional approach, such as industrial action in support of pay claims. Although some general concerns such as these will undoubtedly be raised in the argument, a subsequent thrust of this chapter is also concerned with aspects of teacher professionalism related to the teaching of language.

Such general concerns might relate to the ability of the teacher to take decisions concerning the curriculum which is offered to the pupils over which

¹¹ "The Leadership Class in Scottish Education"; op cit; Page 20 and ff

¹² "Governing Education - A Sociology of Policy"; op cit; P 268

she has charge¹³ . Clearly, this raises aspects of teacher autonomy and empowerment. In one sense, then, the professional teacher might be seen as someone who is able to take these decisions and who is the ultimate mediator of the curricula which are offered to her pupils¹⁴ .

But such a view would be simplistic: teachers are required to work as a team, are required to cooperate on aspects of work which are affected by school and local authority policies, by community influences as well as by national curricular guidelines. The days of the primary teacher as an isolated entity within the sacrosanct boundaries of her own classroom were substantially eroded before the Education Reform Act¹⁵ . Developments such as the integrated day, team teaching, open plan primary schools and cooperative teaching and learning had had a significant effect on this isolation. This does not, however, mean that the teacher was necessarily deprofessionalised by these developments¹⁶ . There could still be a sense of autonomy and decision making within cooperative parameters. However, the definition of professionalism had to change as the profession and the activities of the profession changed too.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is argued that autonomy - even within this changing definition - and the ability to take decisions related to the curricula offered to pupils are two important considerations in the construction of a model of teacher professionalism.

Another important area of professionalism might be seen as the knowledge of the teacher, of her being perceived as the expert on the particular set of pupils for whose education she is responsible. A primary school teacher has to be in command of knowledge¹⁸ over a wide set of skills; she has to

¹³ Harry Judge, writing in "Standards and the School Curriculum" in 1978, thought that: "It is a truism that in primary and secondary schools alike, English teachers enjoy a peculiar degree of freedom in determining their curriculum and making their own professional decisions"

Significantly in the light of subsequent developments, he added:

"That freedom cannot be taken for granted, and its survival depends upon a foundation of public confidence in the work of the schools"

"Standards and the School Curriculum"; HM Inspectorate; Ward Lock; 1978

¹⁴ Aspects of autonomy are discussed in "Professionalisation and Innovation" Huub Mertens; European Journal of Teacher Education; Vol 17, Nos 1/2; 1994

¹⁵ "Primary Perceptions; the New Professional"; Christine Doddington; Cambridge Journal of Education; Volume 24, No 1; 1994

¹⁶ McNamara, Britton and Martin - see subsequent references - would tend to this viewpoint.

¹⁷ This point is supported by Eric Hoyle in "The Teacher as Professional in The 1990s"; NUT Educational Review, Volume 4, No 1.

¹⁸ Doddington; op cit 1994; page 81

operate in several curricular areas and teach several subjects. Some teachers will develop an interest and an expertise in certain areas, whereas others will remain more generalist in nature. But primary school teachers have more sustained contact with pupils than secondary school teachers. They get to know their pupils and their families on an intimate nature. In a very real sense they become the experts on their charges, and this is recognised by current arrangements in Scotland for Assessment and Reporting within the 5-14 Development Programme. Their expertise extends beyond this, however. Teaching within specific stages such as infant or upper/junior school endows them with understanding of child development in a very real way. They are aware of normative development and therefore of children who are precocious and children who have difficulties, and this knowledge was utilised rather than a research base in the formulation of the targets in English Language 5-14¹⁹. This knowledge is often related to an understanding of the communities within which schools are set, and the dangers of stereotyping are recognised. It is therefore contended that the model of teacher professionalism will include the concept of the teacher as the expert - on the development of each individual in her class - and that for the primary school teacher, an important aspect of knowledge will be precisely such expertise and the ability to relate it to the provision of appropriate curricula.

This leads on to consideration of the primary school teacher as linguist, and to consideration of the skills required for the successful teaching of English language. The area of teacher knowledge of language and linguistics has already been signalled in earlier chapters. For example, it was the view of Marenbon²⁰ that a return to traditional values and methods in the teaching of English would require a generation of misled teachers to be retrained in traditional grammar. Lawlor expands this, arguing that what teachers required was a mastery of subjects, and not a grounding in "modish educational theory".²¹ This concern with the linguistic capability of primary school staff was also a concern of Kingman who devoted a Chapter to the

¹⁹ See interview with Gordon Gibson, Appendix Five

²⁰ "English Our English" op cit.

²¹ "Teachers Mistaught"; Sheila Lawlor; Centre for Policy Studies; 1990; Pages 42-43

education and training of teachers. ²² Kingman recommended that

"...all intending teachers of primary school children should undertake a language course in which the larger part of the time allocated to the course (ie over 50 per cent) be spent in the direct tuition of knowledge about language as outlined in the model proposed in this report which is relevant to the primary school child as displayed through the attainment targets." ²³

Thus preservice training. Where inservice training of existing staff was concerned, Kingman saw serious problems:

"Lack of expertise presents even greater problems. At present, people who are professionally expert in knowledge about language are spread over universities, polytechnics and colleges, but not necessarily involved in teacher-training." ²⁴

The recipe for putting this state of affairs to rights was a cascade model. Appropriate staff would be identified and would train others, who in turn would have the responsibility for training teachers²⁵. The financial implications of the Kingman Report in this respect were also recognised by its authors. The last piece of the jigsaw was the LINC project, or National Language Project as Kingman entitled it, which would provide the resources to enable teachers to deliver the necessary teaching on knowledge about language.

Teacher awareness of language is an area for staff development. There is not necessarily an implied deficit here. The world is changing and our understandings are changing with it. Language and knowledge of its nature are subject to research and to development in their own turn. But it is necessary for the teacher, in order to teach effectively to have specific skills and abilities and specific understandings about the nature of language.

²² "Report of the Committee of Enquiry under Sir John Kingman"; op cit; Chapter Six ;Pages 61-67

²³ The Kingman Report; op cit; Page 62

²⁴ The Kingman Report; op cit; Page 65.

²⁵ Kirk ; op cit;1988; points out that this cascade model may in itself be a deprofessionalising influence, since it removes those at the point of delivery further and further away from the point at which decisions affecting that delivery are made.

Teachers in primary schools at the earliest stages face tremendous challenges in the initial teaching of reading and writing. This has long been recognised ²⁶ as one of the most critical areas of a child's whole school career, and one in which the teacher can have a real influence for good or for ill. Added to initial literacy skills within the four mode model of language is the necessity to teach oral communication, building on the intrinsic understandings of patterning which a child will have from her early use of speech and from listening to its use by her family and friends. Further, the teacher will have to have an understanding of how language works, how articulated utterance functions in different audiences and for different purposes - knowledge about language. She will require this in order to translate the statements of guidelines and orders into materials and experiences which she can place before her pupils; to assess the appropriate pedagogy to put in place to enhance and develop the language of her charges, according to the stage of development of each one. The possession of such skills is an area within which, it is argued, the teacher can and must display professionalism.

The last concept to be discussed here is the concept of teacher as negotiator. Teachers, it has been stated, work more collaboratively now than in former days. There is also a sense in which they are subject to greater managerial interference than ever before, in common with other professionals in for example, health care. Shaw argues that:

"Teachers are increasingly managed according to the disciplines of industrial society, visible in tighter organisation, quality control, surveillance, progress chasing, subjection to market forces, contribution to wealth creation as purpose..... intensification of management controls is replacing the wisdom, experience and self- monitoring of the practitioner".²⁷

Thus, teachers are required to interface with senior staff within the school, with local authority advisers, with parents in the role of product consumers, with inspectors and directors of education. They are as accountable as ever

²⁶ "The Language Arts in the Primary School"; Alastair D McPhee; unpublished M Ed Thesis; University of Glasgow; 1974

²⁷ "Ideology, Control and the Teaching Profession"; KE Shaw; Policy and Politics; Vol 18 No 4, 1990

they were, but that accountability is more visible than it was previously. The question can then be posed: as negotiators, are teachers more or less professional than formerly? They may be affected in this sense by the way in which national guidelines are posited - do they leave room for dialogue, for the teacher to negotiate a path which according to her understandings of the learning situation suits her learners, or are they cast in such a way that these agencies identified above are entitled to certain uniform expectations, certain assumptions about the teaching and learning processes? Clearly these considerations are related to aspects of autonomy, but it may be helpful here to see them as a separate dimension of the professionalism of the teacher. It will also be the task of the later parts of this discussion to address these concerns above.

The model of teacher professionalism which is offered in this chapter, therefore, is one in which autonomy within the team context, the ability to make decisions based on understandings about the learners and their needs, the possession of skills in the teaching of language and understanding of its processes, and the ability to negotiate are recognised as constituent aspects.

The Era of Liberal Progressivism

It is possible to use historical data in terms of the evaluation of this model of teacher professionalism, and to fit this data against ideological concerns and stances²⁸ ? The influence of liberal/progressive thinking on education in the United Kingdom in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies has been well documented earlier in this study and elsewhere. In England, Plowden devotes a whole chapter to the training of primary school teachers, describing the different routes by which staff were recruited to the profession, and covering such areas as qualification / unqualification. This section of Plowden is interesting in itself, because it covers ground which is being revisited at the time of writing through the debate on competence-based

²⁸ This task is also undertaken by Shaw (1990); op cit.

teacher education.^{29 30} It concerns itself, too, with a closer partnership between schools and colleges. But it actually says very little about aspects of teacher professionalism, even to the definition of the skills which primary teachers should have, or to description of the qualities which are desirable. The section, rather, is concerned with aspects of management and development of teacher training courses, both preservice and inservice. This is perhaps surprising in view of the space which has been devoted in the report to the development of the child and the child in the school, that so little should be said about aspects of the professionalism which their teachers are expected to possess. On the other hand, it may be that the Council did not see it as its duty to advise on this, as it was primarily concerned with the child and with a holistic view of the child in her/his primary school. Plowden did in fact recommend that a Commission be set up to look into the whole question of initial teacher education, (to become the James Committee of 1972) and this would tend to reinforce this opinion. Also, it is possible that there was a consensus view that these aspects of teacher professionalism were accepted as read by the Council - although it has to be said that this is unlikely in view of the scope of the final publication. Nevertheless, the document says much in support of teachers, and little to suggest that they themselves were responsible for shortcomings which might have been perceived: these were rather seen in structural terms.

On the other hand, Bullock had a great deal to say about the professionalism of teachers concerning the teaching of English language. The evidence before the Committee suggested that there were serious misgivings about the initial and continuing education of teachers in the field of knowledge about language and its applications. Some of the general concerns voiced by Plowden are repeated - such as the integration of school experience in initial training - but there is a distinct thrust for a better provision of language teaching in schools through a heightened awareness of the teachers. This awareness is to be provided through enhanced training, both preservice and inservice. ³¹ This does not, however, entirely address the question of

²⁹ "Questions of Competence"; David Carr; British Journal of Educational Studies; Vol XXXI No 3, September 1993

³⁰ "Management and Values"; Bartholomew J McGettrick; in "The Management of Education; A Scottish Perspective"; edited by Walter Humes and Malcolm McKenzie; Longman in association with BEMAS; 1994

³¹ The Bullock Report; op cit; Chapters 23 and 24.

professionalism, although it does address that of teacher training. In terms of professionalism, Bullock is concerned in the most part with enabling teachers to cope with the implications of the recommendations of the Committee following upon the research which they had commissioned. The model here is one which recognises the autonomy of the individual practitioner, although Bullock is very much concerned with deficits where the awareness of teachers to cope with the implications of new approaches in linguistics and language are concerned. There is a recognition, in Chapters 23 and 24 that a great deal has to be done to remedy that deficit: therefore it would not necessarily be true to say that Bullock recognises the expertise of the individual primary classroom practitioner where the knowledge of language *per se* is concerned.

In Scotland, there is a clear picture offered of the classroom teacher for the primary stages in the 1965 Memorandum. That teacher is described as possessing personal qualities of optimism and cheerfulness, of having an understanding of her children and the skills to diagnose and react to their needs. She (sic) is also constantly reviewing and improving her teaching, working with other colleagues, and keeping abreast with educational research.³²

Although it has to be recognised that this portrayal is that of an ideal model - of the teacher as the Committee would have liked her to be - in these respects, she fits well with the model of professionalism described above. But perhaps just as important as this generic statement is the fact that the Memorandum is infused with discourse which suggests strongly that the teacher is perceived as a valued expert. Constant references are made to her knowledge of her charges, to her ability to select "judiciously"³³ the correct materials and to her overall sense of expertise. Nothing is said in the Memorandum which might damage this sense of professionalism, although that does not preclude the report from making recommendations and assertions which are designed to move the new curricula and the new

³² 1965 Memorandum, Pages 28-30

³³ Doddington; op cit 1994; makes the point that the language in which educational reform is couched - ie the discursive framework for reform - is crucial to subsequent understandings: "Any attempt to significantly change the language of education can have a powerful effect and should not be underestimated" (Page 84)

approach forward. And yet the 1965 Memorandum is much more than a handbook of suggestions for teachers. It is in effect a reorganisation of Scottish primary education away from the traditional subject-knowledge centred curriculum towards a child centred model which is much more liberal in its nature. Perhaps it also recognised that in order to achieve these ends of innovation within the Scottish context it had in its turn to recognise the right of those who would implement the reforms to be convinced of their worth, and to see their value prior to implementing them. The long period of time which elapsed between the publication of the Memorandum and subsequent major change in the 10-14 Report of 1986 suggests that this evolutionary approach took some time to bear fruit.

The 10-14 Report itself says very little on the question of teacher professionalism, although it does devote a chapter to the education of teachers. Once again, there is an indication that the process of innovation is best left to the classroom professionals where the actual service delivery is concerned: the report addresses itself mainly to structural issues in the curriculum, and specifically with the "great divide" between primary and secondary sectors.

The question of the view of teacher professionalism emerging from the documentation which is largely assumed to be characteristic of the liberal/progressive era in education, is therefore a problematic one, in that very few clear statements are made which inform the construction of a model. The clearest statement which we have is that of the 1965 Primary Memorandum. Nevertheless, it could be stated that the purpose of these curricular documents, in attempting to bring about systemic change, is to make recommendations. These recommendations may be accepted or rejected by those charged with service delivery, although there is a clear expectation that the former will in fact be the case. The documents might be seen as empowering teachers to make decisions regarding the education of their pupils. They do not compel them to do so. But on the other hand, if changes in teacher education and training are as necessary as the documents themselves all suggest, the question might legitimately be asked if teachers can make these decisions when they do not seem to possess the training or education which is seen as necessary. Yet another view might

well be that the curricular documentation of the liberal/progressive era is so bland that teachers lack adequate guidance. If this view is taken, then the slowness to implement the recommendations of the 1965 Primary Memorandum referred to earlier and sustained by the present author's previous research in this area might be explained, too, in terms of the profession lacking the guidance it needed in firm enough terms. Yet a further explanation, in Scotland at least, might be respect for the academic tradition and the valuing of the teacher as expert within the domain of education - one half of the old duality of the dominie and the kirk.

The Era of Conservative Reform

When consideration is made of the era of the Education Reform Act, then one obvious and clear difference in approach is the use of Orders to enforce the National Curriculum - indeed, the presence of the curriculum itself. The Education Reform Act compels schools and Local Education Authorities to introduce the National Curriculum into their schools, and the National Curriculum Orders themselves constitute a legal framework within which the subjects of the National Curriculum must be delivered to children in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, there are very important differences in curricular innovation before and after the 1988 Act. The question must be asked, was the purpose of this legislation to oblige local education authorities or teachers to toe the line?

The answer in terms of the actual legislation itself is both. Nevertheless, does this legislation represent an attempt to bring errant authorities to heel, or does it strike at the heart of professional aspects? The Hillgate Group in "The Reform of British Education" make it clear that their quarrel is with those local authorities who have disentitled children and therefore have endangered the future labour force by their failure to give young people their entitlement to a thorough grounding in basic skills. The teachers themselves - although they are patronised in the tone and discourse of the document - are largely seen as being misled by a politically motivated minority. Examples of the extent to which this process of misleading has taken place are appended to the document to reinforce the authors' points. This has led

to a situation where the Government has had no alternative but to impose a National Curriculum, and to do so within a legal framework. Likewise Sheila Lawlor in "Correct Core"³⁴ argues for the provision of simple, understandable, logical curricula in the forthcoming National Curriculum. This may reflect a feeling that teachers were not up to handling much more - but it may equally well reflect the New Right distrust of the expert, of "barmy theory" as Kenneth Clarke put it. Allied to the removal of statutory wage-bargaining bodies and the fragmentation of Local Education Authority control through such mechanisms as the rights of schools to opt out of such control, the strengthening of parental representation on the governing bodies of schools in 1986 and the creation of City Technology Colleges, the impression might well be gained that there was almost an all out war on teachers, who were no longer valued in professional terms. Did the reforms of the Education Reform Act go beyond the disempowerment of the LEAs and strike at the heart of teacher professionalism?

To answer this question, one has to look beyond the immediate rhetoric. It has been argued that in fact there was and has been, a changing concept of teacher professionalism on a much larger scale than that which seemingly obtained within England and Wales, or within Scotland for that matter. Popkewitz cites the example of curriculum materials within the US which not only specify what is to be taught but specify the detail with which it is to be taught down to the provision of a script which the teacher is to follow.³⁵

Additionally, Novoa argues that there have been, in control and in terms of interests by others involved in education, tendencies to deprofessionalisation throughout the twentieth century in Europe and beyond.³⁶ Thus within the scenarios described by these commentators, the advent of centrally controlled curricula is no more than another development along a track which was already unwinding. However, against these comments, we must balance the views of Cox, who was responsible for the design of the English Language component of the National Curriculum in England and Wales. Cox attempted to have statements included in his

³⁴ "Correct Core - simple curricula for English, maths and science"; op cit.

³⁵ "Professionalisation of Teaching and Teacher Education"; Thomas Popkewitz; op cit

³⁶ "Les enseignants: a la recherche de leur profession"; Antonio Novoa; European Journal of Teacher Education; Volume 17, Nos 1/2; 1994

Report which reflected good teaching practice, as seen from the viewpoint of the practitioner. These views included statements of good language practice, but also statements about the kind of collaborative learning contexts in which they could be realised. Since these ran counter to the approach favoured by the Conservative government, which wished to see a return to traditional grammar and to traditional ways of teaching it, this section of the Cox Report was never published, although copies were available in schools.³⁷

The National Curriculum was generally given a cautious welcome rather than an outright rejection by many in the teaching profession³⁸. There was a feeling in many quarters that perhaps things had gone too far, and there were misgivings in many areas, but there was not the outright refusal to implement which would have suggested that teachers were feeling that their professionalism was being unduly threatened³⁹. Indeed, there were far more misgivings about the national tests, the SATs than there were about the curricula themselves. We have already noted in a previous chapter the grudging welcome which Kingman and Cox received, if not the process by which their recommendations were to be implemented. That is not to say that there was no concern on the part of the commentators, however. Denis Lawton saw the wide spread of bureaucracy and the lack of centrality of teachers to the planning process of the new curriculum as severe drawbacks, affecting the way in which the curricula would be perceived.⁴⁰ Likewise, Stephen Ball⁴¹ comments on the discursive framework of the New Right where the perception of teachers is concerned:

"They were seen as dangerous, radical and politically motivated."

³⁷ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Pages 23 and 24

³⁸ Commentators such as Anne Waterhouse writing of her experiences with the National Curriculum in her primary school make it clear that the concept of the curriculum itself is welcomed: the complaints are about the resourcing and management implications. "Sense and Nonsense and the National Curriculum"; Eds Barber and Graham; The Falmer Press; 1993.

³⁹ Martin Leonard, in "The 1988 Education Act: A Tactical Guide for Schools"; Basil Blackwell, 1988, comments thus:

"...the reasons which were used initially to justify the introduction of the national curriculum are sound enough, and merit the agreement of every teacher."

⁴⁰ "The National Curriculum - Choice and Control"; Denis Lawton; Hodder & Stoughton; 1989

⁴¹ "Politics and Policy Making in Education: op cit; Page 28 and Pages 49-52

Ball quotes Hillgate and Sexton in this context, and the fact that their professional training is responsible for this state of affairs - they had "studied nonsense" for three years. Similarly Sheila Lawlor was clear in her view that teacher education in general was concerned with marginal activities when it should be concerned with improving the academic and practical education of potential teachers⁴² . The response to this is to reconstruct a teacher who need not be necessarily qualified in the formal sense of the term, but who would through virtues of common sense and aptitude for the job represent an improvement on the status quo. Such teachers were subsequently to be obtained through the DFE schemes for articulated and licensed teachers⁴³ .

What is clear is that there were severe misgivings about the kind of teacher who was operative in the state system: of course the National Curriculum was not seen as necessary in the independent sector, where presumably traditional values and methods were still in evidence. To summarise the New Right position on aspects of teacher professionalism, it is contended that there was in fact a divergence. There were those such as Marenbon and Lawlor who saw the teacher as misled, as misinformed; and there were others such as Scruton who saw her as dangerous and her role in need of redefinition. The implementation of the National Curriculum is perhaps one of the ways in which the "nonsense" can be cleared out of the way and common sense (see the discursive framework for this described in Chapter Three) restored.

An important text to consider at this point in the development of the argument is that by James Britton and Nancy Martin.⁴⁴ Britton and Martin were two extremely influential figures in the teaching of English during the nineteen seventies and indeed before then. Their work in the Schools Council and with the University of London Institute of Education saw both at

⁴² "Teachers Mistaught"; Sheila Lawlor; Centre for Policy Studies; quoted in "Teachers' Professional Image and the Press"; Peter Cunningham; History of Education; Volume 21, No 1.

⁴³ "Developments in School-based Initial Teacher Training; John Townshend; European Journal of Teacher Education; Volume 17; Nos 1/2; 1994. According to DFE research, school based training is more likely to deliver the teachers who fit the model described in the main text above. This raises the interesting question: how can this be since those training them in schools are presumably those who have been characterised as failing?

⁴⁴ "English Teaching - Is it a Profession?"; James Britton and Nancy Martin; English in Education; Volume 22 No 3; Summer 1988

the forefront of developments in the teaching of language in education, as we saw - at least in the case of Britton - in the previous chapter. Britton and Martin confront the issue of professionalism in the terms described above in their paper. They trace deprofessionalising elements such as the abolition of the Schools Council in 1981, attributing the reason for this action towards an institution which had, on the face of it, operated at the cutting edge of innovation in the teaching of English for over a decade and whose work had achieved an international reputation to a deliberate move to attack the professionalism of teachers. They quote Sheila Lawlor once more:

“left in the hands of the professionals it would entrench current orthodoxies and lower standards”⁴⁵

adding that this was believed to be the view of Mrs Thatcher, too.⁴⁶⁴⁷

Britton and Martin deplore the turning away of teaching from a research-oriented pattern, adding that

“Research and its attendant professionalism are virtually outlawed”⁴⁸

However, they are also concerned with the maintenance of a balanced view. The National Curriculum may in the end prove to be a good thing if it is possible to harness to it the professional views and involvement of teachers. They detect possibilities for the advice of the profession in the Programmes of Study and in the Attainment Targets, if not in the much deplored pattern of testing. In this area

“...teachers have no say in it at all, yet all we know points to the influence of

⁴⁵ “English Teaching - Is it a Profession?”; op cit; Page 4

⁴⁶ In fact, this is confirmed in “The Downing Street Years”; op cit; Pages 590 and ff. Lady Thatcher was of a similar opinion to Marenbon that the teaching profession had effectively been hijacked by left wing local authorities and “experts” in the new child-centred teaching techniques.

⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, Mrs Thatcher subsequently became of the the opinion that the National Curriculum might have become too restrictive, stifling teachers' personal judgement and initiative.(Cunningham. op cit; 1992) This is also her personal view stated in “The Downing Street Years”, where she had no wish to “put good teachers in a strait jacket” (Page 593); but it was most certainly not the view of the Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, or of other members of the Cabinet.

⁴⁸ “English Teaching - Is it a Profession?”; op cit; Page 5

tests in swinging the teaching towards teaching to the test"⁴⁹

They quote their own involvement in research in this area to substantiate their point. Ultimately, they move on to consider how a bad job might be made better. Breadth in attainment targets and programmes of study are desirable ends, and they are heartened by statements to this effect in the consultation document issued by the Secretary of State. As linguists and professional language teachers in the field of education, it is perhaps interesting that they have comparatively little to say about the actual language content of the proposed curricula, preferring to concentrate upon the broad professional issues. Their main misgivings, then are about structural matters. They deplore the burgeoning power of the Secretary of State over the curriculum - a natural tendency, one might think, in former members of the Schools Council. They deplore the transfer of power from consultative bodies to directive ones, and ultimately believe that if the opportunities of teachers to be involved in consultation and the formulation of curricula at grassroots level are cut off, then this will deprive them of a vital aspect of professionalism and by consequence lead to a decline in standards in schools.

Britton and Martin are therefore most concerned with the aspects of autonomy and negotiation defined in the model which has previously been constructed for the purposes of this chapter. They are concerned about a perceived lack of involvement at structural level in the decision making process and at the limitation of the professional teacher in the negotiation of curricular affairs. But they are not entirely against the concept of a national curriculum, arguing that it very much depends on the way in which it is constructed as to whether or not it will damage teacher professionalism and therefore in the end be a success⁵⁰ .

Let us at this point return to perceptions of what exactly might happen when

⁴⁹ "English Teaching - Is it a Profession?"; op cit; Page 5

⁵⁰ Interestingly, this point of view is shared by James Callaghan who instigated the debate with his Ruskin College speech. His view is that:

"We must begin with the teachers.... their self esteem matters. They must be given the confidence that they are fully respected and trusted... they must feel fully involved in planning the changes that result from the pressure of innovation."

"Continuing the Education Debate"; op cit; Page 12

the content of teaching is prescribed in terms of orders in a subject such as English. One view might be that the role of the primary teacher - who is incidentally targeted by the New Right discourses of derision - is changed. She is constrained in a new way - no longer does she have the right to decide what is taught within her own classroom. That is decided by others, by those who know. She becomes a mere curriculum technician, tweaking the curricula in small ways in order to meet local circumstances. Her professionalism is diminished.

That would indeed be a sustainable view if the curricula themselves were specified in unambiguous terms and in enormous detail. However a second view is possible. It could be argued that there still is room within the Orders for a great deal of professional interpretation and for teacher autonomy at the point of service delivery. As McNamara contends:

"At the crux point where teaching and learning take place in the classroom expertise rests with the teacher: it is important, therefore, that practitioners should influence as well as be influenced by, the National Curriculum".⁵¹

The Orders themselves specify what should be attained by children at given ages. They also, through the Programmes of study, specify ways in which teachers can work with their pupils in order to get them to the stage where they fulfil the conditions laid down in the Attainment Targets. But there can be no sense in which every lesson is prescribed. There is room for teachers to use their own judgement, to work with pupils and with each other in the collaborative professional way to which allusion has already been made earlier in this chapter. There is scope for autonomy here in the sense of individual decision-making. There is opportunity for teachers to use their expertise in their knowledge of their pupils. It could therefore be argued that what the National Curriculum Orders for English do is to focus that autonomy, and to focus the direction of the teachers' efforts in particular

⁵¹ "Professional Primary Expertise: influencing the National Curriculum"; David McNamara; Aspects of Education; No 45, 1991

ways.⁵² Teachers must learn to work within a framework, but once the focus provided by the framework is in place, they can exercise their autonomy.

There are however, two areas perhaps where the professionalism and professionalisation of the teacher is challenged within the framework of the innovations following upon the implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act. The first of these is the area of assessment. Chapter Five alluded to the role of this in driving the curriculum, and the work of Britton and Martin has been cited in this chapter. The use of assessment in order to oblige teachers to create educational performance in children which meets certain laid down criteria calls the judgement of teachers into question - there is in the mind of the author little doubt about this. The use of SATs may be seen as a mechanism of deprofessionalisation in that it is a statement that teachers can't be trusted - a national objective measure is required to ensure that the goals which are defined are actually delivered.⁵³ This is of course an intrinsic part of the debate about standards in state schools, but it is also an important aspect of the debate about teacher professionalism. Ball comments about assessment as an element of teacher accountability in precisely this way in terms of:

"...the neo-conservative distrust both of teachers and of new teacher-based forms of assessment"⁵⁴

The second way in which the ERA reforms may be seen as deprofessionalising is the fact that teachers were removed from the decision making process about the kind of curricula which they themselves would

⁵² This point is echoed by Kenneth Baker where he reveals the five points articulated at a conference in the North of England on professional aspects of the National Curriculum. These were the provision of incentives for schools to improve; the provision of a detailed framework for teachers to work to; the provision of clear information to parents; continuity and progression from one year to another; and the obtaining of the best possible results from each individual child. "Duncan Graham Memoirs"; Kenneth Baker; Times Educational Supplement; 24th November 1992

⁵³ "Testing to Destruction" in "Alternative Currents"; Richard Noss and Harvey Goldstein; Forum, Autumn 1991

⁵⁴ "Politics and Policy Making in Education"; op cit; Page 52. The point is expanded by Maurice Galton in "Crisis in the Primary Classroom"; David Fulton Publishers; 1995. In Chapter 3, "The Mess that is Assessment" Galton charts the development of National Testing and examines its theoretical and political bases.

teach.⁵⁵ It is perhaps fundamental when aspects of autonomy are being considered, that a professional would be consulted where decisions in the field of expertise professed were being taken. To extend Downie's allusion, it is unlikely that the government would legislate to enforce doctors to perform operations on patients in a particular way or for a particular reason. They might consult expert medical opinion to ascertain the feasibility of offering certain procedures within the National Health Service, but would be extremely unlikely to impose these without that consultation. Yet that is exactly what has happened with the imposition of a National Curriculum in areas such as English without extensive consultation of those involved at the point of service delivery. The presence of one or two teachers and advisers on a Committee does not, in the view of the author, constitute this consultation. It is therefore argued that the National Curriculum's imposition, no matter what its reception might have been, or what its rationale might have been, within the framework of legal obligation, represents an element of deprofessionalisation along the lines described by Novoa and other commentators.⁵⁶

The situation in Scotland - 5-14

In Scotland, it has been argued, there were significant differences in the way in which the 5-14 Development Programme was implemented from the model which was utilised in England and Wales. For example, there was a process of infusion of professional expertise into the Review and Development Group rather than the production of an "independent" report by a group of appointees, who did not include a significant number of practising

⁵⁵ This is expanded by Susan Thomas in "Upsetting the Natural Order"; Times Educational Supplement; 4th October 1991

⁵⁶ Further evidence to support this view comes from Davies and Hentshke. Undertaking a comparative study of educational reform in the USA and in England, they write "The involvement of teachers in either the first set of reforms, those of the National Curriculum and pupil assessment, or the second set comprising school-based management and school choice has been, at best, very minimal and at worst non-existent. In practice, teachers have been excluded from the design of the reform or the pattern of implementation, being merely concerned with its implementation. This situation could be considered as a serious deprofessionalisation of teachers - to have a reduced professional input into the education system and more of a technical delivery role of a system that is designed by others." "Implementing Educational Reform - The Early Lessons"; eds Simkins, Ellison and Garrett; Longman in association with BEMAS; 1992

classroom teachers. Secondly, there was a feeling among many professionals that the time had come for these particular reforms to be implemented, and therefore there was a greater degree of acceptance for them⁵⁷ than might otherwise have been the case, particularly in view of the "innovation fatigue" which had set in in many schools in the wake of reforms such as enhanced school management, the formation of school boards in Scotland, Standard Grade in secondary schools and so on.

In this process of firstly drawing on the professional expertise of teachers in the formation of the group which was charged with the implementation of policy and in terms of the consultation exercise which was carried out by the two national development officers, there was a sense in which the professionalism of teachers was recognised in a way which did not occur south of the border. Moreover, there was after the publication of the RDG Report and prior to the translation of that into national guidelines a further consultation exercise and piloting in schools of the draft arrangements.⁵⁸ Within the RDG on English Language, moreover, there was a considerable acknowledgement of the professionalism of the teachers in the schools:

"We had a strong perception of the professional role of the teachers - and we wanted to produce a support for the teachers which in a complex curricular situation would give them a way of analysing and planning and in assessment and evaluation..... We had the view of the teacher as a professional doing a good job, and of the document as providing help towards coherence and organisation"⁵⁹

This is not, however to suggest that the guidelines in the draft form met at once with the approval of the authorities. Rather, the opposite was the case. In the foreword to the RDG Report of March 1990, Mr Ian Lang- who had succeeded Mr Michael Forsyth as Education Minister upon the appointment of the latter to be Chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party - comments upon his concern for accuracy and a knowledge of the grammar, punctuation and spelling of English to be imparted to all pupils. Further, he states:

⁵⁷ see interviews with R Robertson and G Liddell.

⁵⁸ This consultation also occurred in England, but not on so extensive a scale.

⁵⁹ Interview with Gordon Gibson, Appendix Five

"I would have preferred the report to have expressed with greater strength and conviction the need, not just to achieve an awareness or gain an understanding of language, but also to learn about it. I would have welcomed, too, a recognition of the importance of training and testing the mind and memory."⁶⁰

Although the rich culture of Scots dialect is recognised, there is also a request that

"Priority must be given to teaching every child standard English."⁶¹

These comments echo well the concerns of the New Right in the publications which have been examined in this study. And yet, when the RDG Report became translated into the national curricular guidelines for English Language there is no prioritisation of standard English, and the request for rote memory training has been denied. The Knowledge about Language strand remains largely unaltered, too, with just a hint of strengthening here and there, but by no means a return to traditional grammar.

The importance of this foreword for the discussion on teacher professionalism is that it may reveal that the New Right concerns were not unique to Conservative thinking in the party in England, but had a hold on thinking north of the border, too.⁶² Did these concerns extend to a feeling that teachers had let the side down, and were dangerous radicals? Certainly the provision of school boards was one piece of legislation which on the face of it seems to be in this tradition; that teachers could not be trusted to cultivate their secret garden on their own, and that greater involvement and

⁶⁰ Foreword by Mr Ian Lang to the Report of the Review and Development Group in English Language: Scottish Education Department, March 1990

⁶¹ This theme was re-echoed in an article by Mr Lang when Secretary of State for Scotland; here he argued that the Government had deliberately been confrontational because it had had to confront "mediocrity and sloppy standards". A return to traditional Scottish academic values is called for.

Ian Lang; "Lang sets out Tories' stall on standards"; Times Educational Supplement; March 26th 1993

⁶² A useful comparison of professionalism north and south of the border is found in "Managerialism versus Professionalism"; Lesley Kydd and Douglas Weir; Teaching Today; Spring 1994

interest by parents would be necessary to bring education more into the public domain. HMI No 2 comments that there was distrust of the profession by elements within St Andrew's House and by the previous Minister, Mr Michael Forsyth: he sees a difference between what he perceived as genuine consultation of the profession and "making some teachers members of a working group". There is therefore a view that New Right distrust of the professional was indeed present in Scotland and that it had permeated thinking in the corridors of power. Against that, Kydd and Weir contend that:

"No national system of education has been impervious to the sociopolitical changes of the past twenty years. Some, like Scotland where a democratic consensus still prevails, have seen fewer changes to traditional definitions of the teacher's autonomous role. Some, like England, where 'New Rightism' is still dominant, have seen a dramatic redefinition of teaching in a routinised and technicised direction. All are, however, still engaged in a significant debate about the relationship between the state and the profession which questions the rights of the state to take the dominant role in the distribution of knowledge and power."⁶³

In the previous discussion about the situation in England and Wales it was noted that the mechanism which was used to implement the National Curriculum was that of orders within a legal framework. In Scotland, of course, this has not been the case, and the preferred option has been that of guidelines. There has also been discussion earlier in this study about the policy implications of this preferred implementation engine. However, it may be that there are also implications for the views of professionalism of teachers which underlie these different mechanisms. Is it the case, for example, that the guidelines were set up in 5-14 because there were different perceptions of teachers among the policy community north of the border? Was it implied that teachers were professional in some way which did not apply, or applied to a lesser extent, to their counterparts in the south? Was it therefore not necessary to use the framework of legal orders because the profession could be relied upon to act in a different more "professional" way and to implement the new curricula without recourse to law? Or was it just going too far to try this particular mechanism in a country which was

⁶³ "Managerialism versus Professionalism"; op cit; 1994; Page 9

traditionally proud of its academic heritage and those who delivered it? It would be tempting to think that this was in fact the case, that the Government recognised that there were subtle differences in the presentation of its new curricular policy which were more suited to Scottish circumstances, and which took account of particular Scottish sensitivities. However, this is only partly true.

There may be a case for stating that there was a different approach because of the Scottish factor. There had been considerable debate, carried out in the press and elsewhere, about the "Englishing" of Scottish education⁶⁴,⁶⁵, and there was little doubt that there was a perception that such a process was occurring, through innovations such as school boards and the very concept of a national curriculum for Scotland. In the wake of the Education Reform Act there was a feeling that what was seen as right for the system in England was also right for Scotland in some form or other. There was also a perception that the Scottish educational system was distinctively different, and although a case may be argued that public confidence in teacher professionalism had been eroded to a degree by a sustained programme of industrial action through the nineteen eighties in support of better wages and conditions, there was still a perception that the profession of the teacher was valuable and that the job teachers did was a worthwhile one.

But what is also true is that the Secretary of State reserved the right to legislate⁶⁶ in the event of the guidelines not being observed in terms of implementation by members of the Inspectorate. Therefore, the legal framework was always there in the shadows, almost lurking like a threat. The message was: teachers had the chance to implement 5-14 voluntarily through the guidelines by acting in the professional way the Government expected them to act, but if at the end of the day the expected progress towards the achievement of the reform was not observed, the Government would oblige them to implement their policy by means of law. This statement

⁶⁴ "Forsyth's Hidden Agenda -The Turtle's Turn"; Brian Boyd; Times Educational Supplement Scotland; June 16th 1989

⁶⁵ "Forsyth's Hidden Agenda - Fancy, Logic or Nonsense?"; Brian Boyd; Times Educational Supplement Scotland; June 23rd 1989

⁶⁶ Scottish Education Department; "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the Nineties"; HMSO; op cit

carries considerable implications for our discussion of professional issues in the same way that the Orders of the National Curriculum did. It might well be seen as indicating that the consultation, the appointment of working groups from within the profession, and the taking on board of teachers' views was largely a paper exercise. On the other hand, it might also indicate that the entire agenda was not being driven from within New St Andrew's House and that there were certain expectations of delivery which had to be built in in order to achieve a more Scottish-oriented agenda in this area at all. In trying to form an opinion, it is worthwhile looking at the opinions of the two HMII who have contributed to the interview data.

In the opinion of HMI No 1, no pressure was put on the working groups to deliver any particular curriculum. The professional autonomy of the teachers on the working groups is intact; there is no sense in which they might be seen as placed men and women. However, interestingly, the mechanism by which schools are inspected for implementation is also described:

"HMII have invested immense effort in developing forms of inspection for the 4 learning outcomes. For example, they have to take children from the different stages and talk to them. Schools are told in advance that this will happen and they have to provide a sample of pupils. They also have to give the HMII assessment information in terms of the outcomes and strands."⁶⁷

This suggests that the professionalism, the autonomy of teachers is respected in that the onus for the selection of pupils lies with the teachers, that they also make the decisions about the assessment information. But the HMII themselves are there in the same role they have always had - that of the checking of pupils against national standards and the assurance of the quality of Scottish education. Against that, there is still the discourse of compulsion - teachers have to provide the information to the HMII who will inspect to see if satisfactory progress is being made towards successful introduction of the new curricula. Thus, in Scotland there is perhaps a slightly different discursive framework. Although in one sense the discourse is towards national *guidelines*, towards making the best of *good practice*, towards suggestion and towards the valuing of the professionalism of

⁶⁷ Interview with HMI NO 1, Appendix Six.

teachers in the widespread *consultation* of the profession which took place and for which there is ample evidence through the composition of the RDGs and the work of the two NDOs, there is still an underlying discourse of control and compulsion which is difficult to avoid. If there was not quite the same distrust of the expert - indeed of the professional teacher - in Scotland as there was in England and Wales, there was nevertheless an undercurrent of it.⁶⁸ The art of the politics of innovation and educational reform in this instance may well have been the massaging of the message; the construction of a discursive framework which would be more acceptable to those working within the Scottish profession, but underpinning which were similar ideas and ideologies. Another possibility may well have been that there was within the policy community of the SOED a rearguard action fought in order to ensure that the intentions of a reforming government were sufficiently modified to be acceptable to a teaching profession in Scotland which was still rather tender and hurting after a period of extensive strikes, the Main report and the implementation of Circular SE 40. There is some evidence to support this theory, too: the careful language of the SED submission to Kingman; the Remit from CASC to the Committee on Assessment which did not require the testing agenda which was so central to the government's agenda in England and Wales to be implemented with anything like the same ferocity in Scotland; the repeated statements of those who worked with the RDG in English Language that they were under no pressure to produce any particular sort of curriculum when in fact there is very considerable evidence to suggest that their counterparts on the National Curriculum were in exactly this position.⁶⁹

Therefore in terms of the view of professionalism and professionalisation which was taken in Scotland we are in a rather interesting situation. On the one hand there is distinct evidence of consideration being taken of professional aspects such as autonomy at one level, and evidence of that autonomy being undermined or even subsumed into direction at the level of the state through the need for HMI to inspect for implementation and the right of the Secretary of State to legislate. In terms of consideration of the linguistic and other expertise of teachers, there is again evidence of

⁶⁸ See interview with HMI NO 2, already cited, as to evidence of changes along the lines of Government thinking within the S(o)ED during the period in question.

⁶⁹ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Pages 3-13

consultation. For example, if the use of terminology from traditional grammar is there in the national guidelines as a result of consultation, of teachers being asked what terms were in use to describe language then that may be seen, however reluctantly in some quarters, as evidence that the professionalism of teachers was being respected and that terminology which might well be denigrated in some areas was included simply because it was what the teachers wanted to use. The fact that it could also be seen as playing along with a particular agenda related to the standards debate and to ideological concerns is, in this argument, of secondary relevance. But on the other hand, it could also be seen as evidence of unprofessionalism on the part of those who were using these terms because the world of language had largely moved on from the terminology associated with the teaching of traditional grammar: the implication being that the teaching profession in Scotland had failed to catch up and had remained in a kind of linguistic time warp. One major residual question which then emerges is: How do you deal with this situation - what is the best way to manage innovation?

Where the right of teachers to engage in curricular negotiations is concerned, it is once again possible to take two points of view. The first of these is that the guidelines are of precisely that broad and general nature advocated by Britton and Martin; that teachers can negotiate the appropriate curricula for their charges according to their understandings of the learning characteristics which they exhibit and with the conditions associated with these. Thus, there is no prescription, for example, in the reading programmes of study. In this respect, the second characteristic of the model which was developed earlier, is observed. There are broad statements of what children are expected to undergo in the movement towards particular levels of attainment rather than a tight prescription of these, and there is still substantial room for negotiation on the part of the professional at the point of delivery. The other viewpoint is that the prescription of strands, of levels and of targets is in itself a movement towards direction from the centre. There is a national recipe for each child at each stage. This recipe is worked through in behavioural terms, there are specific behaviours which are expected of children at each age level and these behaviours are not a subject of negotiation. They are laid down at national level and it is expected that approximately eighty percent of the population will attain them.

The Scottish pattern of national testing, with its emphasis on the teacher's judgement as to when a child is ready to be tested for a particular level⁷⁰, is also able to be viewed in a similarly dichotomous way. On the one hand, it can be argued that the professionalism of the class teacher is being valued in that there is no compulsion for all children to be tested at the same time and for them to be made to jump simultaneously through behavioural hoops: that the judgement of the teacher herself⁷¹ is critical in all aspects of assessment. On the other, it can also be stated that if the teacher's judgement is paramount and that she is the professional at the point where it matters, why is it necessary to impose a framework of national testing at all? The usual response to the last point is that it is necessary for the teacher to know if her judgement is in line with national standards, and certainly there may be an argument here. Ultimately the pattern of testing in Scotland is not nearly so much oriented towards the checking up on the national curriculum which seems to be the case in England and Wales, and therefore, the point concerning professional negotiation would seem to be more valid in Scotland than perhaps it is south of the Border.

In the end, one has to ask the question: what will be the effect on teacher professionalism of the description and prescription of a national curriculum by order or guideline - something which has, within the timescale of this thesis, never happened⁷² in the United Kingdom or in the same way as it has in other European countries? (This as distinct from the views of professionalism which brought the guidelines or orders into existence⁷³.) To answer the question, one might return to the evidence of the interviewees. Those who were responsible for the production of the national guidelines in Scotland are, predictably, fairly upbeat about future prospects. For example, Robbie Robertson sees the main gain of the implementation of the

⁷⁰ "Assessment 5-14; A Teacher's Guide to National Testing in Primary Schools"; 5-14 Assessment Unit, Scottish Examination Board; October 1993; Pages 3 and ff

⁷¹ This is made explicitly clear in the National Guidelines for Assessment 5-14; op cit 1991; and in Part 3; a Staff Development Pack

⁷² It can be argued that there is a precedent for such rigid prescription in the nineteenth century through "Payment by Results", where the curriculum was laid down and teachers remunerated according to the extent to which certain standards were fulfilled. However, there is no comparable movement during the epoch covered by the study.

⁷³ According to Protherough in "Curriculum Progress 5-16"; op cit; Mr Kenneth Baker believed that it was wrong that teachers should decide what pupils should learn. (Page 142)

guidelines as a consistency of approach between school and across the primary/secondary divide.⁷⁴ Allusion has already been made in this chapter to the view of the professionalism of teachers which Gordon Gibson detected. Teacher professionalism is also described in positive terms by Louise Hayward from the perspective of assessment.⁷⁵ There seems to be a perception that these people would not have allowed themselves to be involved in a process which led ultimately to the deprofessionalisation and devaluing of the job which their colleagues did, and they have to be respected for that perception.

But there is another perception, too, and that is perhaps most noticeable on the part of those who observed the process of the construction and implementation of the new curricula, rather than those who were intimately concerned with its genesis. Dr James McGonigal comments:

"I think they will provide a structure in a complex school world with a packed curriculum....There are practical problems about time and a worry about effectiveness....teachers are not getting thinking time due to the time scale for the implementation of the proposals. Things are being squeezed out which in themselves are valuable simply because they do not seem to fit the ordained pattern - for example, going out for a walk or singing to old folk. Teachers classify activities as "language" or "environmental studies" or "expressive arts" and worry about these in the context of balance. They should be aware of wider possibilities: they should have a sense of confidence when discussing the curriculum"⁷⁶

McGonigal's chief concerns within the model which has been described lie to a certain extent within the realm of autonomy and more greatly within the realm of negotiation.

HMI No 2 is much less convinced about the effect of the reforms. Questioning Government commitment to the long-term teacher education issues in the 5-14 Language proposals, he comments:

⁷⁴ Interview with R Robertson, Appendix Two

⁷⁵ Interview with Louise Hayward, Appendix Ten

⁷⁶ Interview with Dr James McGonigal; Appendix Three

"The style of the times is colossally penetrative. It is a management culture where presentation of documentation has taken on more and more significance and accountability activities are getting in the way of teaching, in my view. Will the guidelines do more for school management and documentation than they will for improving actual performance? There is great interest in the surface features and their presentation rather than in the actual substance. Will what happens to a child in the classroom actually have changed that much in 5 years? However, if 5-14 increases the rigour with which teachers approach language, that is good: but in general, I fear that they will be disempowered more than they are empowered; they may become more technicians than developing professionals with a stake in curriculum development. For a highly qualified workforce this seems an inappropriate and unwise trend - if it proves so."⁷⁷

Thus, in the context about his reservation on language training, HMI No 2 raises doubts about teacher professionalism in the wake of the reforms across three aspects of the model - autonomy, expertise and negotiation.

Finally, Brian Boyd, in a speech to the Scottish Association for the Teaching of English at its inaugural meeting⁷⁸, raised the whole issue of teacher professionalism within the context of the standards debate. Teachers were being deskilled and disempowered: there was a crisis of confidence. 5-14 would only be successful if teachers assumed ownership of it and made it work on their terms. In this, Boyd contextualises the reforms, the issue of professionalism and offers a way forward which respects the professionalism of the individual teacher. However, the issue is also raised: what kind of teacher is able or willing to assume ownership?

At the end of the day, one has to ask what the effect of the guidelines will be in the light of the opinions which have been expressed above. Will the professionalism of teachers be enhanced, or ultimately will it be reduced, bringing the spectre of the curriculum technician even closer? If this spectre becomes flesh, will this be important - do we in fact live in a society where

⁷⁷ Interview with HMI NO 2; Appendix Nine.

⁷⁸ Notes from inaugural SATE Conference, November 17th 1994; Appendix Eleven.

the traditional, professional definition of the school teacher is no longer applicable, or alternatively a luxury which we can no longer afford: or is an entirely new definition of teacher professionalism which assumes the presence of national guidance and central direction in the curriculum as a given factor now necessary? Does consideration of the kind of teacher which we have contribute to the debate about curriculum and the kind of learning which we wish to see in schools? This was certainly the view of Margaret Thatcher, who reflected the Marenbon/Lawlor/Scruton/Baker views in "The Downing Street Years". Ultimately, are we engaging in a debate which takes us beyond teacher status and definitions of what professionalism might or might not be - a debate which Avis thought might ultimately be futile anyway - and engaging in a much wider debate which relates to aspects of power and control in education and in society as a whole? In these terms, the professionalism of teachers and how it might be viewed is just a little part of this much wider debate. It will be the task of the ultimate chapter of this thesis to attempt to address some of these concerns.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Policy, Curriculum and the Teaching of English Language in the Primary School

The Conceptual Framework - research questions

The study began by asking what views of the primary curriculum and of the teaching of English emerged¹. Within that question, the role of the liberal progressive tradition and the thinking of the New Right were examined. These concerns were the subjects of Chapters Three and Four. Further, the ways in which these views are realised in national curricular documentation relating to the pedagogy of primary English language were investigated, in Chapters Five and Six. It is the task of this section to reflect upon these different examinations and to look at the major implications which they raise.

Firstly, let us deal with the question of political views of the teaching of English language in the primary school. It is clear that there has been a shift of emphasis over the last twenty five years which has seen education in general becoming more and more part of the political agenda². In the nineteen sixties and seventies, an epoch which this study has identified as being associated with liberal progressive thinking in education, there was a sense in which education was entrusted to those who were considered to be in possession of some expertise³. This process was part of the prevailing climate of consensus, referred to earlier. The field of expertise included the practitioners in the classroom, because national curricular guidelines were framed in such a way as to leave teachers to make their own decisions as to whether or not particular innovations would be accepted and ultimately

¹ See Introduction, Page 1

² Humes; 1986 op cit; cf Humes 1994, 1995, ops cit.

³ Cf notes on 1965 Primary Memorandum, Chapter Seven.

implemented. Curricular innovation in language itself was driven by bodies such as the Schools Council, and the Scottish Committee on the Language Arts, SCOLA. These bodies were composed of persons believed to be capable of delivering to the profession advice which could interpret current thinking and translate it into forms which could be incorporated into the primary classroom. Thus, there was the publication of the SCOLA Guidelines on different aspects of the language arts in the primary school, or the Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching, ultimately giving rise to "Language in Use". The production of all of these materials was undertaken by those perceived as possessing defined expertise, either within the school system or associated with it through the auspices of colleges, universities, or local education authorities.

There are implications here, as we noted in Chapter Three, for the concept of the policy community itself, and this will be a theme which will be revisited later in this Chapter.

The Importance of the New Right

With the rise of the New Right and the influence of that political movement on the thinking of Conservative education policy, allied to the influence of Sir Keith Joseph (later Lord Joseph), Kenneth Baker and to a lesser extent Nigel Lawson, education became much more of a political concern than it had previously been. More than that, the teaching of English language became a central part of the debate on standards and value for money in which the politicians of the New Right were engaging. The attempts to overhaul the primary curriculum represented by and culminating in the 1990 National Curriculum Orders have been investigated, but these are a part of a much wider debate in which there is a deep distrust of the expert. We have noted Stephen Ball's 'discourse of derision': the blaming of the 'softness' of what were perceived as left-wing philosophies for the mess in which British education found itself. If the existence of such a problematic area is perceived, one is in the position of being able to posit possible solutions, and that is what the New Right did in terms of the teaching of primary language. Left wing images are associated with decline, with mushy thinking, of a falling away from an era of excellence when British education

was held in respect. Similar discourse exists within the teaching of English. Standards have fallen, and this decline of a central key skill has been associated with a decline in cultural values.

There are two possible theories which might go some way towards assessing the New Right position on education in general and on the teaching of English in particular. The first of these sees a genuine concern for children and for the standards of the schools in which they are taught. In this connection, there is concern with a concentration on what are defined as basic skills - it is the purpose and function of State education to provide these for all children. This is also part of an entitlement curriculum - a theme which recurs in New Right writing. Children are entitled to be taught standard English, entitled to be taught basic spelling and grammar. Their ability to be employed is diminished as a result of not being equipped with these particular skills. These and cognate skills in mathematics and increasingly, science, are seen as the foundations of a good education, as those skills which are most prized by employers and therefore are those which the country requires. It is not the purpose of the education system to continue with what may be seen as less relevant skills at the expense of this basic provision. In particular, multicultural education and cross curricular studies are the targets for invective⁴. In articulating this position, New Right thinking undoubtedly catches a popular concern for the standards in schools, and perhaps, as Chapter Three point out, harks back to a Golden Age when British education was seen as in some way pre-eminent. This concern is ultimately linked to the economic performance of the country and the provision of the appropriately educated and trained labour force to meet the challenges of the end of the present century and the beginning of the next.

This is undoubtedly a perfectly legitimate view: there can be few concerned with education who do not have opinions on the standards debate. Indeed, it seems to renew its vigour as time passes. The perception is that the education system has become politicised and ineffective as a result of its engagement with left-wing intellectuals. Subjects are seen as immutable and neutral, while any departure from traditional subject boundaries is seen

⁴ For example, "The Reform of British Education"; op cit.

as politically motivated and a reason for the perceived decline in standards.⁵

It is also concerned with the transmission of cultural values, with the passing on of the heritage from one generation to another. This view of the New Right position might be seen as manifesting itself in the importance placed on accuracy in grammar and spelling, so that children are equipped with the skills to enable them to express themselves accurately and with precision, in terms of the economic argument. In terms of the cultural argument, children will study key texts and these texts will be linked to a particular view of British culture which espouses a vision of greatness. There is some evidence in the Orders, particularly in England, to suggest that this view has made progress through to the curricular level. Both in Scotland and in England there is evidence to suggest that the aims of the New Right as far as accuracy and expression are concerned have also found a home in curricular guidelines. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the view of rote learning and exercises - the pedagogy through which these traditional models of language will be taught to the next generation - has made significant progress either in England or in Scotland.

The second theoretical interpretation of New Right thinking on education in the area of English language is rather different. It sees the position as one which seeks to control and which wishes to impose a popular view of education as in terminal decline on the educational community⁶ This view draws on concerns such as the emphasis within New Right thinking on cognitive learning, and the acquisition of definable knowledge and skills. These are perceived as more valuable than, for example, the ability to develop powers of questioning and evaluation in children. This view relates to a much larger educational view which is in turn related to the effect of market forces upon education in general. Good schools will offer what parents want - an education founded upon a solid grounding in the basic skills - and as a result of reforms, parents will choose to send their offspring there. Poor schools which do not provide this solid grounding will close as a result of parents not wishing to send their children to them and opting to go

⁵ Ball, 1990; op cit Page 48; Thatcher, 1993; op cit Page 590 etc.

⁶ Ball, op cit;1990,1994

elsewhere.⁷

If this view is taken, then the New Right position is seen as one in which a minority seeks to impose control upon the majority, and through the removal or reduction of the teaching of thinking and questioning skills from the school curriculum, creates a workforce which will accept diktats much more readily and with less reaction. The essential relationship is the role of language within power. Again, it is possible to find some justification for this view. The New Right stresses the importance of the written modes, reading and writing, and apply the discourse of derision to the teaching of oral language, within which such abilities of questioning are most readily developed. The cultural view which is articulated within this theoretical position is that of the imposition of a minority (and possibly elitist) vision of cultural importance upon the majority. Thus, the texts which are to be studied are seen not so much as representing the highest peaks of excellence, as a particularly narrow definition of culture which does not admit the importance of local and mass culture in an electronic age. As such, it becomes another part of the control dialogue. In terms of the national guidelines as we have them, there is evidence to suggest that there has been significant intervention and modification by the policy community - hence the much more eclectic book list than, for example, that suggested by Marenbon. The New Right vision⁸ is not writ large in the National Curriculum, even if it remains as a shadowy presence in the background.

Nevertheless, this section is concerned with views of the pedagogy of English language in the primary school. The rather unfortunate phrase 'back to basics' has, as we have seen above, been used to describe the social philosophy of the Conservative government. In a sense, the educational

⁷ Ball, op cit; 1990 Page 59 and ff.

⁸ It should perhaps be recalled at this point that the New Right itself is no single and unique entity with a totally coherent vision, but rather an indication of the general political philosophy shared by such interest groups as Salisbury, Hillgate and No Turning Back. Within educational thinking, there is in the opinion of the author little doubt that the Hillgate group had preeminence at the time of the formulation of the Education Reform Act and the National Curriculum - hence the concentration upon the articulation of the particular vision which they shared both here and in Chapters 3 and 4. See Ruth Levitas; "The Ideology of the New Right". However, none of these groups is recognised in this way in "The Downing Street Years" - Lady Thatcher preferring, instead, to concentrate on the role of personalities within her own cabinet.

vision of the New Right can be seen as espousing this view. In terms of English language curricula, this would emerge as the insistence upon the teaching of traditional grammar - not only as the fulfilment of a knowledge about language strand in which the terminology is used in a metalinguistic sense to describe usage - but as a prescription for correctness in the way language is employed in the written mode. This is echoed in the insistence upon 'correct' standard English forms in the spoken mode. But the question can be asked: what is the sub text to this insistence on a back to basics approach? What is the discursive framework?

In the case of the documentation of the New Right view of the teaching of language, there can be little doubt that the populist appeal of concerns of correctness and good teaching and standards is circumscribed by another discourse. Chapter Three attempted to articulate that discourse. It is concerned with language as social control as much as it is with an articulated concern for standards. It is concerned with a power set which includes concepts of nation and class. These concerns emerge in a number of ways: through the discourse of 'common sense' and 'sensible people' who will agree with the articulated opinions and positions; through the discourse of greatness and a perceived great past, where a particular form of education produced great people. If the country can return to that system, then this will assist in making the country great again. The difficulty, as Stephen Ball says, is that the perception and the solution are both pastiches of different strands of thinking. The problems may in fact be different in nature to those identified by the New Right thinkers; cultural and structural⁹ as well as economic and educational. The New Right version is essentially a simplification of what is an extremely complex situation involving a number of conflicting strands. Consider the transmission of 'British' culture as advocated by Scruton and the Hillgate thinkers. Whereas it may well be possible to articulate a position where there is such an entity, citing a historical basis, it presupposes that there is some kind of national perception of what that culture is. It is equally possible - and distinctly more credible - to suggest that whatever 'British' culture now is, it has changed considerably since the days of Empire. In New Right publications, multicultural education

⁹ The term "structural" is used here to designate the structures which are used to mediate and manage education. Examples of New Right solutions to structural problems might include Local Management of Schools and School Boards in Scotland.

is listed as one of the areas where left wing sloppy thinking has permeated the curriculum. Yet it is surely essential to recognise the pluralistic nature of society in the closing years of the twentieth century, and the contributions which people can make who have come with their own distinctive ethnic identities.

Consideration of the nature of 'British' culture - and of the discursive framework within which that term is used - leads us to aspects of comparison of the political views of primary language in the two systems under consideration. The liberal progressive line would seem to recognise and value the equality of cultures, and seek to avoid debates about cultural relativism. It would stress the need for the education system to be inclusive and for that inclusiveness to recognise the value of other cultures. The New Right do not subscribe to that view, stating that mainstream Anglo-Saxon culture should be transmitted to children through the school system. Local and ethnical considerations are secondary to this duty. This would presumably include concerns of Scottish culture, since the term 'British' is used, as we have noted, to describe both the education system and the cultural values intrinsic within it. However, there are significant differences in approach to cultural issues in Scotland and in England. Whereas in the Kingman and Cox Reports there is paid attention to the needs of bilingual children and their learning of English, this is seen as within the context of ethnic minorities. In Scotland, there is in the National Guidelines a recognition of the place of peculiarly Scottish culture, and a positive encouragement to teachers to engage in its development within the context of national curricular guidelines. Scottish culture is not a local concern, or secondary to the British cultural argument. It is central and important.¹⁰

There are very different and distinctive views of primary English language and its pedagogy, and these have emerged within this thesis. What has also emerged is that the extent to which liberal progressive or New Right thinking has actually resulted in the production of a particular set of guidelines or orders has been modified and influenced by the action of the policy

¹⁰ The place of Scottish culture in the thinking of the New Right is quite ambiguous. On the one hand there is the discourse of 'British' culture which makes no mention of any Scottish dimension and on the other there is the insistence on the empowerment of the individual and his/her local community as part of the movement away from the monolith of central direction.

communities which produced them. It will be the task of a later section of this conclusion to address the ways in which these policy communities operate in both England and Scotland, thus addressing the second part of the first research question in the Introduction. In the meantime, it is the intention to pursue a little further some of the implications of New Right theories and to utilise the work of Ball in this connection.

Language and Power

At this point it might well be useful to expand if possible upon that relationship between language and power which was articulated earlier in this section. Ball makes a number of central points about this. He sees the discourses which are employed by New Right thinking as central in our deconstruction of it, and this approach has of course been utilised in the present study in earlier chapters. He is clear about the cultural agenda which the New Right are advocating, too, and he refers to this as “cultural restorationism”¹¹. This is the concept that traditional forms of education are central to the concept of British culture and that their restoration is important in the achievement of the high standards which characterised earlier epochs. This seems to the author of this study to be an important concept and one which is worthy of further exploration.

It has been argued in previous chapters that culture and cultural concepts are of great importance to New Right thinking on education - thus, for example the insistence on set texts which reflected a particular vision of ‘British’ culture¹². But Ball takes this whole argument a stage further and sees the forms of education themselves as part of the enculturalisation process. This has several significant implications. Firstly, traditional forms of education stressed particular power sets. The order which ensued from pupils realising their status *in statu pupillari*, whether consciously or unconsciously, was important; and this links into concepts of teacher authority and through this, to ideas of teaching styles and to the kinds of relationships which will exist between teachers and pupils in a highly

¹¹ Ball, 1994; op cit; Pages 28 -30

¹² For example, Marenbon, Hillgate; ops cit

ordered and disciplined society. Ball contends that cultural restorationism was a background influence in the events leading up to the Education Reform Act, but that the influence of the educational establishment (Ball's terms of reference for the entity referred to in this study as the policy community) were still strong. However, since the demise of Mrs Thatcher and the coming to power of Mr Major as Prime Minister, Ball argues that there has been a greater influence of restorationism and New Right thinking in educational matters. Ball thus makes a strong link between this strand of New Right thinking and policy making in education.

Secondly, and of importance for this study, traditional forms of knowledge and education are perhaps most enshrined in the teaching of traditional grammar and the employment of traditional methodologies in the teaching of English language. Is traditional grammar, then, simply an aspect of cultural restorationism, or is there a deeper meaning - an underlying agenda? There are two possibilities in answering this question. The first is that traditional grammar is simply part of the enculturation process and that a yearning for its return is also part of the search for meaning in the changing society which is now with us. Traditional grammar is associated with concepts of correctness and therefore incorrectness. Pupils are right or wrong in their usage. Descriptive grammars do not utilise these concepts, and point instead to possibilities created by alternative usage. The structure is less ordered, and more fluid: more open to challenge and debate. Through the teaching and learning of traditional grammar, pupils learn to create "correct" English and they also assimilate a concept of authority in their use of language. The second possibility grows from this. It is that the State can effectively control knowledge through this control of school discourse.

Ball points out the importance and significance of the vastly increased powers available to the Secretary of State for Education.¹³ He asks why these powers are necessary, and the answer which he postulates is that they are concerned with a whole range of control mechanisms. If teachers do not perform they can be disciplined. If schools do not perform they will be closed by the mechanism of parental choice. The teaching of teachers is assessed through the mechanisms of SATs and so on. The teaching of traditional

¹³ Ball, 1994; op cit; Page 33

grammar can be seen as one more control mechanism in the light of this discussion, especially where some of the alternatives - such as Derewianka's work in genres - are concerned with what might be termed as the linguistic empowerment of children. One can in fact turn the New Right theory of entitlements on its head in this respect and contend that children are equally entitled to be taught forms of language which they can use in different social situations to maximise their participation in differing social dynamics, and that they should be entitled to examine text according to social genres. Thus they realise the conditions under which text is created, and are enabled to recreate their own text in similar situations.

He who controls education controls knowledge¹⁴. This underlying truth has been realised by many over the ages - one has only to think of dictatorships in Germany and the Soviet Union to exemplify it. If this were not so, then these dictators would have been content to leave education to the professionals and to the systems managers and politics to the politicians. There is no suggestion in this thesis that there is a sinister agenda of the nature defined above in the New Right view of education, though it is undoubtedly true that New Right thought in the area of education is perhaps more concerned with the teaching of English than with other subject areas. Such an assertion of a sinister agenda would not be borne out, for example, in the intention of the New Right thinkers to give power back to parents through choice and to put into place libertarian measures designed to increase participation in education such as school boards. These measures are far removed from the centralised, highly controlled situations which are necessary for the exercise of corrupt power. But the principle remains the same. If one is in a position to exercise substantial control over the education

¹⁴ The whole question of the relationship between society, knowledge and culture has been the focus of the attention of commentators. For example, Bernstein is concerned with the relationship between social class and language and the linguistic and cultural codes which are used by various social groups. Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu is concerned with the concept of 'cultural capital', the possession of which is directly related to the degree of success of the individual (Bourdieu and Passeron; 1977; "Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture Page 74"; SAGE publications). Likewise, these issues are discussed in depth by GH Bantock ("Culture, Industrialisation and Education", 1968; "Education, Culture and the Emotions", 1967). One can also add the names of such as Halsey and Michael Young to this debate. The point here is that this is seen by the author of this study as one of the forks in the road which have to be negotiated. While it might be enjoyable and profitable to further discuss the relationships between knowledge, language and culture, there is a finite length to a thesis; and the decision has been taken to pursue the implications for policy in this conclusion rather than to flesh out this particular argument.

system, then one is in a position to influence more greatly the way that schools operate, and through this to influence the way that teachers teach and children learn. That is the important fact, and that is the result of the New Right proposals - now statutes - in education. If, as Ball says, the whole enculturation process is influenced, that the traditional view of education becomes accepted as a self-evident truth, then the *possibility* exists that a future government might exercise a malign influence through this growth in central control. Perhaps that is the greatest of the dangers which New Right thinking presents.

But let us return to the view of language. New Right thinking in this area, is as we have said, highly retrogressive. It enshrines a particular vision of language as correct, and a particular pedagogy of language as correct. It disregards subsequent developments in linguistics and educational language teaching as flawed, because they do not conform to this vision of correctness: by definition, if one view is correct all others must be wrong. Now, as we have also pointed out, other views see the relationships between power and language as crucial. Power is articulated through language, power is obtained through language. In this context what is intended is not simply political power on a macro scale but also personal power through social discourse¹⁵. Therefore it follows that if a view of language is articulated which sees one set of expressions - largely based on Latin, a language to which only a small minority of citizens have, or historically speaking have had access - then the usage of the majority of citizens is wrong. It could even be argued that some of those who are empowered through their knowledge of Latinate structures are 'wrong' in their usage when they choose to step outside these structures in particular social situations. It is therefore the contention of this thesis that the New Right views of correctness and their insistence on a reversion to a particular model of language which in the light of research and developments in linguistics is properly termed archaic, is in fact anachronistic. The effect of this might well be linguistic disempowerment of the majority who do not have access to correct genres (in the social sense of the word as promulgated by Christie, Derewianka et al), and the empowerment of the few who do have access to

¹⁵ Foucault, Althusser, Gramsci, Kristeva. See Chapters Three, Four and Six for specific references.

them. Perhaps the irony of this situation is that one of the justifications for a return to traditional grammar is that children should be entitled - should be equipped with access to "correct" use of language, including Standard English. This last point bolsters the above assertion, as Standard English, far from being a classless mode of language, is in fact largely the preserve of the middle classes. The implications for bilingual and other minority dialectal speakers are immense.¹⁶

Policy and Policy Actors

One of the major findings of Chapters Five and Six was that in spite of a great deal of major international research in educational linguistics, only a limited amount actually percolated into the national curricula, and that was mainly within the spheres of genre and discourse theory. This raises the questions of who decides what actually gets into the national curricula, and by what process this filtration occurs. The research suggests that in fact there are a number of people who act as 'gatekeepers', and that they make the decisions as to the material which will form the basis of what is offered to children in the primary schools of the United Kingdom.

In terms of England and Wales, this process of filtration has been recorded by Cox¹⁷ and by members of the Kingman Committee.¹⁸ It emerged from these studies and comments that there was in the process of implementation of Government education policy in the late nineteen eighties, a mismatch between the desire of the Government to implement an English language programme based on a return to the teaching of traditional grammar, and that the only concept of linguistics for schools which they were prepared to admit was one based upon the assumption that traditional grammar was immutable and indeed the only prescription for correct usage. It also became apparent that what Kingman produced was most definitely not to the liking of

¹⁶ These are teased out in for example, Lesley Woodcock; "Foundation Subject English" in "Cultural Diversity and the Curriculum"; eds PD Pumfrey and GK Verma; The Falmer Press 1993; Page 77 and ff

¹⁷ "Cox on Cox"; op cit; Chapter One

¹⁸ see, for example, "Heart of Darkness"; Richard Knott; op cit

those who had commissioned the report¹⁹ , with the expectation that a return to such traditional concepts would be advocated. The appointment of Professor Cox to oversee the implementation of English language within the National Curriculum could then be seen as a further attempt to achieve this aim, this time by the means of ensuring that the Chair of the Committee was both a respected academic and also one whose credentials through the Black Papers were impeccable from an ideological point of view. However, as we have noted, Cox could not - and did not - fly in the face of his own training and vocation as a linguist, and therefore the Report when it emerged, was much more liberal in nature than that which those controlling education policy at the time expected it to be.

These observations also tie in to the findings of this study in terms of the process by which curriculum change in England has evolved in historical terms. It was noted that in England there tends to be a period of assimilation, followed by the identification of a need, and subsequently the appointment of a large state Commission or Committee under the Chairmanship of someone with particular expertise or who is held in particular respect, which then takes evidence and produces a report. This report is usually - at least until Kingman - research based and of fairly large proportions. Indeed, models like Plowden and Bullock might well be said to constitute major contributions to educational research in the decades in which they were produced. Only a Government sponsored and funded initiative could have the same scope and access as these studies have had.

These reports are then subject to a process of consultation and implementation during which schools have traditionally reviewed their practice and selected those aspects of the reports with which they agreed and which they found they could implement. The process of implementation has until the advent of the National Curriculum, traditionally been a fairly slow one. Thus, in a sense, until the advent of the Education Reform Act, it could almost be said that policy at the macro level was decided by the results and findings of these reports. The government and the policy community would decide on a need and the process by which it would be implemented, and this in turn reflected the consensus approach to

¹⁹ "The Downing Street Years"; op cit; Page 595

educational policy and planning which has been identified by many commentators²⁰ as characteristic of the period up until the mid nineteen eighties. After the Education Reform Act (or indeed in the period leading up to it) education policy has been marked by a desire to directly implement a particular version of policy which is in turn ideologically driven rather than research driven or consensus driven. Thus, one finds the inclusion of market forces into the educational equation; a vision of education as one of a number of competing claims on the nation's resources rather than an investment in human capital which will eventually be repaid; and a back to basics approach which as we have seen, is based on a particular view of as deterioration in standards and a desire to return to a former age when it is perceived higher standards obtained. What is perhaps slightly ironic in the case of English language is that this return to traditional grammar and a bimodal approach refers to part of that earlier consensus, where traditional grammar was taught in the vast majority of schools as a matter of course.

In the case of Scotland, the process of the implementation of policy within the 5-14 framework is not nearly so well documented²¹ , and indeed it is within this sphere that this study makes perhaps its greatest claim to originality. What is clear from previous chapters and from the research undertaken is that the process of implementation in Scotland is very different from that in England and Wales. There are a number of reasons for this, and it is now the intention to discuss these and review this process.

Historically, Scotland has not followed the English pattern of curriculum innovation. This divergence has also featured in the process of implementation of Conservative education reforms in the 1980s and particularly in the period after the Education Reform Act and parallel developments north of the border. There have not been the big reports, the massive research exercises on the scale of Plowden and Bullock. That is not

²⁰ see McNay and Ozga; op cit; Ball 1990, 1994; op cit.

²¹ "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland - A Policy for the Nineties"; Angela Roger and David Hartley; op cit; is perhaps the nearest that published studies have come to a complete analysis. As far as is known, this is the first study to undertake an in depth look at the process of implementation within a subject area. As this study was under construction a further unpublished PhD by Sandra Percy at the University of Edinburgh was in course of preparation, based on the developing relationship within the 5-14 programme between Biggar High School and its associated primary schools.

to say that there has been no research, or that documents like Plowden and Bullock have had no influence. Indeed, we have noted the influence of Bullock in particular on some aspects of the work of the RDG in English language. But what historical study shows is that the process of innovation in Scotland in the realm of English language has been much more gradual, on a smaller scale, and much more continuous. Thus, the 1950 Primary Memorandum led to its successor in 1965, to the SCOLA documents and the SCCE Bulletins of the 1970s, in turn to the 1980 COPE Position Paper and the 10-14 Report. In all of these innovations there was extensive involvement of the teaching community, either through nomination to working parties or task groups, or through teacher representation on the substructures of the SCCC. Most interestingly of all, this process has continued after the implementation of 5-14, even if there has been a shift in the way that policy is formed at the macro level.²²

Why should this be? It seems that there could be a number of possible explanations. Firstly, Scotland is a much more compact system than that which obtains south of the border. It serves a population of five million as compared to one of fifty five million, and therefore the possibility of more direct lines of communication exists. It is easier, to pick up currents and to develop them, particularly if there is a greater involvement of teachers in the process. It is as we have noted, traditionally seen as more centralised, although McPherson and Raab have cast some doubt upon this view. It is a basically different system, and thus the implementation of innovation can take place in a different way.

Secondly, it can be argued that it is more homogeneous. The Inspectorate in Scotland is different, and has been traditionally different. There is a single central government agency in the SED / SOED which is responsible for education within the system rather than a number of local education authorities each with a differing interpretation of central DES/DFE policy. Although local authorities have a distinct role to play in the interpretation of local circumstances, it is possible to maintain oversight over the system in a way which is much more difficult in England and Wales.

²² see "Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom; Brian Boyd; op cit.

Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, there is a traditional perception of the professionalism of teachers which is historical in origin and which ties in to the valued role which teachers have traditionally enjoyed north of the border. This is reflected in the central place given to teachers in the working groups which have been described above. HMII are assessors to these groups and are charged with ensuring that they consider the remit which is decided at the level of the Department: they do not - at least overtly - steer them into particular ways of thinking - although the influence of certain individuals may well be considerable. The evidence of the interview material suggests extremely strongly that the RDG on English Language was given a free hand to develop curricula within the Remit handed down by CASC. There was no attempt to make it think or report in a particular way, and evidence exists to suggest that the personnel involved would not have done so if such an attempt had been made. This is also borne out by the evidence available from those involved on the Committee on Assessment, where the express desires of the Minister for an emphasis on testing were not carried through.

Likewise, one can look at similar examples of teacher involvement in the groups which produced the 1950 and 1965 Memoranda - even if these documents emerged from the Inspectorate and with their imprint of authority upon them. The involvement of teachers in the SCOLA and SCCE work of the seventies was enormous, accomplished through the SCCC appointing particular individuals to the tasks it put in hand. Of course, it could be argued that these appointments are a form of patronage²³. But even if this is the case, the central involvement of teachers in the implementation - and earlier perhaps even the deciding²⁴ - of policy is manifest.

This involvement is arguably the result of a very different emphasis in Scotland to that which prevails in England and Wales. There, as we have noted, when a Report is to be drawn up, expert opinion - including the profession - is consulted. But the profession, although always represented, is not central to the process. Kingman and Cox, Plowden and Bullock were all experts who were brought in to do a particular job. In Scotland, the experts can be seen as being within the profession, even if a wider interpretation of

²³ See Humes, 1986; op cit.

²⁴ The remit of the former Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum was the provision to the Secretary of State of advice on the curriculum in schools in Scotland.

the term 'profession' is necessary in order to include training colleges and the Inspectorate. In England and Wales, the agency of change can be seen as external, whereas in Scotland the emphasis is on internal change agents. However, if change agents are to be internal, there is a case for them to have a high level of training and expertise. Otherwise, they will not be in possession of the necessary abilities and knowledge to make change work successfully. It is contended that there is this high level of training, of expertise in Scotland and that it exists within the profession as more widely defined - within schools, colleges of education and universities and within the Inspectorate.

In Scotland, people go into education and work at the highest level which they can, not all of them in the agencies identified in the last paragraph. Chapter Seven identified a different perception of professionalism in Scotland to that which predominates in England and Wales. It is part of the same process which has led to the establishment of a General Teaching Council to maintain standards in training and entry - a feature which many writers would wish to see established south of the border. It is part of the academic tradition in Scotland, identified by Macintosh, Hunter, Scotland and others, part of the process by which teaching has been able over the years to continue to attract and train people of high calibre. This is not to say that teachers in England are in some ways inferior in training and professional skills. It is to say that a perception of the worth and professionalism of teachers has become embedded in the system in Scotland²⁵ in a way which has not occurred to the same extent in England and Wales, and that part of this perception has resulted in orders in the latter system and guidelines in the former. That perception underpins the central use of the teaching profession in the formulation of change in the system within which they work in Scotland.

What then is the process by which policy becomes curriculum in Scotland? In the case of English language, the evidence of this study is that there are a number of key players who occupy crucial locations in the process. In a sense the whole of the RDG on English language 5-14 might be said to

²⁵ see also David Northcroft; "The Teaching of English in Scottish Secondary Schools 1940-1990; op cit.

occupy this role. They decided how the remit should be interpreted, and fundamentally, how it should be implemented. Thus, policy decisions made at macro level by the Government in terms of the need for an overhaul of the primary curriculum and arrangements for assessments actually translated into curriculum according to the decisions made by the RDG itself. There was no pressure as we have noted, and this is seen as part of the process outlined above. But it is also part of the pluralistic implementation of policy as described in Chapter Three, and fits the model described by McPherson and Raab. However, it should also be noted that it is part of this thesis to state that there are a number of policy communities which operate at a number of different levels - and that it is possible to argue for the existence of a separate policy community for the sphere of English language. Indeed, all the evidence available to the author suggests that this is the case. In the case of the Committee on Assessment - and it has to be recalled that assessment formed a critical element of Conservative education policy in the nineteen eighties - there was a similar process. In the case of that Committee, there was an overt recognition of the needs of teachers and a similar recognition of their abilities as identified by the research carried out by the National Development Officer. There was therefore a turning away from the primacy of testing. This had to exist as part of a national assessment strategy - but the Guidelines on Assessment identified it as playing a particular role within a much broader definition of assessment which prioritises overtly the professional judgement of the teacher.²⁶ In making these decisions - and in seeing them carried through to have a profound influence on the curricular arrangements being undertaken for a generation of children in Scottish schools - the Committee on Assessment have been responsible for the translation and formulation of a policy which in effect goes in a different direction to that which the Government originally envisaged, but which fits much more closely into the democratic tradition of education in Scotland and into the construct of teacher professionalism identified earlier.

At this point it is perhaps helpful to pick up further on some of the findings from Chapters Three and Four relating to the policy community and to the nature of the policy process in Scotland. McPherson and Raab's model of

²⁶ National Guidelines on Assessment, Page 3

the policy community is that of a combination of governmental and non-governmental agencies which together effectively form and deliver policy. Its influence is not always seen as benign: for example, this combination may continue inequities in the system²⁷. McPherson and Raab also identify macro policy communities within a larger picture - policy communities for education, industry, fishing, housing and so on.²⁸ However, their text and monumental research contained within it established and sustained the policy community concept.

This idea is as we have noted, a refinement of Humes' leadership class, and is by no means unique to commentators on the situation in Scotland. Ball chooses the term 'educational establishment' in some of his text, particularly when he is referring to the New Right way of looking at things, and this term is also extensively used within New Right writings on education²⁹. The New Right's view of the policy community, of course, was that there existed an establishment of liberal professors, advisers and inspectors whose influence on education in Britain (effectively England and Wales) was malign and which had served to destabilise the traditional view of education.³⁰ But Ball also recognises and utilises the term 'policy community'. He expands upon it, too, in that he is able, writing from a post-structuralist/ critical analysis viewpoint to locate specific discourses which are used by it and therefore to identify discursive frameworks referring to the power sets which are in operation.

In Scotland, the concept of the policy community has also been developed further by Marker³¹. Writing on the making of policy in teacher education in Scotland from 1959-1981, Marker comments on policy at national, macro level. In this he sees the SED at the centre of policy, with other groups interrelating with it. This interplay is pluralistic in that no one group could legitimately, within the sphere of Marker's research, claim to have got its own way. Marker also develops McPherson and Raab's distinction between

²⁷ "Governing Education"; op cit; Page 476

²⁸ "Governing Education"; op cit; Page 475

²⁹ for example, Marenbon, Lawlor etc.

³⁰ "Education Reform"; op cit; Page 33

³¹ "Policy Making in Teacher Education in Scotland, 1959-81"; William B Marker; unpublished Ph D thesis; University of Glasgow; 1993

pluralism and corporatism, where the former is defined as disparate groups who make claims on government and are more or less successful in achieving them and where the latter is defined as selected groups who collaborate with government and achieve the formulation and achievement of policy. It might be useful to take these points forward with reference to the present study.

Firstly, the concept of the policy community holds good within this research. How is it constituted? It would appear that the Government formulates, in Scotland at least, a particular policy in general terms, and the educational policy community then fleshes it out. In the realm of English language there is, as we have noted, a legitimate claim for the existence of a discrete policy community. This includes the SOED who make decisions at the macro level, the Inspectorate who sit on Committees and act as Assessors but who do not interfere when the Committee decides that it wishes to pursue a particular line unless that line is thought to be contrary to what the Department in general sees as desirable policy outcomes. Secondly, it includes Robbie Robertson's "horses for courses" - the Department knowing who to place on a Committee in order to achieve particular results. These are perhaps the principal policy actors in the framing of the 5-14 curricular guidelines in primary English language. What now has to be addressed is the manner in which they operate to carry through the policy and curriculum processes. The role of the Minister of State for Education has been identified in this thesis at an earlier stage. His task, as he saw it, was to drive through a raising of educational standards by putting in place a range of policies which would achieve this. The identified targets were the curricula of the primary schools and the first two years of the secondary schools. In concert with this were to be the overhaul of assessment, intersectoral liaison and the quality of information provided to parents. The agency which was charged with the implementation of the policy was of course the Scottish Office Education Department, and the appointment by it of subsidiary groups - first CASC, then the RDGs. Thus there was in place a hierarchical policy structure of at least four layers. But we have already noted the distinct divergence in the final curricula which emerged from the RDGs from the original policy intentions. Therefore, was this an example of pluralism, with the effective decisions being taken at the appropriate level - almost subsidiarity, in effect?

Once more the answer is a qualified yes. It is qualified by the fact that there were undoubtedly, through the employment of “horses for courses” , aspects of corporatism in McPherson and Raab’s terms in that a carefully selected group were appointed. But there the resemblance ends as they did not in fact carry through the shared intention - nor, would it appear, was there pressure upon them to do this. They were, as we have noted repeatedly, given a free hand. Yet what they produced was a compromise - a bit of genre theory at the cost of the use of traditional grammar terms, even if these are to be used in a metalinguistic rather than a prescriptive manner. The question then arises - at what level was the policy decision effectively made which governed the production of the national guidelines?

The answer has to be within the SOED, because it was at that level that the decision was taken upon the remit, and it was at that level that the decision was therefore made about how the RDG would be constrained. On the one hand there was a Minister of State for Education with New Right credentials who was engaged in the pursuit of a particular agenda related to the standards debate and to testing, and on the other hand there were the professionals who would be obliged to make the proposals operate - and who, it should be remembered, did not necessarily agree with the Minister’s view even if there was a perception that reform was now due. The task of achieving that reconciliation must have been undertaken within the Department. The policy community within English language is therefore to be seen as one in which there may have been corporatist elements, but within which there is substantial support for a pluralist view of the policy decision making process.

Related to this is another concern which was raised earlier in Chapter Three, and that is whether or not the centre lay within Scotland or outside it. The policy model in England and Wales, as we have noted is a different one - but the effect of the different process is not dissimilar in that the intentions of a reforming government were diluted or perhaps more properly, modified through the more liberal views of the Kingman and Cox Committees and the end results were Reports which were different from those which the Government had envisaged. The policy communities themselves were

different in that they were much narrower and more focused away from the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the initial policy initiatives from which both the Education Reform Act and the Secretary of State for Scotland's paper sprang were the same, and rooted in the same basically neo-conservative concern for standards and for a return to traditional forms of education practice. In that sense, the centre could be seen to lie outside Scotland in the driving through of UK wide policy initiatives. But as far as the implementation of these initiatives is concerned, the evidence of this study strongly suggests that the Scottish way is different from the English way and that the final result of this difference has been a system which is much more in tune with what teachers understood and were prepared to support than the 1990 Orders were in England and Wales. There certainly does not seem to have been the same degree of teacher resentment at an overcrowded curriculum and at the forms of national testing as there has been in England and Wales, and Scotland has not needed its Dearing - so far.

Policy, Pedagogy and Linguistics

Chapters Five and Six looked at the pedagogy of primary language as expressed in the various national curricular documents. In Chapter Six particularly, a number of possible approaches and models of language were examined, and those which actually surfaced or formed an important part of the guidelines were identified. This leads to the question: how are the models of language which are implemented actually decided? The evidence of this study is that there are, as has been stated, a number of crucial policy gatekeepers, and that these existed within the Review and Development Group - and also within the Committee on Assessment, rather than constituting the group as a whole. Let us consider this evidence.

There has been as we have noted, a considerable amount of development in the field of linguistics over the past thirty years. Some of that development has gone in particular directions which have found favour in some schools - for example genre theory in Australia - whereas other development has existed largely outwith mainstream schools. This perception that linguistic theory was too remote from what was an essentially practical world of school

education was seized upon by the Government, as we have noted, in the abandonment of the LINC materials. No doubt distrust of the expert also featured in that decision. But the 5-14 national guidelines in Scotland do contain genre theory and they do contain aspects of discourse theory. How did these get in? The answer lies with the expertise possessed by figures such as Gordon Liddell, Gordon Gibson and HMI No 1. They acted as gatekeepers in as much as they were familiar with developments in the field of linguistics and they were aware of movements in international research in language. They knew about crucial distinctions and they also knew what the awareness of teachers on the ground was. Therefore they were ideally placed to decide what got in to the final version of the guidelines.

But this leads us into a problematical area. Such knowledge and the possession of it places these gatekeepers in a difficult position, in that they have to assume an interpretative role. This role is shared by the policy community in English language as defined in this case by the RDG as a whole and by implication those who selected the membership of the RDG - or perhaps even those who decided that the best method to implement 5-14 was through such a mechanism. These gatekeepers feed in to the RDG those aspects of research and development which they think is necessary. Thus Liddell's knowledge of linguistics and language theory, shared with HMI No 1. Thus Gordon Gibson's awareness of the concept of a metalanguage; Robbie Robertson's knowledge of the system and indeed his encyclopaedic humane knowledge. But these gatekeepers can only take their knowledge of research so far where the construction of a curriculum is concerned - they are also aware of constraints such as the linguistic awareness of teachers and their capabilities in dealing with developments in English language. They are as we have seen, also aware of the market and the constraints of ideology. This explains Gordon Liddell's assertion that the inclusion of traditional grammar terminology may have been the price which has had to be paid for the inclusion of aspects of genre theory. Not only are they gatekeepers, they are also balancing artistes. They exercise political judgement and work at the micropolitical level.

Mention of the awareness of both NDOs of the linguistic level at which teachers were operating raises a number of fascinating points. The first of

these is that these gatekeepers were able to inform the RDG as to exactly what was happening on the ground and therefore to make the proposals more acceptable and perhaps ultimately more effective. But there may be more to it than that. Gordon Gibson has explained the inclusion of the terminology of traditional grammar as being there in a metalinguistic way as a shorthand for description. But this inclusion also does a number of other things. Firstly, it shows that the RDG had to get into the teachers' own language in order to communicate. They had to penetrate the genre which was in use in the schools in Scotland in order to make contact with where the teachers were operating. Certainly they managed to incorporate a metalanguage - but that metalanguage had to be that of traditional grammar. This at once raises the issue of the suitability of traditional terminology for this metalinguistic role - but it also raises a further issue of the danger of teachers seeing the terminology - and deciding from its existence in the National Guidelines that what was on offer was a return to the methodologies associated with this terminology: the decontextualised exercise, if not the bimodal model. The existence of the latter is ruled out by the emphasis given in the guidelines as a whole to speech and listening and the connections between oral and written modes.

The second point is that the existence of traditional grammar gives a different emphasis to the Scottish guidelines from those emerging from Kingman and Cox. There, there is almost a determination to fly in the face of Government and to advocate a more liberal model wherever this is possible. There is virtually no reference to the terminology of traditional grammar in the 1990 Orders, and more about genres and the importance of language in context. This of course was part of the reason for the Government's intense dissatisfaction with the final version of English 5-16 and its restricted availability.³² It is slightly ironic once more that in Scotland, where the policy community and its engagement with teachers has been that much closer, there should be inclusion of precisely those things which the Government most wanted to see.

The third point is that there has been, if the evidence of the NDOs is to be believed, a mythology of the classroom where the teaching of English

³² see "Cox on Cox"; op cit.

language is concerned. The popular perception, seized upon by the New Right as we have seen, of English being taught by laissez faire methods, with emphasis not on traditional skills but on processes and creative writing seems to be, according to the NDOs, largely mythological. Teachers in Scotland continued to concentrate on the traditional way of doing things, at least in the terminology which they employed if not in the methodology. This was also what the author found in his own earlier research. In turn, this can be explained in two ways: firstly as a reluctance to demit traditional terminologies where these had been shown to be valuable in describing language, and where there was a consensus - perhaps based on folk tradition - that this was the way in which language was described. Secondly, it can be explained in terms of the linguistic awareness of the teachers themselves - they simply did not have the knowledge - or perhaps the confidence - to commit themselves to the use of the newer forms of descriptive linguistics. Being unwilling to take risks where the education of their pupils was concerned, they stuck to what was perceived as tried and tested. Even younger teachers, trained with some awareness of the alternatives, were either constrained by school policy, or again lacking in confidence - so they reverted to the way they themselves were taught. Either way, the assertion by Marenbon that retraining in traditional grammar would be necessary does not seem to hold water where Scottish education is concerned.

The Wider Context.

The above discussion leaves some questions rather tantalisingly in the air. One of these might be: what criteria do these gatekeepers use to determine which aspects of language theory development actually penetrate into the curriculum and which aspects are left out? To a certain extent we can identify one possible response: the pragmatic concerns of teacher knowledge and the acceptability of proposals to those who form policy at the political level. But this study does not have enough data to answer that question more fully, and in this, it perhaps points the way to further research which might be carried out in this area. It would be important to know this, because it would provide insights into the way in which these policy gatekeepers act, and in

understanding that process, we can have access to possible improvements in it. Similarly, the fact that the attainment targets - at least in Scotland - are the result of the nous of practising professionals may bespeak the role of these professionals in the implementation of policy, but it also suggests that there may be research required to establish exactly what a child in Scotland might be reasonably expected to do at a certain age or stage of her/his development in English language. It appears to the author that this lack of a critical research dimension in the attainment targets is a potential weakness in the 5-14 curriculum proposals at a very important point in the structure which has been designed.

To revert to the previous point, we have asked what criteria are employed by policy gatekeepers. Another related point might be the knowledge that the gatekeepers themselves need in order to fulfil their functions properly, and how are they selected for this role. Further relationships exist between individual gatekeepers and the way in which they operate as a team. This is evident in the data available from both the Review and Development Groups which were investigated. It is clear that Professor McGettrick and his team operated extremely well and efficiently together, just as Professor Wilson and his team did. We need to examine whether, as Robbie Robertson says, the larger policy community select those whom they know will produce a particular kind of report, and whether the dimension of representation is as wide as it might be, or if the efficient working of the group is more important than the extension of debate. We might ask why a cadre of persons committed to traditional grammar was not appointed - there was evidence that the profession would have supported this since they were apparently still using these terms. In any event it is possible that the influence of such as HMI No 1, Liddell and Gibson was so powerful that even the presence of such a cadre would have resulted in the event in a broadly similar report. These matters are important, because they relate to the processes by which curricula are designed, and beyond that to the ways in which Government policy is implemented through the various layers of the system. There may be in fact a case, supportable from the evidence both from Scotland and from England, which says that neither system of implementation produced the reports which the government wanted or perhaps even expected, and thus it would have been more fruitful from their point of view to have utilised

some other system. Having engineered a particular working party - even in the expectation of a particular result - makes it very difficult to reject the findings of that group when they appear and do not suit your purpose.

A further issue which arises from this discussion is the role of elites. At least in Scotland, we have seen change agents of very high skill, manifesting a profound knowledge of how the system operates, and using that knowledge of the system to implement what is basically a fairly unified vision of how children should learn language skills, even if the unified vision is eclectic in the sources from which it emanates. Thus we have a system which articulates with Standard Grade, which is quadrimodal in nature, which concentrates on processes as much as on knowledge. Do those who constructed that model constitute an elite, remote from the experience of others? Should curricula be in fact constructed by such groups at all, or within a system where decentralisation of administration is rapidly gathering pace, should there be devolution of curricular design to the level of the school itself?

To respond to the first point, it can firstly be argued that we need elites of this nature and that there is no need to apologise for their presence. Secondly, it can be stated that since the majority of the Committee were practising teachers and those who were not were in everyday touch with the world of the classroom, they most certainly could not be described as remote from the experience of the recipients of the guidelines. The second point is a much wider issue and relates to the argument below.

We need further research on the way in which organisations change, and on how new thinking percolates down into the curriculum in the school.³³ It has been said³⁴ that new technology has its origins with the military, is then exploited by the commercial and finally drips down into the world of education, and there is some truth in this. We need to think about how schools relate to new research and how they incorporate this research into

³³ Research of this nature on the 5-14 initiative has in fact been commissioned by the now Scottish Office Education and Industry Department under the auspices of its Research and Intelligence unit and has been published by SCRE on its behalf in the Interchanges series. See the Bibliography for specific references.

³⁴ Daniel Chandler, to a workshop of the National Association for the Teaching of English, 1983

what they teach. In the world of language, and in the primary school, we need to think about how schools can utilise the developments in linguistics which are going on. If we do not, then the linguist and the classroom will move further and further apart. Ultimately they will be incapable of communication with one another, as CP Snow feared in his "Two Cultures" argument. And if linguistics and the world of the primary school are separated, then there are serious problems for the system, for the primary school is the starting point for every potential researcher in linguistics. More than that, if linguistic research - say, in genre theory, as we have noted - is concerned with enabling children to use language in a way which is designed to empower them, then we run the risk of disempowerment if we choose to ignore these developments in our classroom teaching. And if the children in some countries are empowered where those in others are not, then perhaps we become that bit less competitive and less effective in economic terms - say in the sphere of negotiation. Thus we return to the argument that the purpose of education is to serve the economic ends of the country, but we are far away from the New Right version of this.

Another area which this study touches upon is the world of teacher education. Perhaps we need to define the knowledge which teachers require in order to cope with the English language education of primary school pupils in the closing years of this century. We may in fact need to ask whether it is useful to perpetuate the teaching of traditional terminology "because that was what we found teachers were actually using". There might be a case for arguing that what we need to do is to educate teachers to understand much wider views of the concept of text and how text works - this is certainly the view of Andrew Philp. Simply because a particular set of terms were in use at the time a government committee chose to investigate how metalanguage was being taught in Scotland does not surely suggest that these terms should be taught in perpetuity. There are those who regret the missed opportunity that the 5-14 guidelines represent; among them Andrew Philp and HMI No 2. For them, there was a chance to take Scottish education beyond its kailyard and its traditions and to align it with movements in language which are now taking place on a global scale. That chance was sacrificed in their eyes on the altar of systems maintenance.

Thus, we have to think very carefully about how our teachers are to be educated for service in our primary schools where the teaching of language is concerned. We surely do not wish to restrict them to simply serving the needs of whatever set of Government documents might emerge, but to giving them a wider vision which will enable them to make informed decisions about the kind of language teaching in which they are engaging. This seems to the author to presuppose that the kind of teacher education in language which was envisaged by Kingman should take place. Teachers have a duty of prime importance towards the development of their pupils, and the structure of the national curriculum guidelines in Scotland and in England may help them to achieve continuity and progression. We need to have research on how these programmes are achieving the ends which they set out to carry through, and there is some evidence that this research is now ongoing. But we also need to ensure that the valued professionalism is not lost or diluted by the need to get children to jump through specified hoops at a particular time, and that teachers of primary language are aware of the alternatives which do exist, and which as Derewianka and others have shown, can be translated into effective classroom procedures and programmes for learning. Ultimately, like all curriculum proposals, the National Curriculum and 5-14 are children of their time and will need to change. They should not be regarded as immutable truths by teachers, nor as the only version of how primary language programmes might evolve. As Brian Boyd says³⁵, teachers have to seize these curricula and develop them the way in which they want them to go, otherwise the precedent may well be set that there are those who decide curricula and those who carry them out.

This thesis, then, has set out to present a multi disciplinary investigation of national curricular guidelines in Scotland and in England, and to look at the views of primary language which have informed these curricula, how they were designed and implemented with regard to concerns of history, language and policy, what concepts of teacher professionalism underpin them, and how they relate to each other.

³⁵ Address by Brian Boyd to the inaugural meeting of the Scottish Association for the Teaching of English, November 1994.

Appendix One

Keynotes from Interview with Professor Gordon Wilson, Principal, Faculty of Education, University of Paisley and Convener of RDG 1 - English Language 1989-91

August 29th 1994 from 2.45 until 4 pm

Heading 1

Could you comment on the Remit which the Review and Development Group worked to?

There was an overall steering committee known as CASC. There were also meetings of the Core Group and Executive meetings. The paper which started the process was known as Definition of Headings, and the process itself started in January 1989. As a group, we were conscious that we were working behind England. We were influenced to a certain extent by the Cox Report - but there was a clear vision that as a group we wished to produce something which was Scottish and appropriate for the Scottish system.

A strong steer was provided by the Levels. We were given Levels A to E from the Scottish Office Education Department, and we were invited to comment on these in the context of our work. Some within the group were uneasy about this kind of framework - there was concern about matters such as over rigidity. However, within the group it became clear that there was a shared vision of Language. That did not preclude lively debates, especially on the strand concerned with Knowledge about Language. Some - especially Primary teachers - were rather reluctant to specify when children should learn any particular skill.

Heading 2

Were the Targets based on Research or culled from the nous of the Review and Development Group?

While the RDG did not commission formal research as such it would be untrue to suggest that no research was done. The two Development Officers - Gordon Gibson (Primary) and Gordon Liddell (Secondary) did the groundwork on the Targets. They wrote to the Local Authorities and received feedback from them - much of this was very interesting. Perhaps it might be true to say that this research produced little new: but that in itself was useful for us. It must also be remembered that Cox had already done research on the Targets, and also that the group contained a great many practising teachers whose knowledge and expertise was invaluable at this stage.

There was a 2-3 day session in which we firmed up on the targets. We split up into groups and each group had to consider a particular area and produce Targets for it. A format was agreed. However, after the first day it became clear that we were producing far too many Targets for the thing to be workable. The next step therefore was to streamline the whole thing. Manageability was a key term, and the groups set about grouping Targets, classifying them and then finalising them. After the 3 days we realised that we had at least a beginning.

The SCCC held a seminar. At this seminar David Robertson remarked somewhat tongue in cheek that he was looking forward to our Targets. Later when he saw what we had produced he pronounced himself well pleased with them.

So in answer to your question - yes, there was reliance on the nous of the group, but there was a prime concern of pragmatism and teacher friendliness. The NDOs were constantly in touch with teachers in the schools and this enabled them to try out our ideas on them. In this respect, there was a contrast with the pattern south of the Border.

Heading 3

Were the Review and Development Group conscious of constraints of cost of their proposals being imposed upon them?

No. No constraints of cost were imposed. However, there was an expectation that whatever proposals emerged would be without substantial resource implication. The last version of the proposals was designed so that it could be implemented without need for additional resources. This had political implications. It tended to be attractive to the government, but to be the opposite to the teachers. There were implications, clearly, for some individual schools in that they would require to obtain some resources and perhaps discard others: but the whole set of proposals could be implemented within existing staffing budgets.

The Local Authorities said at one point if they could not achieve implementation within their existing budgets and resource allocations that they would reject the guidelines. So yes, we were aware of the resource constraints within which we were operating in that sense.

Heading 4

Were the Review and Development Group constrained by the parallel developments in the National Curriculum in England and Wales?

No. 5-14 was seen as an entirely different initiative from the development of the National Curriculum. It was quite separate from the National Curriculum. For a start, we were designing Guidelines - not a set of Orders which were to be legally enforceable. We were happy with that situation. More than that, we were conscious that there was professional support for what we were doing and for the proposals when they emerged. That is not to say that there were not some people who thought that 5-14 was simply a Scottish version of the National Curriculum. For example publishers kept contacting us to ascertain the extent to which schemes and future publications might be able to cater

for the needs of both 5-14 and the National Curriculum.

There was never any pressure on the RDG to conform to any English national model. Eppie McClelland HMCI was conscious of the Cox Report and the targets in it. Questions then arose from a comparison of the Scottish Guidelines and the Cox targets in that targets in any particular area might be more or less demanding - which version might then be said to be "right"? However, I can say that this never became an issue. Although we considered Cox, we put the report aside in framing our proposals. 5-14 is an entirely separate entity, although there was at the outset in both systems a perceived need for clearer guidelines on practice. This was defined in the SOED paper of 1987, which raised the problematics of too much variation in standards and practices between schools. The Review and Development Group themselves came to the conclusion that national guidelines would be helpful in addressing this perception. However, the autonomy of the professional teacher was recognised in Scotland in a way which it perhaps was not in England.

Heading 5

Curricula are constructs of individuals. Is there any sense in which you feel that the RDG was weighted towards a particular view of

Language in order to produce a particular set of guidelines?

I had a say in discussing in the composition of the group. Suggestions were made to the appropriate arm of the SCCC. I discussed particular possibilities with HMI Jim Alison and with Robbie Robertson of the SCCC. They were in touch with the national scene and knew of good practitioners. We needed a Head Teacher, a Secondary Head Teacher, and people whom we knew had insights into the teaching of Language. When it came to a choice of an Adviser, we chose John Fyfe because we knew of what he could do, and of his success in the Standard Grade programme and so on. Members of the Review and Development Group were picked because they themselves were good people and they were au fait with what was going on in the teaching of English Language. We were not conscious of a desire to

produce a particular document of any sort.

Heading 6

Could you comment on the process in which the RDG was involved, the process through which the Guidelines came to fruition?

We started with the general structure. This as I have said was given to us. Then we worked on the main Learning Outcomes. There was actually some debate about this, mainly about Talk and Listening. Were these to be considered together, as oral skills, or would we regard them as separate outcomes? In the end we decided on the latter. After this we looked at the framework and got feedback on good practice. It was actually some months before we got the Targets.

We established a notional timetable for things to happen. We really had to do this - the timetable for the whole thing was draconian - we had less than 18 months for the whole process. The Programmes of Study followed the Targets: they fell logically into place once we had decided what should be learned. However, bear in mind that we kept visiting and revisiting the Targets, especially the two NDOs.

Heading 7

At what stage did assessment become crucial?

Not until we were near the end of the process. This was just a result of the way in which we worked. We had ground rules - these were established by CASC - but these changed. There was a separate group considering assessment and this group under Bart McGettrick's chairmanship worked parallel to RDG 1. An assessment section was produced, however, and this gave approaches to assessment. The two NDOs had a joint meeting with HMI Ernie Spencer and as a result of this meeting much had to be cut away.

There was no sense in which the assessment tail wagged the curricular dog,

however. Testing was divorced from our proposals altogether. We sought and obtained reassurance that there was no obligation whatever that the Targets had to be testable.

Heading 8

Could you comment on the part which practising teachers played in the formulation of the National Guidelines?

Practising teachers were involved in two ways. Firstly, they were involved in constituting a majority of the Review and Development Group. Then secondly, they were involved in a wider sense in the feedback which they provided to the group as its deliberations proceeded. When proposals were coming through on which the group thought that it might build, then these ideas were taken out to schools by the NDOs, and the schools would have the opportunity to comment on them. But teacher involvement in these senses was part of the ethos of the whole 5-14 process.

Heading 9

Do you feel the Inspectorate looked on RDG1 as a pioneer and therefore one which might inform the work of other RDGs which would follow it?

This was never made explicit at any time. The RDG on English Language and that on Mathematics worked concurrently, and at one stage the Targets were different, but ultimately these aligned with each other. Because the Review and Development Group produced proposals which were acceptable, it was seen as being successful. Again, because it was the first RDG to report - though by a small margin - this was important as it was a means of informing others.

The idea of the Strands was one way in which we were perhaps ahead. Jim Alison produced a paper in which he discussed the idea of the Strands - these being seen as a means of organising the targets. Cox and others had

considered targets but there was really little shape to them. Strands allowed teachers to consider the Learning Outcomes in manageable quantities. Some strands which we considered had to be abandoned because of the primacy of practicality.

Heading 10

Knowledge about Language. Some have commented adversely on this Strand and its use of Latinate terminology as being naive and regressive: others see it as a sop to contemporary Conservative thinking. Could you comment on this?

There was a sense in which Knowledge about Language was expected of us. Not all the group were familiar with current thinking on linguistics, although NDO Gordon Liddell certainly was. He fed us with the information and awareness which we required. We had a basic idea that children learn language skills by doing things within a context, rather than by learning sets of rules. However there is a distinct lack of research in this area - I think the last work that was done of which we are aware was forty or so years ago. Therefore we were not confronted with a battery of research which gave us a firm steer one way or another. But we were aware that the profession preferred this contextual approach. It was largely in fact driven by the Secondary teachers. They were arguing for something more systematic than what they had through the use of terminology and planning for progression - using the contexts within which Language worked. We arrived at the position we did for largely pragmatic reasons. This represented the views of the teachers on the RDG but there was also a sense in which the Minister was looking for something of this sort. I am aware of a Paper produced by the Centre for Policy Studies on the matter of Knowledge about Language and Grammatical correctness - this may have influenced Mr Forsyth's thinking, but it did not influence the thinking of the RDG.

Heading 11

Were you obliged to take on board diktats about the primacy of Standard English in the way that the English proposals were?

We had no difficulty about our recommendations that Standard English was part of the repertoire of a child, and that that repertoire should include Scots accent and dialect. There was a consensus within the group on this. We took the view that competence in Standard English was an entitlement for children and we wanted to set this beside Scots - we wanted to support Scots but not to go too far. If we had done that we could easily have become embroiled in debates about what constituted Scots, what kind of Scots to teach and learn and how it should be taught. I think that in this respect we went as far as we could. There were consensus views about Scots, but in no way was there external pressure on us either to play the Scottish card.

Heading 12

Macro Issues

Why was it decided to create policy through a Review and Development Group rather than by some other means or that adopted in England and Wales?

The concept of a Review and Development Group was obviously not that of the members but they were happy with their role and with the nomenclature which was applied. They were what the title suggests, a group of practitioners reviewing the current situation and forming proposals in the light of their remit and what they perceived. I do not think that the Inspectorate could have fulfilled that sort of consultative role. The Local Authorities could not have done it either - lack of coherence in what emerged was a real risk.

At the end, the RDG model worked - perhaps though not for all the groups. An example of this was Environmental Studies - though to be fair, there were

perhaps other difficulties in that particular area. However, if the group had veered too far from what was acceptable to the Inspectorate there would have been comment. And the HMII had a distinct influence through the presence of Jim Alison - the quality of the person was important. Jim fed our progress and ideas constantly back to the Inspectorate and also to Local Authority advisers.

As far as representation from industry was concerned - there might have been possible benefit from this. There has been a growing awareness - through the training colleges and the schools, for example - of a need to work more closely. But at the end, industry and its representatives had the opportunity to comment through the SCCC comments procedure. So I feel that the structure of RDGs was successful in achieving its end.

The above Keynotes are an accurate representation of the interview which took place on 29th August 1994.

Appendix Two

Keynotes from Interview with Mr Robbie Robertson, Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum and Adviser to RDG 1 English Language 1989-91

August 29th 1994 from 10.30 am until 12 .15 pm

Heading 1

Role of the RDGs treatment of the Remit

This area can be looked at in different ways - either in terms of guidelines or in terms of a fixity. We looked at guidelines whereas in England they took the form of fixed orders. English and Mathematics were first in the field, therefore it is possible that these RDGs had a greater degree of influence than they might have and possibly a greater degree than others. This created a sense of flexibility and gave us a debating position with the SOED. Therefore we had a clear sense that we were producing guidelines and not orders. The RDG was able to modify its remit - an example of this is the introduction of strands as a way of giving shape to the Targets in assessment. We were given the 5 Levels from the Government - that was what we had to work to, a framework for our discussions. We as a group introduced the idea of Strands, and this worked its way through into other RDG Reports. Strands have an interesting origin - I believe the word first saw light in the Inner London Education Authority English Magazine some years ago.

Heading 2

How if at all were you constrained by the Government's view of what should constitute the educative process?

The idea of a top down model for the imposition of policy rather than a participative model is not unique to the Conservative Government, but this was to some extent the case here. Unconcerned with sharing, they have a belief and a vision of what education should be. This largely centres around

what might be termed a deficit perception of education. They are aware of what is wrong with education rather than of what is right with it. They take these ideas of what is wrong and state how they will put things right. This leads to a directive approach. In the Scottish system it has been modified. Elsewhere in the UK we have a position of continuous warfare between the Government and the profession with bouts of occasional open warfare. In Scotland the imposition of testing is an example of this. So the Remit was basically an ideological construct - if you like a vision of things as they should be, following an analysis undertaken in their 1987 paper of what is wrong in the education system.

What is really interesting in this case is that in Scotland the Government's vision received a broad degree of support. They correctly identified the mismatch between primary and secondary education. Essentially primary education is child centred and springs from a 19th century egalitarian view of education centred on cooperation and closeness. There are within the primary sector perhaps aspirations of power - Head Teachers for example may have this - but there is not the associated bureaucracy. In contrast, the secondary sector is based on what seems to me essentially to be a mediaeval view of education and epistemology - the idea that knowledge comes in chunks. This extends even to managerial constructs with the idea of principal teachers in charge of the various chunks. Most in Scottish education agreed with this perception of a mismatch. The primary curriculum was largely undefined - it required to be focussed. This was widely acknowledged within even the primary sector in Scotland, even if at times this acknowledgement was implicit rather than explicit. Therefore, there was a lot of support for the work of the RDGs and for the 5-14 programme in general within the education system. Assessment, too, needed to be given a sharper definition. The problem of S1 and S2 being a time of no progress would also be addressed by having clearer definitions of both curriculum and assessment.

Heading 3

Policy Considerations. What in your view were the major policy considerations in shaping the revised curriculum?

Control was certainly one. There were explicit agendas but also implicit and hidden agendas too. The explicit view was that we had to look closely at cohesion and about systematising the curriculum. But ultimately it is also about greater degrees of control over the curriculum and what is taught in the classroom. The system produces Guidelines - these are often open guidelines. But the whole process is a challenge to local democracy and leads to greater centralisation and control. A framework such as 5-14 gives you the opportunity to monitor and to review. It is in a sense the Power of the Book, the written statement. If you have written things down and given them an official seal, then you can ask, "Why are you not doing this?" or "Why are you not doing that?" This makes teachers feel guilty. Although on the surface 5-14 does not have any flavour of the National Curriculum within it there is this kind of substance of the National Curriculum - a vision of monitoring and control. Teachers are faced with a barrage of sources from different directions. This leads to a fortress called the Scottish curriculum and it is made from mounds of paper. It's really an exercise of power through words and language.

However, the RDG was given latitude within these sort of considerations. There was creditably no pressure on the RDG to produce what might be termed a Conservative vision of the future. There was no directive on what was expected of the RDG - all documents and all briefing papers were made public. That is not to say that there were no sticking points. Knowledge about Language was a key aspect in this respect. But there was no pressure or directive on Standard English as there was in England and Wales.

Scottish education owes a debt to the Inspectorate and to its own bureaucracy, that is my impression - and it is only an impression. But how else could you get more liberal national guidelines at a time when Scottish education was in the hands of a Right-wing education Minister like Mr Forsyth? Only when you have a situation where the politician was genuinely

surprised for the degree of popular support enjoyed by the system - people would not stand for it to be changed too much. In this sense paper policy was different from dialogic policy. There was probably persuasion from HMII to the Minister that he should not go too far down the ideological route and his agreement resulted in the production of an agreed and credible curriculum policy.

Heading 4

What were the principal links to the parallel development of the National Curriculum?

We were given the Cox report after we requested it. We also had the Kingman Report. We were impressed by both of these documents. However, this was the time of the SATs - Standardised Attainment Tests - and these were not workable. In Cox and Kingman the central messages about language were OK but those about assessment were cumbersome and were work intensive. The RDG was aware we had to keep assessment under control. We adopted a more pragmatic approach in general - we felt that assessment could become a monster which could gobble everything up. We tried to produce a model which would lead to a generous curriculum, if I might use that term. It was also a model which would put teachers in charge of the curriculum content. The assessment framework was an open weave; the Targets were open. The interpretation of text was loosely defined, in contrast to the proposals in the National Curriculum where they are precisely laid down. Our system was less precise, less exact - and therefore less exacting. The system was flexible, open and it put teachers in charge.

But we were aware of other deficits. The RDG thought that Cox for example gave insufficient attention to the language which children bring to school with them. Another problem was the belief in the centrality of Standard English and the narrowly focused interpretation of and obsession with "standards". The prescription of text showed a dangerous attitude. The texts themselves in the lists were not at issue. Teachers in England were not as well trained or as aware of concepts of textuality: they were also more used

to having to work with prescribed texts. They were in fact prepared to accept a hotch-potch of texts. There was no widening of vision in the Leavisite sense. Nevertheless texts such as Bullock and Plowden which had been formative in England did play a part in shaping the thinking in Scotland.

Heading 5

What was the nature of the RDG - for example, how was the membership chosen?

The roots lie deep in the culture. The appointments ensured that people were chosen who would in the end produce what was required. A Review and Development Group is a fabrication to articulate a particular point of view. The SOED know the correct horses to run in particular courses. It was not ultra prescriptive, but not ultra left wing either.

Heading 6

What do you consider the effect on Primary schools of your proposals will be?

The main effect will undoubtedly be the achievement of consistency. The thing you have to ask of course is whose consistency? Any curriculum is a construct - who does the constructing? Members of the RDG went around the country and produced rafts of questions which in turn tried to find out what the curriculum as it was actually looked like. I suppose you could say that they looked for and tried to identify best practice. But when you consider a term like that you have to ask whose best practice? Where? When? and with what resources? We looked at what things were happening which might define a core and what actually constituted a core. This was not a research exercise in any density however. Members brought their own interests - for example, media education, Scots, computing - and also their own visions. We were aware we had to give a leadership.

The Headings Paper is useful in this context because it constitutes a generic account of 5-14 in terms of the curriculum and it was given to all the RDGs.

The curriculum is not just made by people - it is an amalgam of the flows and currents of ideas which operate in a culture, etc. These discourses shape the way in which we think. Mr Forsyth's discourses are different from my discourses - I am, as you know, a post structuralist. What happens is that we latch on to the discourse which we need. It is a much more eclectic process.

Heading 7

Could you comment on the teaching styles which the document seeks to promulgate?

There is no attempt to impose a particular teaching style, no attempt to direct us down any particular avenue. It's the case of the dog not barking - the silences are as important as what is explicitly stated. What we had to produce was an assessment system and guidance on how the curriculum should be interpreted. Teaching styles were not part of the remit.

Where Knowledge about Language is concerned it is about grammar and parsing, that sort of thing. We were in a Machiavellian situation - we had to gratify the Prince but we could not contaminate our shared vision. Therefore we devised something which would remain true and not impair development. We recognised the need for a metalanguage - without it there could be no corpus of ideas, no dialogue between the teacher and those who were taught. This strand, which was the most debated and dissented, was highly problematic. Dissent was largely caused by ignorance - when should various aspects of language appear? This was argued over until publication. It was also the one most changed between RDG Report stage and the final national Guidelines. If you look closely you can see an Italicised 's' in the word "show". This is the last vestige of the older version. The italics were to stress the importance of children showing how these ideas and constructs could be used rather than just mugging them up. The term "can use" is crucial in understanding our view.

I don't think that Knowledge about Language was a reversion to older Latinate terminology simply in order to provide a base for consideration of this area - to give a shorthand which teachers could use to fill a vacuum. I think that it is a much older thing than that. I think it really goes back to an 18th century view, that the only worthy descriptors were Graeco Latin in origin. It's really a precursor to the evolution of English - another discourse thing. But you have to understand that the group trod a tightrope here. The strand is really an act of intelligent reading of the situation in which the group found itself. We know what would be expected by the politicians but we were not put in an overt position where we had to produce a trade - off. It was not a case that to get X we had to produce Y. In England, LINC (Language in the National Curriculum) had if you like a vision of language; deeply vested in the culture in a way that for example, Mathematics is not. Political perspectives are inscribed within language. As a group we had to be aware of these political currents. We had to be aware of Mr Forsyth and his thinking on language and grammar, but we did not want to go down his road. We had certain visions of language - a common belief - visions of how language should be taught. But we did not want to get into a heavily analytical view - parsing and so forth. It is interesting and important that the RDG was informed by - and read - the 1965 Primary Memorandum and the 1980 COPE Position Paper.

Heading 8

Please comment on perceptions of the Content versus Process dichotomy in the group's thinking.

This sort of dialogue was a feature of our deliberations. The whole epistemology of the subject is fascinating. It's a question of how you arrive at the knowledge. The knowledge if you like was there in the Targets. But as far as the Programmes of Study are concerned - and you should ask Gordon Gibson about this aspect - we did not wish to go down the road of prescription. Essentially, the Programmes of Study are a replication of the Targets. This was deliberate to allow the teachers to take forward the getting of the children to the targets in ways which they wished to and which were

most appropriate for their own circumstances.

Overall I must say that I thought it was a splendid Committee. The debates were real - there were differences of perception about some things - but there was also a commonality of perception about how language should be constructed. You have to see policy and curriculum not necessarily in terms of flows the one to the other but really in terms of a set of multidimensional Venn diagrams - a set of interfusions. There are so many overlaps, and these determine what you finally arrive at as a set of guidelines - and compromises!

Appendix Three

Keynotes from interview with Dr J McGonigal, Head of the Department of Language and Literature, St Andrew's College, Glasgow.

August 23rd 1994 from 10.00 am till 12 noon

Heading 1.

What do you see as the main constraints impinging on the construction of the 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language as we have them?

The first was the demand of the speed at which the Review and Development Group had to work. They were also looking at their own experience as teachers and the demands which they were making upon teachers, and how teachers have to work. Reforms in England were in my opinion much more politically driven. They were tied to Conservative philosophy rather than to a pragmatic approach, and that was what happened in Scotland. HMI Mr James Alison had experienced the policy into practice process through his involvement in the construction and implementation of Standard Grade. He had seen what would happen if proposals were not constructed upon a basis of what was manageable. There were a number of politics - the politics of survival and credibility, the politics of Scottishness, and the need to retain a cultural distinctiveness in institutions.

Standard English was an issue here. It has always been seen by Scottish teachers as useful, and is traditionally taught. It is not linked to a social class approach to the teaching of English. However, there are difficulties with changes in language and attitudes changing. Children are encouraged to use their own accents and dialect forms. This has led to a situation where they did not necessarily have a repertoire which included Standard English.

Heading 2

What do you see as the main strands of language theory since Barnes and Britton in the 1970's?

Discourse theory was a professionalisation of Barnes and Britton, with the rigour of linguistic study.

Genre theory looked beyond concepts such as the word and the sentence to the whole of the discourse.

Critical Linguistics included dimensions of power which went beyond language. It came out of discourse theory, and is in evidence in media study and the widening of the concepts of text and textuality. Examples of this would include feminist and new historicist approaches. It feeds through into analysis of text in the classroom - ideological analysis of text in its wider forms.

The consideration of Halliday in the Antipodes is important because it brought insights of systemic linguistics into genre theory and the school. It added the energy of a young culture - the Sydney school of linguistics - and came into curriculum development. eg. stages K 1 - 9. There has been a degree of interplay between the Australian and the English schools as a result of this.

In the National Curriculum, Carter and the Language in the National Curriculum project - which was withdrawn by the Government because it had not produced materials which they found ideologically acceptable - had produced materials which had the potential to challenge and analyse. It provided an insight into what language could do, and uses Halliday as the model for this. Its politics include the critical linguistic. It offered inservice all over, and was distinctly regionally based, with local centres. It included a multimedia approach with tapes, etc. To teachers, this was attractive at a time when there was a perception of more and more prescription in official documents. A Halliday approach had also been around in Scotland since the 1960s.

However, theory has to be put into practice: it is worthless unless something can be done. The National Literacy and Oracy projects raised teachers' awareness of writing and talk, in a way similar to the process which achieved this at Standard Grade in Scotland. It was a process of the curriculum development of teachers. Standard Grade saw the process driven through the assessment, but teachers use terms such as "audience" and "purpose" more confidently and they know what they mean. Teachers link theory and practice.

Heading 3

In the context of a developing linguistic theory, how do you view the return to Latinate terms in the Knowledge about Language strand?

The terms are essentially practical - but they are also in danger of being forgotten. Teachers were using different terms - mixtures of terms associated with different theories such as scale-category grammar, for example. There were different understandings. The examination system was changing, and curriculum development was focusing on stylistics and the centrality of literature. The sixties and the seventies had been characterised by a Leavisite approach, with its associated focus on values. However, there was a generation in the seventies who had a variable exposure to grammar and variable teaching of it. An analytical approach was retained in Modern Language teaching, but even they were moving more to the approach associated with Communicative Competence. Grammar in English was seen as boring and pointless, but still of some relevance to modern language learning. Foreign languages needed grammar to make sense, but our own language explanations became almost a distraction. Some children need the grammar to see the point of a discourse, especially perhaps those with a scientific bent. They are interested in structure, terminology. They analyse their world through science, maths - it is all a question of terms through which they make sense of their world. The children of the seventies had no such terminology - they had an insecurity about language. Yet as teachers,

they were working with older colleagues who had the security of terms. The Latinate terms provide a base from which you can start to describe language. They give you a common terminology. Older people also perhaps experience insecurity because the terms have been forgotten - the younger because they have no structure.

The Knowledge about Language stress gives a sense of filling this vacuum. Research shows that teachers say they know most of the terms used in the Knowledge about Language terms. The terms they find most difficult are "suffix", "prefix" and "root". But there is a vagueness of knowledge in this area. The problem is how you use the terms and how you explore them with pupils.

Heading 4

What links do you see to the National Curriculum ?

Both systems have a sense of parallelism: in England, there is a sense of development and continuity from reception and the early years and then on to the rest. In Scotland it is more through the area of oracy. If we take oracy as an example, in England there is a greater political dimension (for example, the emphasis on Standard English) and the English guidelines are more diluted - for example, a narrow emphasis on correctness. There are similarities between Cox and the approach in Scotland - for example, a recognition of the changes which have taken place in English studies - a broadening into media and the use of computer technology. The National Guidelines in Scotland, rather than offering narrow prescription, offer the teacher the time to reflect, etc. There is also evidence that the Scottish guidelines show evidence of being proactive rather than reactive to Government policy. In England, the changes in the guidelines for schools show evidence of concurrent changes in right-wing political thinking. They are reactive in that they were changed at the planning stage by Conservative thinking. In addition, there were different consultative processes.

The Scottish Inspectorate had forward guessed what the Government might

do and therefore there was not the need for a full National Curriculum, complete with Orders. This has led to a coherence and stability. In England, there has been constant rewriting, rethinking. There has also been the change in the role of the Inspectorate from the supervision and implementation of the National Curriculum. Now LEAs tender for the curriculum. It seems that England is compared to Scotland a bit of a mess.

Heading 5

How do the National Guidelines contain a Scottish dimension?

It seems to me mainly through the more centralised nature of the system. There is a relatively small group of people active and they give coherence to the proposals. There is Scottishness in a confidence about the system as being effective as it is. We have adopted an approach which might be described as “middling” . It is less extreme and less exciting than the English: the best is never as good as the best of the English, but on the other hand the worst is never as bad as the worst of the English. Teachers are more stable, more respected. They are not “reaching for the stars”. Level E counters the pull towards the mean, thus also the level beyond Level E. It seems to me that English teachers - teachers in England - are more interested in in service training. Is this a facet of the quality of their early training? Scottish teachers are all graduates or all trained - therefore there is a feeling that they can rest on what they have achieved. The Scots have to challenge more - have to be less content with the “middling” base. However, on the other hand there is not the panic that there is in England. There is more rigour and less freedom in Scotland.

Heading 6

What to you are the links between the Guidelines and assessment patterns?

In Scotland, the Munn and Dunning proposals were seen through to fruition

by the teachers themselves - there was collusion with the planners. The Guidelines therefore have the notion of assessment being supportive of the curriculum. There is a strategy for dealing with the obsession with "standards". The areas are wide and have been worked on by teacher and pupils over several years. The system of assessment of strengths and next steps is a humane one. It is also combined with testing materials which themselves are good classroom practice. There was foremost a desire to get the curriculum right: the assessment would follow that. There is a framework of continuity and progression. This is a wash back effect from the success of Standard Grade - the assessment system is progressive and unified.

In England the situation is just about the opposite. The Tests represent standards and the curriculum is simply a lead up to the tests. The curriculum skills which featured in the Kingman and Cox Reports have been undercut by the narrowness and spuriousness of the testing, appeals to competitiveness and the denial of worth. Power has been transferred from school to parents through results and the treatment of results in publication. The aim is the driving up of standards through competitiveness. Is pressure to be the sole determinant of quality? Teachers cannot believe in tests which are used to make judgements about their professionalism and their competence.

In Scotland, teachers saw beyond this to the bigger issues. They were not against testing as such, but against the deprofessionalising way in which it was being done. Tests did not fit the epistemology of the subjects in a way which was coherent. The coherence achieved in the Standard Grade experience suggests that there it was done successfully. Teachers were satisfied because it made intellectual sense. Teachers have to have a progression from mind to heart here - in England they have been patently manipulated.

Heading 7

What do you think the effect of the National Guidelines at 5-14 will be?

I think they will provide a structure in a complex school world with a packed curriculum. Older teachers will have to unlearn practices accepted as self evident. Young teachers have a need for this kind of structure. There are practical problems about time, and a worry about effectiveness. The Guidelines provide younger teachers with a map. The scale of this map is not fine, however. It is crude, and there is a danger that teachers take the broad descriptors as fixed boxes into which children should fit. The experience of the assessment of talk in the early days is an example of how this can happen.

Time and experience and reflection will help. But teachers are not getting thinking time due to the time scale for the implementation of the proposals. Things are being squeezed out which in themselves are valuable simply because they do not seem to fit the ordained pattern - for example, going out for a walk or just singing to old folks. Teachers classify activities as “language” or “environmental studies” or “expressive arts” and worry about these in the context of balance. They should be aware of wider possibilities: they should have a sense of confidence when discussing the curriculum.

One aspect in which the Guidelines have already achieved progress is the linkages between primary and secondary schools. Previously, mere lip service was shown in the curricular areas. The onus is on secondary schools to work more closely with the primary sector at the curricular level. There is also a need to get differentiation into the mixed ability classroom: this is something at which we have not been too good, in a way in which the primary sector has. There are therefore issues about what differentiates and how differentiation is achieved.

Lastly, there is public pressure to demonstrate that children at all levels are being adequately challenged.

Appendix Four

Keynotes from interview with Mr Gordon Liddell, Head of English at Moray House Institute of Heriott-Watt University, Edinburgh and former National Development Officer (Secondary), Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum.

August 8th 1994 from 5 pm till 6.45 pm

Heading 1

What do you consider to be the major advances in Language theory since the work of Barnes and Britton in the 1970s?

The most important document was undoubtedly the Bullock Report. It gathered the strands of development together, and became a Bible for most involved in language during the 1980s. In a sense, the 1980s were a period which were spent realising Bullock's demands. In terms of 5-14, there was a new element, and that is Halliday's work in Australia with the Sydney school. Genre ideas were emerging from this work. It seemed to make sense and it would make sense to teachers. Genre was a good device for helping teachers to make sense of the teaching of reading - and also listening and talk and writing. But reading came first, and the chief impetus was from reading. Genre theory was also most obvious in reading. As far as the RDG is concerned it was first accepted as a viable strand in listening and was extended from that to reading - both receptive skills. It did not extend to talk and writing.

The development of strands in the group's thinking became inevitable because the key players on the group had been through Standard Grade where we had the purposes in language, and they wished to produce a model which would be consonant with Standard Grade. There was a consciousness in HMI Jim Alison and in both NDOs that we needed to create a smooth system to link with Standard Grade. In this respect, the purposes at Standard Grade could be linked with the strands at 5-14. The basic aims

were the same. They were different in kind, but they do translate readily.

We were needing to take Talk and Listening and to devise a model which would make more sense to teachers. It's not made explicit, but the Programmes of Study really include ideas on Talk and Listening which emerged from the committee: for example how Talk and Listening could go across the targets, or how it should be developed. We were conscious of the need to indicate how children could progress. This was not born of a theoretical base, but rather out of a need to make what was essentially a very grey area clearer.

I agree with Robbie (Robertson) when he says that the profession needed and indeed was ready for guidance of this kind and for a structure, and also with his view that this is part of the reason 5-14 has had a positive reception in general.

Heading 2.

Can you comment on the Knowledge about Language strand and the apparent reversion to Latinate terms at a time when linguistics was developing in the way you have described?

We had difficulty in deciding about the Knowledge about Language strand. Questions were asked like: What terminology would we use? Would we include parts of speech? Would we use older terms? Would we go for the subject - verb -object approach? Or on the other hand would we go for one or possibly a combination of more than one of the new ways such as scale-category grammar? In the end the old terms were used simply because they were familiar. One problematic was what items we should put in the Knowledge about Language strand in the 4 modes (Listening / Talking / Reading / Writing). It was difficult to know whether the terms should be introduced orally at first. We had to find an area where the terminology was most likely to be encountered and therefore where it was most likely to be taught. This was a difficult area. Some items were most often in Listening. The whole thing had to be rationalised.

I was not aware of any Government pressure on Knowledge about Language. It was not a giveaway in exchange for something else except, perhaps, in the presence of the strand itself. We accepted that we could not win that particular battle. Part of our remit instructed us to identify and to use best practice, and so we went out to do that. The problem was that what we encountered out there used only the old traditional terms - we were not aware of anybody using the new terminology.

My view of the Knowledge about Language strand is that there were inherent dangers in listing things which children should know. In that way, these things become an end in itself - rather than a means of reinforcing concepts which they can actually use. But there is a value in naming understandings of skills and the skills themselves. Further, I think that able children benefit from an analytical approach - there is not, however, perhaps as much value in this for the less able children.

Heading 3

What links were you aware of to the development of the National Curriculum in England and Wales?

There was no pressure from the Government to develop a particular curriculum. Indeed we had remarkable freedom to develop within our remit - although the terms of that remit were tight. We were given attainment targets and the idea of levels and so on. That was what the Government were trying to achieve. Other than that there was no significant pressure to develop in any particular way. As NDO I undertook to find Sheila Lawlor's papers and to distribute them to the members of the group. The committee knew that Mr Forsyth was influenced by what she said. Sheila Lawlor was in the Conservative think-tank with a rigid view of what education should be. She had a clear vision and view of education. In that way we knew the background thinking. Although we knew the background, we basically decided to ignore it and to develop our own document - for example, we included some genre theory. We developed what the committee thought would be a document of value to teachers and would shape

thinking about language in terms which were beneficial.

I agree that there was a differential perception of the value of teachers and their professionalism in Scotland from that which prevailed in England.

Heading 4

Could you comment on the incorporation of a Scottish dimension into the document?

In terms of the fact that we did not have to give priority to the teaching of Standard English, but were able to view it as one of a number of repertoires which Scottish children might use, the theoretical position on which we based our proposals resulted from research into bilingualism. This research suggests firstly that if you want to promote Standard English within a dialect area you do this by promoting both together so that you can contrast the two and increase understanding through this comparison. That was the intellectual base. The second thing is that within the RDG there was a strong determination to value local dialects and literatures and what you might regard as Scots. Thirdly, there was a recognition that Gaelic existed and that we had to take account of that and the other home languages. Cox influenced the committee on this and on other matters. The RDG felt that Cox reinforced their positions and drew strength from this.

Heading 5

What were the links to assessment?

The Assessment RDG and the Reporting RDG were running alongside us and we had liaison with them. As NDO I produced a paper for the RDG about the need to make its proposals more consonant with those of the Assessment RDG. I saw Louise Hayward and reported to the committee with the need for change. On the whole there was not a great deal of dissension. There is advice in the little blue square - advice that they wanted to give.

What they were saying stiffened the RDG's original suggestion. There are key things which are important - the need to share criteria with pupils and the notion of only sharing one or two criteria at a time - of keeping it simple. This results in a lesson built on a shared understanding of what the lesson is about on a particular day. We were anxious to deliver what was already best practice but this would include what was being taught within the Colleges of Education, such as self and peer assessment taking a bigger place in the assessment process. But there was no idea of assessment or testing driving the curriculum - we had a notion of what language is and its related skills already from the Standard Grade pattern.

Heading 6

What constraints - such as cost - were operative on the group?

I was not aware of any pressure in this direction. Once the remit was taken care of, there was no real pressure to turn the group a particular way. On the group there was a number of Primary teachers who gradually grew in strength. These were not vociferous, but powerful voices. They had skills to push their own views. The group also knew each other. This is a small country and the committee united behind 90% of the proposals.

There were no constraints of cost, but what was produced would have to work. The membership knew that there was a need to be reasonable. Sometimes a Utopian set of proposals is necessary and effective but there was a consciousness that the document was different from what the Government and Sheila Lawlor would have preferred. Therefore there was a careful construction to avoid it being an easy target. There is also a coherence in the document which would make it difficult to criticise and reject or unstitch. One of the problems in committees like this in Scotland is that they are not sufficiently challenged!

Heading 7

What are the cross-curricular links?

There was a need to be careful about who in secondary schools should develop English skills. Everybody develops language but the English department develops English. We made good statements about Drama and about media and computers within the document. If time had permitted there was the possibility of explicit links to the Expressive Arts and to Environmental Studies. But the time scale was a major problem - although it can cover the rhubarb! It was only 8 months or thereabouts.

Heading 8

What was the role of the NDOs?

We made an analysis of good practice. We took out a questionnaire to key advisers on what was best practice. We also elicited their views on aspects of language teaching and we found out what was going on on the ground. We gave that coherence and we took it back to the committee. In terms of the structure of the questionnaire we ran a pilot with Fife then visited the authorities. I was not seconded full time - Gordon Gibson was seconded full time. I was half time. There was a National Development Officer, Joan McKay, the HT of Prestonpans who was appointed for the development phase. She worked on the reading pack. The RDG was in touch with the profession in two ways. There were Head Teachers and class teachers on the committee and secondly the NDOs talked to Advisers and to Head Teachers.

When we were constructing the Attainment Targets and the Programmes of Study for the early stages we were aware that there were not enough early stages teachers on the Committee, so we drafted in 5 early stages teachers for a day and a half to construct the Attainment Targets. I took notes for the Programmes of study.

Heading 9

What do you think the effects of the National Guidelines 5-14 will be in terms of their impact?

That depends on a number of things. Firstly the way in which the Environmental Studies document is handled by the local authorities and in the schools. If the approach is too prescriptive then damage could be done. If people can get around the Guidelines, then they can be used to support curricular choices. It hinges on how people in the local authorities recommend it should be handled. This is crucial because the document contains curricular areas. If teachers feel constricted by the formula this could be disastrous. Teachers need freedom of imagination and enthusiasm to have choices and not rigidity, as is the case in England.

Secondly, the Guidelines in Assessment and Reporting have in my view been misinterpreted by the local authorities and by some Head Teachers. Assessment need not be a huge burden on teachers but it is being interpreted in a way which will make it a burden. Teachers do not need to be trammelled - they need to feel free. It is inevitable that there will be a few years when they will feel threatened - as was the case with Standard Grade - but after a few years they will modify things to suit their own requirements.

Thirdly, if the testing process is not kept in place and reduced to sampling in order to achieve basic understanding of where children are in relation to national standards it will subvert creativity in the teachers.

My own view is that I am quite hopeful that in ten years a perspective will have been gained and that we can then encourage teachers to use their imaginations and creativity in teaching children.

Appendix Five

Keynotes from interview with Mr G Gibson, Lecturer in English Language, Craigie Campus of the University of Paisley and National Development Officer 5-14.

September 9th 1994 from 9.45 am till 11.30 am.

Heading 1

What was your involvement with RDG 1, and how did the RDG deal with its remit?

I came in to the process through the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum. The invitation was somewhat out of the blue - I was a Primary Head Teacher in Dumbarton Division, and there was no indication of why I had been approached, but I believe the Primary Adviser was contacted and inquiry made as to who might be suitable. I had no national involvement in curriculum development before, but I had been involved in local and divisional activities. I was conscious of some naivete about the issues involved and I was concerned about possible reasons for my selection. There was a meeting of a small group of us - Gordon Liddell, myself, HMI Jim Alison and Robbie Robertson. We had a view of George Gordon's starter paper - the Headings Paper - and this assumed the status of Holy Writ for us. Its nuances were carefully studied. There were some difficulties - with the Attainment Targets, for example - and these were difficult issues for Jim Alison and Gordon Liddell. They were a focus for awkwardness. The RDG was not happy at this stage with the remit. It wanted a map of attainment but balked at the tie in to age and stage. Other parts of the Remit lacked clarity. I had the impression that RDG 1 steered the impression of the remit for the other RDGs. An example of this was Mathematics, which was running at the same time as we were. They saw RDG 1 setting the precedent and the structure.

Programmes of study were an example of this. The first run we had at this

was gigantic - because the remit read as if it was to be a guide to all teaching. It was 70 to 80 pages in length. There was much poring over the remit. Some felt that it was ambiguous. As the Head Teacher of a primary school I personally felt that a set of guidelines would be an invaluable tool. However, there was anxiety about political ramifications and undertones - and these even extended to worries about accepting the job at all. In the end I was convinced that the RDG was to be based as an educational committee, unlike the committees which were deciding the National Curriculum. We were informed by the Cox report, and it informed us in both positive and negative ways. However, there was a feeling that ministerial 'interviews' were not taking place as they were in England, that we were not placed men but that a selection had taken place through the filter of the SCCC. Our names must have been OKd but we never really knew at which level this had taken place. Others came in to the development programme who were known to hold left wing political views. Why were they included? There was no clear political loading and this convinced many that this view of evenness was shared by other RDGs and NDOs. But at the end, everything we did was within the parameters of the remit.

Heading 2

What was the rationale for the appointment of National Development Officers, and what was their role?

The public rationale was to have people with a practical perspective involved in the work of the committee. The academic input was provided by Gordon Liddell and this was balanced with someone from a school background - myself - to demonstrate publicly that people with practical experience of schools were involved in the group; so that it could be seen that the Guidelines would be produced not solely or indeed predominantly by people from academia or from the SCCC. I have a strong feeling - though I have no evidence for saying this - that in general in the choice of the National Development Officers, many were folk with a reputation within the Regions and Divisions. They were seen as practical and sensible people, and that this was part of the selection process.

As far as their role was concerned, Robbie Robertson was the Senior Curriculum Officer from the SCCC and he was responsible for the day to day running of the committee. He worked closely with Gordon Wilson, the convener and Jim Alison. No major decision could be made without reference to either the committee or to the Chairman's Committee which consisted of Gordon Wilson, Jim Alison, Robbie Robertson, Gordon Liddell, myself and Wilson Bain who was the secretary and provided an Educational Studies perspective. Wilson was a less constant member of the proceedings. I worked closely with Robbie Robertson and did tasks emerging from the committee. For an example, an early task was to read Local Authority guidelines which were in existence and to collate common belief about good practice. I was also looking back at national reports and SCCC reports - examples which were very much in the background to our thinking were the 1965 Primary Memorandum and the 10-14 Report as well as the COPE material and the stuff which came from SCOLA. We also had to be aware of current thinking. It became clear that we should have to consult the Local Authorities. A questionnaire schedule was prepared and taken round the Local Authorities and this was done at Adviser level and also at the level of Primary Head Teachers and to Principal Teachers of English. We also looked at schools as a whole. To coordinate the efforts of both NDOs, early visits were made jointly by Gordon Liddell and myself. This was based on a clearly stated view that we had to base the report on good practice - but to do this we first had to find out what good practice actually was.

It was also important to be aware of the research background. What is perceived as good practice in schools and in Local Authority guidelines might not necessarily square with current research. The time scale prevented deep knowledge of this research, however. But the theoretical bases were there through my own work in the Open University MA in Education Language and Literature course and through the expertise provided by Gordon Liddell. He was feeding in the theoretical perspective through, for example, the work of Margaret Stephen who had tried out genre theory in the classroom. There were also lots of things from the past - I have mentioned the 1965 Memorandum. It was constantly in the background, and the ideas emerging from it were firmly embedded in COPE and SCOLA in the Foundations of Writing work of Bill Jackson. Although we also drew on

the 10-14 Report there was a certain awareness that this could not figure too largely in the early drafts because the Inspectorate had torpedoed it and there still was a certain sense of despair in the SCCC about the way in which this had been handled and about the work which had not come to fruition. Since we did not wish our work to suffer the same fate a certain sense of self censorship grew as the RDG developed. This was not a big issue but it was present from time to time. Some of those who felt that they knew what was going on argued that the committee should not do certain things because they would not be permitted - by the Inspectorate or the powers that be. But there was a feeling that there was an unstated subversion going on. An example of that would be that we did not like the idea of Attainment targets but we knew if we did not do it, then others would be brought in who would. The Inspectorate were known to be unhappy about certain aspects of the Attainment Targets - there was a looseness in the Targets. This was because they were not to be used on a daily basis but rather over a period of time. There was a considerable potential for a restrictive and prescriptive document - for example, a spelling, punctuation, parts of speech and grammar document which might have been used as a stick to beat teachers into conformity. However our attempt to produce a document which was humane was amazingly successful. Robbie Robertson, Gordon Liddell and Jim Alison were steeped in twenty years of curriculum development in English and their presence and involvement were crucial to this success. On top of this, Gordon Wilson brought powers of chairmanship and an awareness of the politics of the thing. He gave us superb management of the remit. The contribution of Jim Alison was crucial because some of the Inspectorate were believed to be committed to the Michael Forsyth line.

Heading 3

What were the principal links to practising teachers?

We visited the schools, and we saw a responsible group of teachers - teachers who were committed teachers. We also sent out drafts for a response from the teachers. For example, we had a group of infant teachers

in Moray House for a day to get their perceptions of the management implications of what we were proposing. It was the same with the Programmes of Study - all members of the committee were bouncing them off the schools and off colleagues. In this way we spoke to teachers and to groups of teachers all over Scotland. We took heed of realities and we did as much as was possible within the time scale which we were given. This business of letting teachers see the drafts resulted in the even tone of the document.

Heading 4

What was the RDGs perception of the teacher and her role?

We had a strong perception of the professional role of the teachers - and we wanted to produce a support for the teachers which in a complex curricular situation would give them a way of analysing in planning and in assessment and evaluation. There was the analogy of a map of what language was. The language specialist has a conceptual framework, for example in the links between talk and writing. But others are not specialists and they had to have the ability to look at integrated work in the primary school and to look at the role of language within that. Additionally, assessment in the primary school did not have the crispness of assessment in the secondary school, who had Standard Grade and the SCE as patterns. Primary school assessment was often nebulous. We had the view of the teacher as a professional doing a good job, and of the document as providing help towards coherence and organisation. Therefore for these reasons, too, there was need for consultation.

Heading 5

What were the understandings of language which underpinned the work of the RDG?

We had the benefit of genre theory from Gordon Liddell. This was a view of language which was essentially a constructionist view that meaning is constructed through language. Language is a social event, and is developed by giving children the opportunities to use language in differing situations. We were hoping to identify and signal to teachers about the kind of things which were felt to be valuable as activities in schools to engage children as learners in the use of language. There is of course a tension between that view and the “jug and pitcher” view of education which was in vogue at the time. The Press and politicians were engaged in this view and the public debate was largely conducted in these terms. On reflection, I would say that certain phrases in the document give a nod to this.

The Knowledge about Language strand really only says there are certain metalinguistic terms which children should learn to use. Examples of these are word, letter. The Latinate terms are used in this metalinguistic way. Metalinguistics are seen as an important part of learning about language and how to use it. There is a political dimension in the language awareness approach - it is seen as contrary to “real” grammar. I believe there is a sense of this in England. We had a feeling that Knowledge about Language would be a good thing: but the list of terms is arbitrary. We drew on other parts of the document but tried to avoid a sense of projection towards grammar exercises. This explains the presence of terms such as “show” and “use”. Some teachers at the consultation stage reacted in extreme ways to this. There was both delight and horror at the perceived reappearance of grammar. Thus we had the Special Issues page to allay any fears.

Heading 6

Was it part of the RDGs function to advise on or promote teaching materials?

Talk and Listening were more developed in the Secondary School than in the Primary School. From the outset the committee pushed the idea that the Programmes of Study had the opportunity to say something about Talk and Listening, which was not assessable. The Programmes of Study were where you might go, rather than a prescription.

The RDG felt if it wrote things down then it had to push for some exemplification, particularly in the cases of Talk and Listening in the Primary School. Areas which were also identified in this respect were the assessment of Reading and the assessment of Writing and how these would relate to the national tests. We were told that there was no money for exemplification, but we pushed the case and wrote papers. Gordon Liddell and I drafted material on Reading for Information, but by this time we were into the development phase because the RDG Report was out for consultation and Inservice was under way. I did some research myself, through the Open University. The draft Targets with samples of children's writing were sent out to schools to see how the teachers used them. Robbie pressed on after I left and talked about the production of a video. The assessment of Writing was also under consideration. Joan McKay, the Head Teacher of Prestonpans Primary School was appointed as National Development Officer after me. She worked with Gordon Liddell and produced a package on the assessment of Reading and Writing. Similarly, when I was at Craigie I tried to assemble video material. I spoke to Robbie Robertson and I set up the schools. Joan set up the activities and that is how the video package was produced.

The production of materials was an active part of the job and we were given permission for some aspects of this. However, approval for this was necessary from the Staff Development Committee.

Heading 7

Please comment on your views of the relationship between the 5-14 Development Programme and the National Curriculum.

We had the chapter headings for our report in our remit. There were various committees - the Steering Committee, CASC; the Committee on Assessment; The SCCC Council and so on. There were negotiations between the Committees. Caroline Hutchison was the NDO for Primary Testing and HMI Ernie Spencer was also involved. Thus there were crossovers. That was fine in one way, but it meant that some individuals had different accesses - they could argue down points in the RDG and then reargue them again in another forum. This in turn meant that things we felt were going forward could be argued again in some other Committee. There were guidance documents to ensure that all the committees worked in the same way - that they had a common framework. But after the issue of the remit there was not pressure to ensure that the RDG produced any particular version.

For example, we produced the draft Attainment Targets. Jim Alison showed these to the HMIs. They then in their turn had a go at producing their own version and this was tabled at a meeting of the RDG. The Committee reacted very badly to this but actually this was only one of a number of versions which were considered individually. In fact, the outside view was useful because it gave coherence to the matter. Even at that stage the committee was resistant to interference. There was no overt steering of the deliberations or of the report.

We were kept informed of the evolving situation in England and Wales through Robbie Robertson who undertook to do this. We had Kingman and Cox to hand. Gordon Wilson spoke to Professor Cox when he was up here and they compared notes. We got the legal documents pertaining to the National Curriculum and we also kept tabs on the debate. We also had the documents from Northern Ireland which were similar in content to those in England and Wales if not in the manner of their presentation. The Knowledge about Language debate was considered to be the most

important. The Standard English debate was not similar. The RDG was aware of the work of Perrera - it was her view that you could not explicitly teach Standard English in the primary school - only in the early secondary years. But the imposition of Standard English was not a big issue for the RDG. There was no pressure for any particular aspect of language or any particular grammar.

Appendix Six

Keynotes from non-attributable interview with former Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools: Referred to as HMI No 1.

September 12th 1994 from 2.45 pm till 5.25 pm.

Heading 1

What was the origin of the remit for RDG 1?

There was the CASC Guidelines Paper. This was the generic model for all the 5-14 Review and Development Group reports. It was concurrently issued to the Mathematics RDG and subsequently to other review and development groups. It had internal origins at HMCI level. There was a group known as DUEG and this was an SED executive group for the whole development programme, and the draft was discussed and approved by the programme steering group CASC. None of the national specialists who were assessors to the Review and Development Groups were involved in the initial drafting stage. However, they were able to comment on later drafts of the remit. This was produced mainly by George Gordon, probably with involvement from Eppie McLelland and Douglas Osler. The Inspectorate English Panel, other subject panels and the Panel on Primary Education also commented on the remit. The Secretary of State for Education, Mr Michael Forsyth, indicated that he wished to follow the same general direction that was being followed in England. Both the proposals in Scotland and those in England came from policy decisions taken by the Government. However, early on there were apparent differences between the two systems. In Scotland, Working Paper 1 was produced, and there was no parallel statement to this produced south of the Border. The brief description of the curricular modes was strongly influenced by the 10-14 document. The statements were produced by the SCCC and revised by members of the Inspectorate. Page 4 of Working Paper 1 was phrased by the Inspectorate but basically sourced by the SCCC. For example, the statement on Language is an attempt to obtain

balance. It gives a recognition to the idea that Knowledge about Language is important, but it also replicates the arguments about wider aspects such as genre and media which were in the 10-14 Report. The Guidelines Paper was in thrust managerial rather than theoretical. It was to give cohesion and uniformity to Review and Development Groups who were working with differing areas of the curriculum, and as such constituted a common format. It did, however, give latitude for each RDG to define Specific Issues - very important for RDG 1 - e.g. Scottish culture, Mass Media, etc. RDG1 made good use of this latitude. It is also important to note that the way RDG 1 interpreted the remit was largely accepted by CASC as a template for all the other reports that followed (e.g. the concept of Strands.)

Heading 2

What was the view of the Department on the 5-14 Development Programme? Were there particular concerns?

The Department and the Inspectorate do not necessarily have a particular view: it is their job to implement Government policy and to make it workable. The policy was spelled out in "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland - a policy for the Nineties" -1987.

Every Inspectorate Panel had submitted views on the 10-14 Report. The Inspectorate had mixed views about it - there was a split - but the English Panel had broadly been in support. The main criticisms of the 10-14 proposals were that they were lengthy and diffuse and that the programme of staff development which would be necessary to implement them was impracticable. The official view was that there were marked weaknesses in it. The costing exercise which was undertaken was on the surface a very sensible thing to do: but it would probably not have taken place if it had not been decided to bury it. However, having discarded 10-14 the Department would have felt the need to provide an alternative. There was a paper mainly by David Menzies on behalf of the SCCC which took apart the Department's arguments against 10-14. But having turned down the proposals, the Department had to find some alternative in order to meet the Government's concerns. "Curriculum and Assessment" was the result.

Heading 3

Did the Government have any particular view of the teaching of language and if so what was it?

This can be found in the Palmer lecture by Kenneth Baker in 1986. In this lecture, Mr Baker dealt with his views on literature. It is an idiosyncratic view, representing his own personal philosophy. There is no ministerial statement comparable to this north of the Border. The SED submission to Kingman, in which I was centrally involved, represents the official Department view. Michael Forsyth had well-defined views on the matter, and these were influenced by the thinking of the right wing Centre for Policy Studies, particularly coming from Lawlor, Marenbon and Scruton. Also of importance were essays which appeared in the Spectator in 1980s by PJ Kavanagh (replied to by Anthony Adams), Ferdinand Mount and Valerie Grove, and similar journalism in The Telegraph. These voiced the right wing concern about a perceived falling of standards and the need to put this right. Also of importance are the DES 1984 Curricular Matters booklet on English 5-16 - produced on the instruction of Keith Joseph, who took a very close interest in their content; and the responses document of 1986. The right wing used these as a lever. They felt that they paid lip-service to the importance of traditional values but underneath they were really only the left-wing responding to concerns in the documents in a superficial way. The policy community became these people - the Centre for Policy Studies, the Salisbury group and the No Turning Back group became the ears of the Ministers - Michael Forsyth spoke of that way of thinking. They regarded the Bullock Report as the start of the rot.

As far as political formulation of policy on language in Scotland is concerned, there are internal minutes and prefaces to documents. For example there is the Ian Lang Foreword to the Consultative Document - the RDG Report before the final guidelines were issued. Michael Forsyth's acceptance of the final document was accompanied by a Press Release of 25th June 1991 in which the desired return to traditional skills was highlighted. There was no well-formulated and considered educational statement from the politicians on the reform of language policy. The views of

Ministers were interpreted by the Civil Service and fed into the system through Press Releases and forewords.

The RDG had in fact difficulty in understanding the Foreword to the consultative document -e.g in Paragraph 4 - what exactly were the criticisms? The problem seemed to arise because of an attempt to get a text to which the Minister would agree. It was probably a compromise between what he should say and what he wanted to say.

The SED submission to the Kingman Committee is of relevance because the submission was issued to the RDG. The question was asked: do we need a Kingman here? The submission sought to show that in Scotland a consensus had been produced from which Guidelines could be extracted if these were felt to be needed. (see Para 13, Conclusion).

Heading 4

Was the RDG under pressure to follow the same road as the National Curriculum?

This was not the case. They were briefed by the English documents - the Cox Reports on English 5-11 and English 5-16 and these were very useful. The Group first met in February 1989 and had finished its report by March 1990. It reconvened to look at submissions which had been made at the consultation stage. But it was under no pressure to follow either Cox or the National Curriculum. Gordon Wilson and I tried to persuade the committee to combine Talk and Listening because that was the pattern at Standard Grade. It was also the approach taken by the Cox Report in Chapter 8. But the primary school teachers were not impressed, and others were not impressed by the pattern which had emerged at Standard Grade. In this case the advice of the Chair and the HMI Assessor was rejected. The RDG had independence and autonomy.

The Inspectorate also fed in other documents to the proceedings. An internal HMI Language Group was convened with myself, the secondary

English Panel and Primary colleagues; and we produced a Priming Paper to offer the RDG an example of how it might proceed. This was called the HMI Framework paper. It was issued to the RDG 1 towards the start of the group's life but there was no obligation on the group to pay any heed to it. We did a similar exercise with the Targets showing how these might be modified, but this was done on the basis that what was produced by the Inspectorate could be discarded. In fact, the Framework and the Target papers both proved to be very influential.

The committee was never at any time a group which were "fixed" in constitution or politically manipulated. Members were chosen such as Gordon Liddell and Robbie Robertson who were involved with Standard Grade in order to ensure continuity with previous developments, but the political content of the group was never an issue. Nomination was from HMII or from the SCCC. It was a lively and highly opinionated group, and represented differing political and educational standpoints - there was never the possibility of a fix. There was a broad spread on the committee - for example the schools and the colleges and there was representation with expertise on Learning Difficulties. There was a good distribution of expertise and awareness and the Group made use of these insights. The calibre of primary HTs was high.

Heading 5

What was the status of the 10-14 Report as far as the development was concerned?

It was in the background, as part of a huge range of material supplied by Robbie. They also had the Framework Paper produced by the shadow Language Group and an unpublished Inspectorate report on Primary School Language Policies. The NDOs kept in touch as they were required to - with the profession and found out best practice. At the end the profession knew that it had been consulted and this got through to the members of the committee.

Heading 6

Were you aware of a consensus within the Group which might be representative of a consensus within the wider language community?

I was aware of a consensus view in the RDG and also in the country. This came from the Bulletins of the Scottish Central Committee on English, through the 1965 Memorandum and through SCOLA - all of these exercised a powerful influence. as did the Foundations of Writing material. All of the Group were aware of these and approved of them. The influence of Bullock was still strong. This was a body of shared knowledge within the Group. The Chair, as a non-English specialist, was able to challenge this and it was good to have a Chair who could challenge accepted thinking.

In the wider context as Assessor, I made it my business to remind them of the existence of right-wing views, and I had to ensure that they did not say anything which was counter to Government policy. I had to mediate it and make it work. But there was never an occasion when I put over anything which ran counter to policy. There was never any suggestion of SED whip-cracking. As already indicated, HMI's submissions, the Framework and Target papers, were offered as submissions which could be rejected or accepted - in part or in whole. There was a parallel body SCOLT - the Sub Committee on Language Testing. Its links were with SCAT, chaired by Bart McGettrick and it was chaired by an HMI, myself. It was a body for primary language testing. It had Robbie, Jim Duffin, myself, Caroline Hutchison and SEB and primary colleagues and had to devise a formula for tests and test materials. But RDG 1 made it clear it didn't want anything to do with tests! SCOLT, however, had access to the developing work of RDG1 and tried to frame the proposals in harmony with RDG1s thinking. SCOLT later handed over its responsibilities to SEB's 5-14 Assessment Unit - FFAU.

Heading 7

What is the role of the HMII in enforcement or facilitation of the new developments?

The Inspectorate Progress Report on Implementing 5-14 published in Summer 1994 refers to standards of attainment in the four outcomes of Listening, Talking, Reading and Writing. It looks at how schools are implementing the development in terms of the outcomes and strands - primary schools are inspected in terms of a formula devolved from 5-14 and this tests the performance of children closely in terms of the outcomes and the strands. The last inspection for which I was responsible - that in Minnigaff Primary School - shows this. The HMII have invested immense effort in developing forms of inspection in the 4 Learning Outcomes. For example, they have to take children from different stages and talk to them. Schools are told in advance that this will happen and that they have to provide a sample of pupils. They also have to give the HMII assessment information in terms of attainment in the outcomes and strands. Minnigaff was the first school in the west in which the Expressive Arts were inspected in these terms.

These documents - ie published school reports and the Progress Report show how the Department is pressing home 5-14 - but they are not putting dates on how soon it all has to be in place, as far as I know. There may be problems with the end-on relation with Higher Still - 5-14 has to be in phase with this.

Heading 8

What were the substantive language issues which concerned the RDG?

HMI, in the Framework Paper, tried to anticipate the issues - whether or not in identifying the main elements there was a separate strand or outcome called knowledge or awareness about language. There might have been a

model with Knowledge about Language as a separate element. The Group had to decide how it might handle this. Politically it might be very attractive if Knowledge about Language was a separate outcome, as in the HMI Report English 5-16 south of the Border. The Group chose not to go down that road. This was true on both the primary and secondary school sides. It was important to have both sides. The secondary brought to the debate Standard Grade, where the battle had been fought, but there was unity on the desire not to have Knowledge about Language as a separate element. The decision was to have it as a feature for all the elements. The second decision was whether Talk and Listening would be separate or treated together. The Primary said that especially in the early stages Listening was perhaps the most important skill of all and thus argued for it to have independent status. This view prevailed. There could have been an issue in Reading. South of the Border there had been considerable controversy between phonics and the Real Books as approaches to teaching Reading, but this never became a dichotomising issue in Scotland, where the situation was not as extreme as in the south. In Reading there was a question which was fudged. There is a criticism that the Targets are very general in nature. South of the Border there are recommended authors but not a single text is mentioned by name in the 5-14 proposals. The question then remains as to what are the appropriate texts for a particular stage. I produced statements exemplifying the kind of works which children are expected to read at various levels. How do we illustrate these? The Group was unwilling to specify in this kind of detail and never really gave advice in concrete terms about the nature of the texts to be read at appropriate levels. The nearest is in the support document with Reading and Writing exemplars. What does an 8 year old read? These were culled from experience, but the questions as to whether the readers concerned were advanced or not was never answered. Note that for Writing, a fundamental issue was how far RDG1 should explicitly endorse the "Foundations of Writing" approach to early writing skills. In the end (see Page 44) their advice is consonant with "Foundations" -- though it is not identified in so many words!

As far as the use of Latinate terminology is concerned, once the Group decided to scatter the Knowledge about Language requirements across the Levels it had to decide what was actually required at each Level. It had to

sort out what terms were applicable to Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening, in order to avoid the creation of a separate Knowledge about Language element. In the RDG Report it was at first called Awareness of Language, but became Knowledge about Language. The collection of terms it contains is open to the criticism that it is a rag-bag. Not all are grammatical terms - some are literary, media, genre, gesture and so on. So it is not simply a list of grammatical terms. The possibility of the report using more up-to-date terms was not really an issue. Primary school colleagues chose the terms which were most familiar to them and these were the traditional ones. There was no political dimension to the choice at all. It was a curious clustering of terms. It was also done differing ways in the course of the construction of the document. Chris Webb, for example, retabulated them in order to check the distribution. In the end, the report contains what the members of the committee could agree on in particular circumstances. Knowledge about Language was what the corporate wisdom of RDG 1 agreed was the corpus of terms that children should know and be able to use. The statements incorporated in Section 6 - Specific Issues - deal with important substantive issues for English language - all of these issues were long discussed by RDG1. Note that Diversity of Language and Culture was switched from Specific Issues to Catering for Needs....

Heading 9

What was the role of the Inspectorate in the 1980s in terms of laying the ground for the 5-14 developments?

No-one must assume the HMII are all liberal and middle of the road. Some HMII have marked left or right-wing views, educationally and politically. The Inspectorate has to be careful of Inspectorate policy differing from Department policy. An example of how HMII operate is "Effective Secondary Schools", which is a report which draws on school inspections in order to embody Inspectorate policy. I was involved in the writing of Chapter 2 of this, and the section on Learning and Teaching represents a fairly liberal view of the learning and teaching process. The Inspectorate formulates policies in terms of the findings of its own school reports. For example, "Effective

Learning and Teaching - ENGLISH” presents HMII considered views, and is as coherent a statement as can be managed. It is based on over 200 school inspections. In practice if not in theory the Inspectorate has to be wary of conflicting directly with Government policies.

The Inspectorate tried to organise 5-14 in a way which did not discard the best of earlier thinking in, for example, the 1965 Memorandum - but it had to take account of the need for greater structure and specificity in Targets and advice which is in line with current Government policy. It tried to combine this with the humane view of language and learning developed since the Advisory Report of the 1940s.

The Inspectorate concern in managing 5-14 is to ensure continuity with its previous thinking and reports and documents produced as digests of these reports. In individual documents the line taken depended on the points of view of the inspectors concerned but in general the point holds true - I was as national English specialist anxious not to see any development which eroded the standpoints of the Bulletins and of Standard Grade. The later “Effective Learning and Teaching: English” (HMI, 1992) tries to demonstrate this continuity. It has many references to 5-14 development.

Appendix Seven

Keynotes from Interview with Professor Bart McGettrick, Principal of St Andrew's College and former Convener of the 5-14 Review and Development Group on Assessment.

October 27th 1994 from 5 until 6 pm

Heading 1

Could you please comment on the remit which your RDG was given?

The fact is that we had no remit. I met with HMCI Eppie McClelland and it was made clear that there would be no remit in the accepted sense of the term. Our work was directly linked to and accountable to the SOED and not as other RDGs were, to the SCCC. Only one other RDG was dealt with in this way and that was the group on Testing. The Secretary of State and particularly the Minister for Education Mr Forsyth had an interest in testing. He wished the Department (the SOED) to drive what happened in assessment. All our work had to be within the framework of the 5-14 Development Programme. I was given an account of the interest of the Minister in testing in education. But we were constrained to produce a practical outcome. There was no previous obvious example of this, but our report was not to be in nature like the earlier Dunning report which had driven Standard Grade assessment.

I had advice from HMII on the membership of the group and indeed on the secretaryship. Caroline Hutchison - now herself an HMI - filled this post for two meetings but there were problems with her being based in Edinburgh and me in Glasgow so Louise Hayward, of the College, took over after that; and we had the benefit of a single campus.

Heading 2

What was the relationship to CASC?

CASC was chaired by HMSCI Nisbet Gallagher and I reported to him, but our chief relationship was with the SOED. Whereas other RDGs were responsible to the SCCC and through that body to CASC, the RDG on Assessment reported directly to CASC. Documents were put to CASC, but my visits there were rare. In fact, the RDG was a fairly autonomous committee. There was an HMI assessor, in our case Ernie Spencer and he indicated that the group had a degree of independence. There were 2 centralist forces. The first of these was the indication from Eppie McClelland about ministerial expectations and the second was that Ernie would act as a conduit to feed the Department's thinking down into the RDG.

Heading 3

Could you comment on the composition and disposition of the RDG?

The Committee consisted of a group of highly professional people. It was a real privilege to support those working on the RDG. They were not persuaded by ideologies, but they were persuaded of the need to improve the standards of teaching and learning. They looked sideways at the position which the Minister had adopted and saw a place for testing, but within the framework of a much wider view of assessment. The group was autonomous in action and in philosophy. This autonomy and the consensus which characterised our approach stemmed from the professionalism of the members.

The relationship between the group and the Minister is an interesting one. The forewords to the documents were the overview of the Minister on the work which the RDGs had produced. These were public committees and the documents represented their views plus a comment from the Minister. Thus the RDG version, the first to come out, is the statement of the committee. It is

attributable to them and is unadulterated by the SOED. The Minister then gave the foreword with his views before implementation of the consultation process information. The dark blue document, the National Guidelines, is a Department statement. The names of the Committee are therefore removed, as is the frontispiece panel on Improving the Quality of Learning and Teaching, when it becomes an SOED document - even though this was the phrase which was used to introduce the 5-14 programme. The final document has the imprint of the interpretation of HMII and of 'other forces'.

Ninety percent of the consultation responses indicated satisfaction with the RDG version. Mr Forsyth, through the HMII adjusted the document towards testing. The Minister retained powers in the event of his dissatisfaction with the implementation of the programme to oblige authorities to comply, in the same way as the Orders operate in England and Wales. This was a constraint on all of the RDGs - it was always in the background. We looked at three kinds of evidence for the collection of assessment data - day to day work, special tasks and testing. Testing is therefore only one sort of evidence, and does not have the pre-eminence which perhaps the Minister wished it to have.

Heading 4

Given the prominence of a Minister known to hold very Right Wing views, how did the RDG manage to retain the perspective which it did?

There is a tradition of consensus in Scottish education which he could not break. He did not get rid of the SCCC, although he reduced it, moved it away from Edinburgh and ultimately privatised it. In England the system was much more fragmented and the Minister there was easily able to divide and rule. By contrast, the Scottish system has always been based on consensus.

The Inspectorate and the SOED had put together formidable professional groups in order to put together the proposals on curriculum, on assessment and on testing. Since the Minister therefore had the whole system working

for him, he was not really in a position to subsequently reject the advice which it gave him. Effectively, the SOED got him into a corner. It is well too to bear in mind that the comparatively small size of the Scottish system means that Scottish education is able to work along consensus lines.

As an example of this, if you look at the document which is mostly known as the Yellow Peril, on the shape of the secondary curriculum, there is no legal basis for this whatever. It is simply advice from the SCCC. Yet most people use it as a basis for their curricula because it represents good advice. That is why people adhere to it. The tradition is that advice from the SCCC is good advice.

Heading 5

Could you comment on the links between the RDG on Assessment and other Review and Development Groups?

I personally came to the Committee with views that I was for providing teachers with practical advice on assessment methodologies. But the committee said the document was to do with the principles of assessment. This was seen as helping to lead to teacher autonomy. We were looking at the interfaces between teaching, learning and assessment. We were not concerned with the bolt-on test which was added to the end of a curriculum or part of a curriculum.

Members came with many different agendas. The five areas of planning, teaching, recording, reporting and evaluating only came into being after months of wrestling with the issues involved. We were at this on every Saturday for months. The meetings were extended seminars, and there was enormously hard work done by the members. This avoided the HMII stepping in and saying 'here's your answer'. We had a different report at the end of the day from that which the HMII expected we would.

Heading 6

What if any, was the relationship between the RDG on Assessment and TGAT and the SATs in England?

The report was concerned with the principles of assessment and the strategic approaches which teachers might use. There were some real facilitators on the group, especially Louise. We produced a report which had a philosophical base, not an ad hoc set of proposals. In that we were in a position diametrically opposed to that of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing in England.

The Committee became almost obsessed with the subject. People like Louise, Ernie Spencer, Chris McIlroy and Betty McGill as a practitioner were capable of looking at the underlying principles. Thus we had a consensus in a way which was not likely to appeal to the Minister. There was a different philosophical approach. In England they looked at the establishment of a standard and the curriculum to get pupils up to the standard with the test as a means of ensuring that they got there. We took the view that teachers are professional and competent, if perhaps lacking in confidence. We therefore saw assessment as the servant of the curriculum: in England assessment came first.

We were kept informed of what was happening in England, but we also looked overseas, particularly out towards the USA. But we did not find any sets of proposals which seemed to us to fit the bill or meet the needs of Scottish education: all ran the risk of being superordinate to the curriculum - curricular specification was important rather than assessment itself. We looked at three of the bidders for the SATs - I think it was London, Manchester and Oxford. These were all rejected as a basis for the way ahead. They could be used as a dimension of evidence, but not as a basis for running the curriculum.

We enunciated a number of principles - seen in the grey bits of the document - in each of the 5 areas.

Heading 7

What were the links to Government policy as far as the RDG was concerned?

A philosophical stance was expressed by the Minister in terms of the products and outcomes. He then asked his officers to use normal channels to produce the programmes in curriculum and assessment. In that process, he had to go through the process of the consensus within education and there was no consensus for his view. We weren't given a clear steer when we were given our remit - there was no agenda handed down. Mr Forsyth would have been horrified to see this. What it boiled down to was a statement that 'we want practical advice - now go and do it'. Forsythian thinking just did not figure in the group's thinking and deliberation. We had an agenda driven by concern for children which was quite genuine. However there was a perception that we could be as liberal as we liked but at the end of the day we would need Ministerial approval. We worked in the real world. In fact we produced some documents which had good ideas but which had to be rejected because of a danger of no Ministerial approval. But there was no sense of interference during the deliberation.

The only way in which this was seen was in the context of the staff development materials. I went the first time to CASC with a document in which each of the sections was followed by staff development materials - Planning followed by staff development materials on Planning and so on. CASC said this was not acceptable. They were worried about teacher reaction on the size of the document. It was rejected even though the basic logic of the approach was there. It was really a formatting issue. We extracted the principles and the staff development materials were separate.

On the committee, some said in response to this rejection by CASC that we should keep the staff development materials and reject the principles - teachers were the most important people. But Nisbet Gallagher said it was testing which was the most important. Over the summer of 1990 we produced the RDG report and it came out in September. It was a decision of CASC to separate the principles from the staff development material. In

retrospect I have to say that I think they were right. The staff development materials were put into a folder and made attractive. Later they went out through the means of the SCCC. There has been no second version of the staff development materials in the way that the National Guidelines followed the Review and Development Group Report. Perhaps this speaks about the acceptability of the staff development materials.

Appendix Eight

Keynotes from Interview with Dr Brian Boyd: Assistant Director, Quality in Education Centre, University of Strathclyde; formerly Chief Adviser, Strathclyde Regional Council and member of National Steering Committee on Staff Development, 5-14.

November 29th, 1994 from 9 am until 10 am

Heading 1

Could you please comment in the light of your own research, on the role played by the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, in the forming of the policies which brought about 5-14?

I think there is a need to be balanced when you are looking at Michael Forsyth. For example, the decisions to distance 10-14 were taken by the SOED before Michael Forsyth arrived on the scene. It was a process of politicisation of the SOED - the Secretaries, the HMII were becoming politicised. They had internalised the arguments about standards and rigour, for instance. Michael Forsyth was much stronger. David McNicoll, the Secretary to the CCC, found himself cut off from the processes determining policy, and 5-14 was developed without reference to him. Ian Boyce, HMCI had no knowledge of the 1987 paper on the Policy for the Nineties before it emerged. Andrew McPherson's notion of the assumptive community as a consensual mechanism and Walter Humes' concept of the leadership class which keeps out views different from its own are relevant here. Michael Forsyth changed the landscape, but the process was already under way. Examples of this are TVEI and the Action Plan.

There was also clearly influence from south of the Border. It was a time when the EIS, for example, had concerns about what it perceived as the Anglicisation of Scottish education. The thinking of the Black Papers remained with the Tory Party - it was still there in the Hillgate group and so

on. Keith Joseph was wary of Boyson and his colleagues, but eventually he began to take on board their ideas: these became increasingly more prominent. You can go back as far as Bantock and TS Eliot with the concept of the education of an elite if you wish. These ideas were still to the fore. Sally Tomlinson argued that comprehensivisation was the only attempt to get beyond the elite in thirty or forty years. The result was that recent changes far from creating equality of opportunity had resulted only in an expanded elite. The influence of these elitists was perhaps more in terms of ideas rather than of structures. School Boards, opting out and parental choice were key ideas in their philosophy. The policy community in Scotland really only tolerated these 2 ideas, and was successful in that it prevented opting out. Nevertheless there have been effects on schooling which were positive in nature.

Heading 2

What in your view were the principal influences on the 5-14 curriculum?

The first of these was undoubtedly the examination system. It was still a powerful mechanism for influence in the terms which McPherson describes as “downward incrementalism”. You can see this in the way in which Standard Grade influenced 5-14.

The second influence was the philosophy of Paul Hirst. You can see that the philosophy of Hirst was huge in terms of the curriculum, in the 8 modes of Munn. It is still there in the document known as the Yellow Peril from the SCCC. Andrew Reid has commented on the illogicality of the 5 Primary modes becoming 8 in the Secondary curriculum.

Thirdly, the influence of Piaget, obvious in the 1965 Memorandum which was critiqued in terms of its ideology by Elsie Farquharson, is still there. David Hartley sees 5-14 as the epitaph for progressive primary education in Scotland.

Fourthly, there has been influence on the structure through the new right approach of rigour, accountability, standards, etc. 5-14 would not be in the form it is without the influence of the new right. However, the strength of the Scottish system is its ability to accommodate new influences. Evidence of the new thinking may be seen in the structure of the RDGs to take on board the new ideas. Professionals came into play and took over the new thinking.

A fifth influence was that of the HMII. As a respondent said to me during my research, HMII operate in the “spaces between”. They plant ideas into other people’s minds. An example of this of current relevance might be “shouldn’t there be more specialisation in the upper primary school?”

Sixthly, the influence of the local authorities in Scotland through quality assurance, advisers etc, should not be underestimated. Shadow groups were set up and policies and exemplar materials and staff development were put in place. The local authorities have had influence. McPherson sees Strathclyde, for example, as a key player in the area of education. Reorganisation of local government is partly to put an end to this influence. There is a tension between the two forces - greater centralisation and curricular control and local autonomy at the level of the school. Malcolm Green argued that Strathclyde went beyond its minimum legal duties. It pushed into curriculum development; has worked on the curriculum 0-5; is strong on theory and philosophy. Every Child is Special goes beyond the immediate legal requirements placed on a local authority. Outside ILEA it has been the most influential local authority - and ILEA was abolished!

This example may help. I was appointed to the National Steering Committee of Staff Development 5-14. There was an HMI chair, and representatives from the SOED, SCCC and the local authorities. When the Committee was set up, Eppie McClelland had just retired. He was taken back for 100 days per year because it was assumed that he would have to knock on doors and push 5-14 with the local authorities. The assumption was that the local authorities would not be proactive. But it was found that, notwithstanding the debacle on testing, the local authorities had espoused 5-14 and were implementing it. Therefore he was not required in the way that it was thought that he would be. His task was changed to setting up a bank of resources

because the authorities did not object to the development of 5-14. The Committee found itself trying to identify the requirements of staff development 5-14. Bart McGettrick said focus on people not packages was needed. The Committee has since been disbanded. The SOED see support in terms of one or two SCCC projects - they have backed off. Now that might lead to a situation where nothing is happening to support 5-14. It could perhaps go off the boil. Probably development in the primary sector will continue - this creates progression at the divide. But the secondary sector is hoping that 5-14 will go away - they have one eye on Higher Still and the implications of that development. Strathclyde did road shows with a high profile on Howie - but this has not been done with regard to 5-14. There is high priority where there is assessment with national external examinations - but this is not the case at the soft end. There is a danger that "downward incrementalism" will affect 5-14 and ultimately the primary school. 5-14 is a broad, general teacher-focused development.

Heading 3

What in your view are the effects of 5-14 in language teaching in the primary school?

There has been an uneven response up and down the country. Some authorities are introducing interesting materials and approaches for teachers, including staff development. There has been a greater degree of systematic planning and progression, and a sharper focus on the strands.

There has been a greater focus on aspects like genre and talk: but as Ernie Spencer HMI said, listening has been an example of an assessment focused approach - it has in many instances not been genuinely developmental. 5-14 language lets schools disentangle language from topics and theme studies and look at it in more systematic ways. It also helps with forward planning. Strathclyde matched strands and levels with currently available commercial reading schemes. That is an unfortunate message that 5-14 does not involve critical thinking. But given the framework, the RDG authors did a good job. In terms of Knowledge about Language, they are

making the best of a bad job. It turns the clock back, and bears no relevance to research and the current background. In the 70s we had concerns about the use of Latinate structures and terms - and with the resultant aridity and decontextualisation. The problem is not with the metalanguage but with the way in which it is used.

The RDG probably was right in the way in which they approached the task from a pragmatic aspect, however. There was undoubtedly the need to keep the right happy and the use of the old Latinate terms probably achieved this.

In the end consensus means that the radical thinkers and their ideas get squeezed out in the search for common ground. The RDG appointees were probably regarded as fairly safe. David Menzies thought that safe people emerged from the ashes of the 10-14 initiative. Was there the likelihood of the HMI appointees including really radical thinkers at this time? Probably the Committee on Assessment was the most radical. That on language tried to be, but their time scale was too tight and they did not have time.

Appendix Nine

Keynotes from Interview - non attributable - with former HM
Inspector of Schools: Referred to as HMI No 2
December 20th, 1994 from 10.30 am until 12.30 pm

Heading 1

Could you comment on the relationship between the SOED and the Inspectorate concerning the development of national policy 5-14?

I was not directly concerned with the 5-14 programme itself, but as a member of the Inspectorate I was watching in the wings. I was more concerned with the School Boards initiative, and I worked with Michael Forsyth on this. It seemed to me that the Inspectorate changed its relationship with other agencies during this period. Previously, the analysis of schools which we carried out was a powerful influence on policy making - for example, dissatisfaction with the education of non certificate pupils led to the eventual Munn and Dunning Reports. We had a slow, careful look at the system and this led to a "state of play" report and thence to development. Political thinking was there, but what the HMII said counted. This situation changed to one where the political view came to the forefront. Senior SED - ie., not HMI - administrative personnel became increasingly interested in the curriculum. They became more directly interested in initiatives, and the question has to be asked - did they become politicised? An example of this might be the School Board training manual. Senior officials were conveying the views of the Minister as well as using the knowledge of and seeking the views of inspectors, EAs and schools. Decisions were being made on a more political basis than in the past.

There was a change in the style of curriculum development. In key people, such as Mr Forsyth - there was, I believe, a distrust of the SCCC, of advisers, college lecturers - perhaps even of teachers. As far as 5-14 is concerned, I have the impression that although there was a group to undertake

development tasks, there was perhaps not the same faith in the centre that the group would 'come up with the goods' which they had been asked for.

In terms of the style and content of initiatives, the Department was becoming increasingly proactive, with some people perhaps influenced by New Right thinking. Michael Forsyth did not appear to be tremendously interested in what was actually happening now in schools. He was more driven by what was happening in England, so that we here in Scotland did not 'fall behind'. It was connected with his views on private schools and the standards debate. But there was not the same cognisance taken of what HMII said - there was greater interest in what he perceived as the deficiencies of the Scottish educational system. He was perhaps driven by colleagues in England, and had a desire to keep up. This applied to 5-14: what the Minister said was more important than consultation. It is worth looking, in contrast, at what happened in Standard Grade. There, there was authentic involvement of teachers as distinct from making some teachers members of a working group. It's the distrust thing, and New St Andrew's House not caring the same as to what the profession thought, or not "having the time" to take views on board.

Heading 2

Do you see the 5-14 initiative as being assessment driven, or more focused on learning experiences? Do you see the initiative as being moderated by the policy community?

Some view the language document as not being assessment led. For example, the Programmes of Study might lead you to that conclusion. But my view is that it IS assessment led, certainly in its perception. Perhaps it is down to the speed with which the initiative had to be got into place.

Assessment moves curriculum development faster. There may have been political points concerned with an early publication of the documentation, and therefore an earlier implementation.

I am struck by the analogy between 5-14 and School Boards. The latter were

seen by many as a Trojan Horse for other perhaps more 'sinister' developments - but it didn't work. There might be a view that Mr Forsyth wanted to involve parents, as a mechanism to make change. He thought that parents would 'kick' teachers, but they didn't: there is a real irony that the force which most resisted the implementation of testing was in fact School Boards. Is there an element in 5-14 which is similar? Was it seen as really a framework for the imposition of testing? There is an obsession in the era in which we live for performance indicators and league tables. It is part of the wider debate about standards. What is important is how the guidelines are perceived in the minds of teachers - in terms of learning outcomes - even in terms of the leading up to the tests.

In terms of the second part of the question, it is possible that it could have been worse, but the policy community did moderate it. That does not mean that a moderating influence has got to the important points: this is all concerned with serious questions about the ownership of the initiative. My interest is in the way in which teachers implement it.

Heading 3

What are your view of the initiative as it has evolved in terms of national guidelines - especially in terms of primary language?

The shape of the language guidelines differ in reality from their surface appearance. 5-14 borrowed much of Standard Grade, especially in terms of the checklists; but there are significant differences between the two. Standard Grade began with teaching activities and a construct of the four language modes which was agreed. There was a rebalancing to bring in talk, then a move to the actual teaching activities. There was a degree of choice on all the checklists, and teachers had the freedom to select. How teachers could gather activities led to the units - exemplars were exchanged and discussed. Only at that point did assessment come in. Although 5-14 looks as if it shares some of that, the 5-14 learning outcomes are much more atomised. It takes the constituent parts and teases them out beyond the point of usefulness. Primary teachers are faced with an enormous list which

makes up a piece of writing. In Standard Grade there are appropriate links with what we have learned about language over 20 years and internationally. Kingman links with Standard Grade - 5-14 does not to the same degree. Standard Grade came from a bed of shared thinking thrashed out over 20 years - hence the teacher goodwill which was encountered as we moved towards implementation.

Why did 5-14 go it the way they did? Was that degree of detail thought necessary for primary teachers? Is a person who is not secure about language better with a great deal of detail or not? I have talked with hundreds of primary teachers who see these lists as a 'forest'. It is not intellectually sound to look at writing in this broken-up way; certainly Andrew Stibbs did not. There is a need to look at the purpose and so on in a much more holistic way. I have doubts as to whether all primary teachers will assess using the targets in this way. I have the impression that the degree of detail caused worry in primary schools. In spite of the common content, the two sets of guidelines - 5-14 and Standard Grade - are different. Teachers are beginning to talk as if levels like B and D and so on had meaning - this is a level B child etc. I have worries about the research background - why are there the number of levels, the number of targets that there are in the guidelines? Has there been thorough thinking it through? What about the incremental way of adding items as the strand develops through the levels? It seems to me that the targets are becoming tablets of stone. The tone of Standard Grade was addressed to highly valued professional teachers and the documentation was designed to help them become even better at what they already did well. In 5-14 the tone is not the same. You need only look at 5-14 - A Practical Guide. This document reeks of distrust of teachers' capacities in its patronising tone.

Heading 4

Do you see the influence of 10-14 in the guidelines, or do you think this represents a dead end in terms of development?

10-14 emerged at a time when the Department was just anti SCCC. It distrusted perceptions of left-wing trendiness. I spent a long time in my last 8 or 9 years in the Inspectorate reacting and responding to things. I wonder if the concept of continuity was a shibboleth? It seemed to me that children quite liked the differences between the primary and secondary schools - was it in fact a good thing that the two bits were different? An exception to this of course was the poor transfer of information about progress, but I wonder if continuity has become an in-word? I have severe doubts about what it has become.

Heading 5

What in your opinion will be the main effects of 5-14 in terms of its influence on teaching and learning in primary classrooms?

The map itself is useful for non language specialists in the primary school. But it is too complicated., and in that sense it seems to me that it might be prove to be counter productive. In a negative sense it might confirm the rightness of current poor practice such as the use of the decontextualised exercise. Assessment by little bits is causing problems with the primary school. I ask if we have helped the teachers by presenting it in the way in which we have. I hoped that we might have had examples of children's writing accompanied by a commentary for the practical guide. We actually got documentation on the management of assessment.

I also fear that we may have a situation which leads to the reinstatement of the teaching of "grammar" and the return of the textbook with the decontextualised language exercise.

However, there is also potential for positive development. It may lead to more precise thinking about talk and listening. This has often been

purposeless in the past. Few teachers could say with precision which skills were being developed in their classrooms. It might also be making primary teachers think harder about developing children's language rather than simply giving experiences and the marking them. Language has not been a priority in some regions. For example, Fife has had a thrust towards Environmental Studies rather than language; or rather, Environmental Studies was the thrust for creating language. There has been no sense of taking what children give and then 'burnishing' it. In this context, language has often been made up of exercises such as comprehension questions. There have been bits of writing in stories, uncritically viewed and undrafted. and in general, not much talked about - and then there has been a lump of language making from other areas of the curriculum. It would be much better if teachers made the leap to conceptualisation about kinds of language, and how they are developed.

Heading 6

How do you see national guidelines in terms of the roles they ask of teachers - do they empower or disempower?

I have reservations about the quality and the quantity of inservice training for 5-14. What I have seen consisted mainly of "pages from the documents". Teachers need to be much more secure about language and about their own skills in language. We need to get teachers involved in courses where the process is gone through. There is not enough of the right kind of inservice to enable teachers to make the best of 5-14. The question has to be asked - is there enough Government commitment to this kind of extended, long-term, development?

The style of the times is colossally penetrative. It is a management culture where presentation of documentation has taken on more and more significance and accountability activities are getting in the way of teaching, in my view. Will the guidelines do more for school management and documentation that they will for improving actual performance? There is great interest in the surface features and their presentation, rather than in the

actual substance. Will what happens to a child in the classroom actually have changed that much in 5 years? However, if 5-14 increases the rigour with which teachers approach language, that is good: but in general, I fear they will be disempowered more than they are empowered; they may become more technicians than developing professionals with a stake in curriculum development. For a highly qualified force this seems an inappropriate and unwise trend - if it proves so.

Appendix Ten

Keynotes from Interview with Mrs Louise Hayward, formerly National Development officer 5-14 for Assessment and Reporting and currently Head of the Department of Support for Learning, St Andrew's College

January 11th 1995 from 4.30 pm until 5.15 pm

Heading 1

Given the prominence of a Minister known to hold very Right Wing views, what in your opinion were the reasons that the RDGs with which you were associated retained the perspectives which they did?

The Committees on Assessment and Reporting kept clearly to an educational, as distinct from a political, agenda. Within the Committee there was a core of people who held strong views, and these were similar views. We came to the tasks with similar thinking. We were committed to the perception that assessment should support children's learning. Perhaps in England there was a recognition that assessment would serve particular purposes - we were clear that our central purpose, and the central purpose of assessment, was to support learning. The challenge that the group had to meet was that of the reconciliation of effective learning and accountability. I feel that the Assessment Committee in its thinking was consistent with the culture of Scottish education.

Heading 2

Did you feel as a group that you were part of the wider standards debate?

National testing had a comparatively low profile within the discussion of the Assessment Committee. There was a perception that the Committee on

National Testing was where the standards debate would take place. In reality there were two main debates. There were to us clear linkages between curriculum development, staff development and institutional development. That meant that if we wanted things to happen, to improve children's learning experiences, you couldn't simply tell teachers what to do without supporting them through the advice - hence the integration of parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Assessment documentation. National policy in part one linked to school policy and practice in part two and this in turn linked to a package on staff development, part three. The second debate was on how to provide a framework for learning, teaching and assessment into which teachers integrate ideas. The framework we produced was Planning - Teaching - Recording - Reporting - Evaluation. This strategy seems to have worked. Teachers now know what we meant by the phrase 'Assessment is integral to learning and teaching' and that the term 'assessment' is not synonymous with 'testing'. Teachers in primary schools often said that they were not doing much assessment - but when we went into the classroom we saw that sometimes very high quality assessment was in place. The difficulty was that the teachers did not recognise it as such unless it involved testing of some sort.

'Assessment 5-14' was based on theoretical perceptions, and on practical research.

Heading 3

Did you recognise an SOED perception of the influence of the National Curriculum?

Some parameters were not negotiable - an example of this would be Levels. The concept of strands emerges from the working of RDG1 on English Language. We were aware of the political context but we were not aware of political influence. The question might be asked: would it have been possible to do what we did south of the Border?

My experience of 5-14 was that it contained a great many people who cared about education and who were dedicated to creating a more effective

system. We didn't try to "get away" with anything - we didn't try to be politically clever. The arguments and debates within the committee were not essentially political arguments - they were educational arguments. We were not in any sense part of a culture setting out to interfere with the intentions of the Government. It seemed that the only clear political intention was related to national testing.

Heading 4

Were there links between the Committees with whom you worked and the TGAT, or the Minister?

When I worked with the Committee on Reporting I had to introduce to the Scottish Parent Teacher Council the new Reporting 5-14 document. I found that I would be speaking with Mr Forsyth, Professor Pignatelli and Cameron Harrison, the Chief Executive of the SCCC. I remember the Minister asked me two questions which clearly demonstrated that he was really sharp and on top of his brief. It was said that he read everything and was on top of every remit.

Heading 5

What do you think the positive effects of the whole 5-14 programme might be on the primary school curriculum?

Potentially there is the opportunity to shift the thinking of teachers in significant ways. The programme does not stand alone - the effects will vary according to the individual school and other wider contexts. The optimum position would be one where 5-14 will shift thinking by encouraging teachers to have positive perceptions of children, and moving from this recognition of their strengths to the identification of areas which have to be worked on, then to practical next steps. The programme should encourage action to support learning based on sound evidence.

In addition, for the first time the explicit curriculum will provide a shared agenda between primary and secondary schools. This offers the real possibility of continuity and progression. There are however potential difficulties in the Levels. There is also the potential to improve the relationship between the home and the school - for the first time parents have a real place in the system through the formal reporting system.

Heading 6

What do you perceive as possible negative effects of the programme?

There is a danger that the 5-14 model might be narrowly perceived as an objectives one - tramlines, not guidelines to quote Professor McGettrick . People might interpret things in a rigid way and become locked into patterns which were never intended. There is some evidence that this is happening - eg with recording, where despite advice, a wide range of checklists, are emerging. This should not happen. There is evidence that in some schools that every piece of work is being graded. This implies either that teachers have read not the guidelines , or that they have read them in the context of their own expectation of what 5-14 is really about. Either way they end up undertaking tasks which were never asked of them. It is only a small step between identifying that a child is, say, reading at Level E, and calling that child a Level E child. Labelling is a real danger. People interpret guidance according to their own value systems - eg, if you always believed streaming was right, that labelling was right, then there is no doubt that 5-14 gives you the opportunity to do these things.

There is a danger in an unthinking interpretation of the guidelines. For example, I was working with a group of teachers recently, who reported they saw real problems with individual work, group work and whole class lessons in the Mathematics Guidelines. They could not see how they could fit one whole class lesson per week into what they were doing. I asked them why they thought that such whole class lessons were necessary. They replied that the guidelines said that they should be there.

Teachers need the confidence to stand back and assess the situation, to take decisions relating teaching to learning and to use professional judgement appropriately; not simply to implement without thought.

Appendix Eleven

Notes from the inaugural conference of the Scottish Association for the Teaching of English

University of Strathclyde 19th November 1994

Conference Focus - 5-14

HMI Ernie Spencer, National English Specialist

SOED policy in respect of 5-14

A internal HMI paper lists 3 things which a good English teacher should do:

- a) help pupils to become persons, confident of their potential and abilities to escape constraints placed upon them
- b) provide intellectual sustenance - nobody should be asked to work on trivialities
- c) good teaching should make children think - the application of doubt. They should question their own thinking.

There are certain characteristics of teachers who are successful:

They are intellectually vibrant

They value doubt

They give pupils challenging tasks

They use resources in challenging ways.

The Bulletins were the foundations of the last 20 years - the twin concepts of

growth and confidence. These are still in 5-14.

5-14 represents a desirable curriculum coverage in terms of the 4 language modes / learning outcomes. There is still variation across schools in the extent to which the strands and outcomes are covered. What about linearity? There is the possibility to describe performance at different stages in the same terms. 5-14 is a description of where pupils would be in the primary school and the early years of the secondary school. There is no implication of a structured linear progression along a strand. The programmes of study make this clear.

Mary Simpson's research "What's the Difference?" into differentiation in secondary schools shows that models such as core and extension, and resource based learning do not work. There was no evidence that breaking up structures led to individual progression. However she found that English and Modern Languages on the whole were better at effective differentiation than those who used the curriculum structure as a method of differentiation. These subjects talked to pupils, marked more work and had individual expectations.

5-14 Assessment - the centre of policy is that assessment is part of teaching and learning. The three pillars of strengths, development needs and next steps decide teaching and reporting to parents.

There Are 2 packages of diagnostic procedures in reading and writing - "Taking a Closer Look" at how they are thinking rather than looking at what they can't do.

In terms of recording and profiling there is a need to summarise "occasionally" to avoid having to refer to fragmented work in folios 2 or 3 times per year. Assessment should be occasional, on a time or task basis. It is not necessary to comment on every strand of the curriculum. Deciding which level a child is operating at should be an infrequent overall judgement based on the child's profile and a large body of evidence from the class work. Once or twice a year is sufficient. The judgement of the level is important - parents want to know where their children are. There should be identification of strengths and needs in terms of the 4 Outcomes and an

occasional summary of where the pupils are. The detail of strengths and needs is important for teaching - the role of national tests is simply to confirm the teacher's judgement against the national standard.

**Dr Brian Boyd, Centre for Quality in Education
University of Strathclyde**

Asked fundamental question - what do teachers do with 5-14?

Raised the question of ownership - who owns 5-14?

Where is the good practice?

5-14 born of the 10-14 initiative. The SCCC was making the best of the standards debate. Teachers have to grab ownership of the national framework. This should be liberating.

How you share good practice helps to unlock this across the sectors. The framework gives us a common language.

There is a crisis of confidence - teachers are being, or feel they are being, deskilled and disempowered. The initiative should be about giving teachers the confidence to do the things which they do well.

Delegates were asked to remember the use of FOGs and SMOGs reading indices. The levels should not be turned into labels. Concentration should be on the strands. There is agreement over the aims - is there agreement over the weightings? The rationale for 5-14 English Language is fine - it fits into the pattern of the last 20 years. But the levels are less than helpful when they become labels - for example, a Level A pupil.

There is the concept of the "grading game" - this is a fixation with grades. We have to cut through the barriers. Effective schools have high expectations.

What are the principles? Teachers are prone to disengaging with theory.

There must be equality of opportunity - 5-14 has to empower pupils. There must be the permanent availability of success. This underpins the construct of comprehensive education - the question might be asked - are secondary schools moving back in the direction of streaming?

We must pay attention to the affective aspects as well as to the cognitive. Gramsci talked of 'cultural baggage' - there is a need to avoid looking at the education system as a mechanism for pigeonholing people just because it may traditionally have had that role.

There is need for time to think - methods and orthodoxies change. We have to be flexible - we must organise learning according to the needs of children and not according to ideologies.

The relationship between language and power is crucial to empowerment. What is the impact of English language across the curriculum?

One document from HMII - "The Education of Able Pupils" - gets to the heart of differentiation - it looks at different methods and issues a challenge to schools - do they have an ethos of achievement? - how do we celebrate success?

These notes were transcribed on 17th January 1995 from a handwritten record made by me personally when in attendance at the inaugural SATE meeting in the University of Strathclyde on the morning of 19th November 1994.

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