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Towards more user-friendly education for speakers of Aboriginal English

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Towards More User-Friendly Education

for speakers of ...

ABORIGINAL *English*

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English

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Executive Summary

The project reported on here set out, on a basis of cooperation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal investigators working in university, educational system and classroom contexts, to lead to understandings which would enable a more accessible ("user-friendly") education to be provided for students in primary and secondary schools who are speakers of Aboriginal English.

Specifically, in the context of schools of the Education Department of Western Australia, the project sought to:

1. extend knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal English and its areas of contrast with standard Australian English;

2. provide clarification in the following under-researched areas of Aboriginal English:

    a) semantic fields;

    b) functions of language use in relation to form;

    c) genres;

    d) particular registers;

    e) codes.

3. relate Aboriginal ways of approaching experience and knowledge to:

    a) curriculum;

    b) student outcome statements;

    c) pedagogical strategies to support two-way learning.

The project was carried out by means of the coordinated activities of two teams:

a) a "base team", comprising linguists, educational administrators and research assistants (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) based in Perth;

b) a "field team", comprising six Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers, each linked to a cooperating teacher, in six state schools from different parts of Western Australia.

A large corpus of Aboriginal English discourse was gathered on audio tape from the six cooperating schools by the "field team" members, each of whom was linked with one member of the "base team". Taped material was transcribed and preliminary linguistic analysis was carried out by linguists in consultation with Aboriginal research assistants.

Week-long live-in workshops brought the base team and field team together four times during the two years of the project. These workshops led to mutual awareness raising on the part of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants and enabled interpretations of data to be jointly developed. At these workshops two-way learning implications of the linguistic findings were discussed and strategies for the development of curriculum and pedagogical approaches were established.

With the assistance of supplementary funding from the Education Department of Western Australia, a curriculum writer was added to the team and an independent outcome of the project was the production of curriculum support materials published by the Education Department.

The project demonstrated that:

i) Aboriginal English as used by the children and adults studied differs systematically from standard English with respect to its phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse and pragmatic functions.

ii) The differences in semantics suggest significant underlying cognitive differences, as exhibited in different prototypes, schemas, taxonomies and patterns of polysemy and metaphor.

iii) The distinctiveness of Aboriginal English is already at the level of awareness of many of the adults and children studied and strategic use is made by them of a bidialectal repertoire.

iv) Bidialectal research, curriculum development and pedagogical innovation are achievable on the basis of cooperative involvement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel on an equal basis.

v) The principle of open investigation of dialectal difference across cultural groups has significant application to academic research, to two-way pedagogy and to professional development.

Foreword

The project *Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* was based on the assumption that, in the interests of better educational experiences for Aboriginal students, greater collaboration is needed between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, between the community and the school, between the school and the university, between linguistic researchers and curriculum writers, between teachers and Aboriginal and Islander education workers, between education providers and teacher educators and between standard-English-speaking teachers and Aboriginal-English-speaking students. Awareness of the need for a project which would promote better mutual involvement of these groups derived from experience in a previous collaborative project, *Language and Communication Enhancement for Two-Way Education*, in which Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia worked together to develop new research-based training programmes for teachers working with students who speak Aboriginal English (Malcolm 1995a). Through this project, carried out in 1994-5, the team of educators and academics who were to form the core members of the present project experienced the synergism that can result from combined inputs in a common cause. The *User-Friendly Project* was proposed in the hope that a similar effect could come from bringing many more groups of persons with a common interest together in a cooperative undertaking.

Crossing barriers between groups of people is never easy. It entails intensive face-to-face contact, the building up of trust, the willingness to resign the urge to dominate and control and a faith in the ability of the collaborating group to maintain a common focus and momentum. As Chief Investigator of this project, I would like to record my appreciation to all of the parties associated with it who showed how this could be done and enabled the *User-Friendly Project* to break new ground academically and educationally. In addition to those whose names appear in the Acknowledgements, my co-authors are worthy of particular mention. The success of the project is in no small measure due, not only to their skills, but to their unwavering dedication and their openness to learn, both from one another and from the Aboriginal students from whom all of us learnt most of all.

In the interests of being consistent with the principle of "user-friendliness" we have written two reports. This report is intended in the first place to give an account of the fulfilment of the undertaking we made to the Australian Research Council in accepting its funding for the research. It is intended primarily for an academic and professional readership. Another report being published concurrently under the name "Two-Way English" is directed particularly towards a school- and community-based readership.

We hope that both reports will lead to ongoing action which will make education more user-friendly for future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students - something which we are confident is an achievable objective.

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Acknowledgements

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project rationale

The English spoken by Aboriginal Australians derives from complex origins, both linguistically and socially. The English speakers who first settled in Australia represented a wide spectrum of English language varieties, including regional dialects from parts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, social dialects like those which distinguished the ruling military leadership from the convict majority and a range of maritime varieties, including pidgins, with influence from various parts of the Pacific and beyond. Aboriginal people were at first unrealistically expected by the settlers to want to learn and use English, though they were given no appropriate help in doing so and the assumed motivation for their learning English was based on the mistaken assumption that the Aboriginal people would welcome the foreign intrusion which had occurred on their land and wish to switch the focus of their affairs from their own to the foreign society.

It was, at first, necessity which forced English upon the Aboriginal people, and the English of most Aborigines who used it was minimal - enough to enable essential needs to be expressed or matters to be communicated and to leave the most significant areas of life to be talked about in Aboriginal contexts and in Aboriginal languages. "English", at this stage, was no more than an ephemeral jargon, a coping mechanism for people who had to deal with strangers who were claiming an ever greater part of their land and their attention, but who were not very significant in terms of the core relationships of their lives.

In time, the various inputs of the immigrants began to level into an Australian variety, yet the kind of English which came to stabilise among the Aboriginal people was different. The early jargon gave way to a more regular variety, New South Wales Pidgin- still a non-native variety for most, and a variety with limited functions. From very early on, it seems, the majority of the Aboriginal people who used New South Wales Pidgin found it primarily useful as a medium of communication among Aboriginal people. It served as a *lingua franca* for communicating about the post-contact experience among an increasingly wide circle of speakers of diverse Aboriginal languages. At the same time, it did not carry the full cultural and semantic content of the native English varieties from which it had been derived.

It is probable that New South Wales Pidgin is the more or less direct ancestor of most varieties of English spoken by Aboriginal people today. The prevalence of Aboriginal English as a variety which its speakers have kept distinct from Australian English is a phenomenon of some significance, given that it prevails even after more than two hundred years of contact with native-speaker varieties, and despite its stigmatisation by Australian English speakers. It is clear that many contemporary Aboriginal people see room in their lives for two Englishes, one which identifies them with the wider society and one which identifies them with their own society. The latter English, like the original New South Wales Pidgin, keeps many Aboriginal semantic and conceptual features intact under cover of a borrowed lexicon.

If, as is being suggested here, Aboriginal English carries different conceptualisations as well as different cultural associations from standard English, and if it is transmitted essentially in the home and in other contexts where Aboriginal people interact in the absence of non-Aboriginal people, it is not surprising that the school, where typically standard English is the prevailing variety, is a context which Aboriginal children may approach with some trepidation and where they may experience, on an ongoing basis, misunderstanding, incomprehension and alienation. Nor would it be surprising if many such children were to

find it impossible to achieve the expected academic outcomes and to lack motivation for regular attendance.

In order to explore some of these possibilities it is necessary to draw on the combined and coordinated skills of Aboriginal English speakers, linguists and educators, and it is necessary to work inductively since neither standard English speakers nor Aboriginal English speakers on their own may be able to identify the linguistic and contextual features which are associated with misunderstanding and alienation when children who speak Aboriginal English are involuntarily brought into contexts where standard English and its cultural associations are assumed.

The kind of collaboration envisaged here has not often been achieved in this area of inquiry in the past. Aboriginal English has been studied and analysed, for the most part, by non-Aboriginal researchers and educators. Partly for this reason, the findings of most studies have told us more about form than about content and function in relation to the dialect. Educational studies attempting to document Aboriginal students' basic educational performance and compare it quantitatively with that of non-Aboriginal students (eg. Masters and Forster, 1997) have been, of their very nature, selective in the view they have taken of performance and incapable of capturing the alternative linguistic and cultural perspectives which underlie Aboriginal students' performance.

It was, then, proposed in the project described here to bring a significant body of Aboriginal people into the research process, to have them play the major role in gathering linguistic data from children in their schools and to bring them into intensive interaction with linguists and educators in interpreting the data with respect to its semantic and conceptual dimensions and its educational implications.

The strong level of commitment given to the project by the Education Department of Western Australia meant that remote as well as metropolitan and rural schools could be included in the project and teachers and Aboriginal Islander Education Workers from all schools could be brought together for workshops where some of the most important interpretive work took place.

1.2 Aims of the Project

- *To improve understanding of Aboriginal ways of approaching experience and knowledge through a contrastive analysis of Aboriginal English, as spoken by Western Australian students, and non-Aboriginal English.*

- *To clarify, with respect to Aboriginal English as opposed to standard Australian English, (i) semantic fields (ii) functions of language use in relation to form (iii) genres (iv) particular registers (v) codes.*

- *To relate Aboriginal ways of approaching experience and knowledge to (i) curriculum (ii) student outcome statements and (iii) pedagogical strategies, in order to support 'both-ways' learning.*

- *To develop training procedures to enable teachers, Aboriginal & Islander Education Workers, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Visiting ESL teachers, district officers, psychologists and others involved with Aboriginal education to appreciate the significance of Aboriginal English and how it bears on communication and education.*

1.3 Proposed plan of the research

It was proposed to the Australian Research Council that the research would be carried out on the following basis:

1.3.1 Collaborative arrangements

The University and the Education Department reached agreement on a collaborative research model which would achieve both the *academic* objective of extension of knowledge of Aboriginal English and the *applied* objectives of enhancing awareness of the competencies and values associated with Aboriginal English within both educational and Aboriginal communities, training Departmental personnel for the more effective delivery of educational services to Aboriginal English speakers, and achieving improved outcomes for Aboriginal students. Basic to this collaboration was a *recursive training model* as illustrated below (Figure 1.1):
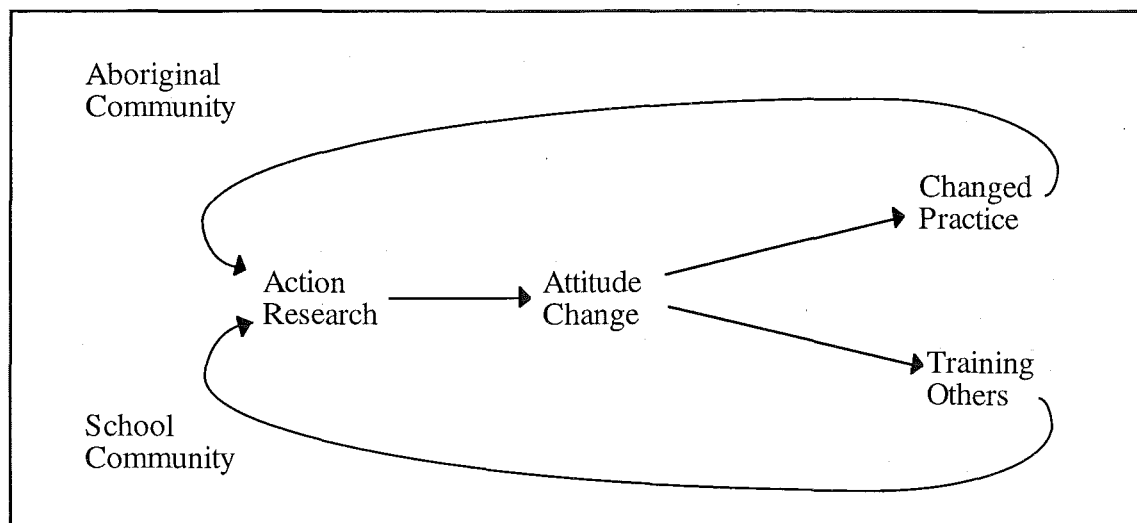
Figure 1.1: Recursive Training Model

According to the principle of recursivity as proposed for this project, the initial research carried out would set in train an ongoing action research chain which would have the potential of changing the overall mindset with respect to Aboriginal English and its speakers throughout the state system of school education in Western Australia. The initial research was to be carried out by the base team (linguists, educators, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal research assistants) accompanied by the field team (six Aboriginal & Islander Education Workers from schools in different parts of the state, each with a cooperating teacher). The initial training achieved in working with the team based at the university would be applied by the field team members in action research in their own schools.

Experience in the project *Language and Communication Enhancement for Two-Way Education* (Malcolm, 1995a) had shown that action research of this kind can produce in teachers attitude change with respect to Aboriginal English, and that this attitude change is the driving force behind both changed practice and the desire to change others' attitudes. Hence the recursivity. The original six field team members and their cooperating teachers (with ongoing support from the base team) would become the catalysts for ongoing action research involving both school and Aboriginal community members, which, it was hoped, would lead to the cycle repeating itself on an ongoing basis.

The project was planned on the basis of a direct linkage between action research, development of awareness, changes in educational practice, and the provision of trainer

training. The intention was to begin working with individuals and, through the raising of their awareness and skills, to lead towards change at the school level which would eventually bring about change across the system. This is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

1.3.2 *Proposed stages of the research*

1. Research Modelling by the Base Team

The members of the base team would operate as mentors to the six Aboriginal Islander Education Workers from the Field Team in setting up and carrying out a pilot research project in which data would be gathered from one Aboriginal community by means of:

a)   linguistic elicitation techniques

b)   ethnographic techniques:
   - observation
   - informal interview

c)   supporting literature searches and analyses.

The data gathered would be analysed and an initial descriptive account would be provided of six areas of particular focus:
- semantic fields
- functions of language in relation to form
- genres
- particular registers
- codes
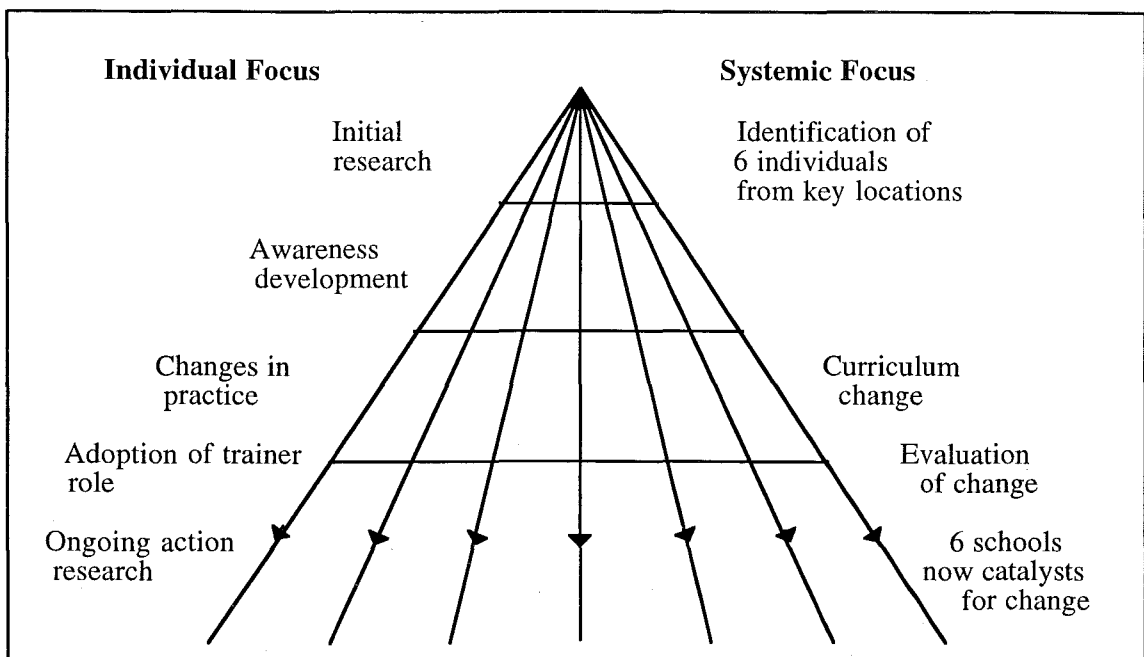
Figure   1.2:   The   process   for   change

2. Research Replication by Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Pairs

The mentors from the research team would assist the Aboriginal field team members to replicate the data gathering, together with their teacher partners, in the six different schools and communities where they were located. Each pair would be responsible, in association

with the linguist and research assistants on the team, to develop a descriptive account of their data to supplement that provided in the pilot study.

3. Curriculum Component

It was intended that the data obtained in the pilot study and that progressively obtained from the replication studies, together with the descriptive accounts of the data, would be provided as an input to curriculum and pedagogical response by a team of educational specialists headed by three officers from within the consultant staff of the Education Department.

The education specialists were to relate the linguistic and cultural data which came from the ongoing research to education in the following areas:

 a) curriculum content (in all subject areas at primary level initially)

 b) student outcome statements (in all subject areas)

 c) pedagogical language (oral and written)

 d) cultural units of learning (eg. genres)

 e) community involvement

 f) methodologies

This was to lead to pilot "two-way" learning packages for trialing in participating schools.

4. Training Component

The original team of six Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and their partners, together with selected members of the school-based teams they had set up, would be trained to assist in the communication of knowledge of Aboriginal English and its educational implications to such groups as:

 a) regular classroom teachers

 b) support teachers

 c) school administrators

 d) district office personnel

 e) psychologists

 f) members of Aboriginal Student Support & Parent Awareness (ASSPA) groups.

Those undergoing training would, it was hoped, continue the research chain in new areas and would, in turn, train future trainers in these areas.

1.4 Implementation of the research plan

As the ensuing report will show, the principles set out in the research plan were maintained and substantial progress was made towards the achievement of the objectives outlined here. However, the project implementation was influenced significantly by three factors not predicted at the time when the plan was devised. These factors, plus the dynamic of the operation of a large team which was committed to the Aboriginalization of research, led to some important outcomes beyond those which had been planned for.

The unpredicted factors which influenced the project were:

Time allocations for field team members

The circumstances within the Education Department of Western Australia under which it had been agreed that six Aboriginal Islander Education Workers would be seconded full time to the project changed, so that these members of the team (ie., the "field team") had to

continue with their normal school duties except when specifically engaged in project-related activities, such as live-in workshops and some school-based data-gathering. In order to maximise the time when the field team members would be engaged with the base team members in full-time project-related work, arrangement was made, with financial assistance of the Education Department, to cover the costs of bringing them to four week-long live-in workshops. Costs were also met for bringing their teacher partners to one of these workshops. An additional Aboriginal research assistant was also funded by the Education Department to carry out field work from the Perth base.

Western Australian curriculum developments

Other developments within the Western Australian education scene led to the setting up of a Curriculum Council and the development of radical curriculum reform beyond the work on student outcome statements which had been the main focus when this research was planned. Members of the base team became actively involved in the development of the draft Curriculum Framework document which was in progress during the course of the project. This changed, somewhat, the kind of input to curriculum which could be made by the project. However, the influence of the project team in curriculum change and in professional development across the system was significant. The Education Department of WA funded the addition of a curriculum writer to assist the team in this process.

Adoption of a 'two-way' research process

As will be described later in this report, the mutual engagement of a significant body of Aboriginal participants along with an almost equivalent number of non-Aboriginal linguistic and educational specialists led to the emergence of new research techniques and procedures. In particular, the one-sided idea of "mentoring" soon gave way to a greater mutual participation in the research experience, with both sides mentoring one another.

CHAPTER 2

ENGLISH FOR TWO WORLDS

As we have seen in the previous chapter, a central premise of the present project is that bidialectal education involves the coming together of two cultural and linguistic worlds in the educational context. We cannot address the linguistic issues in isolation from the whole cultural context of Aboriginal students. Conversely, education must address linguistic difference or otherwise perpetuate miscommunication and unintentional denigration of students' cultural identities (and their consequent alienation and withdrawal from the school environment).

In the following discussion of existing research, this Chapter attempts to reflect the interaction of language and context by first considering briefly the wider context of culture and identity. Next, we will turn to research on specific aspects of Aboriginal English, in the process of which we will consider Indigenous perspectives on research. Our focus will be upon research which addresses the complex areas of speech use, semantics and discourse, although we will also touch upon the more extensive research literature dealing with linguistic form in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax. We will note educational implications which can be drawn from the research and cite research which has been undertaken in overseas contexts where similar linguistic and educational issues prevail.

Next, we will consider historical and current applications of the research in the policies and programs for bidialectal education, both in Australia and overseas. And finally, we consider some ways in which change in research and education can be accomplished in a 'two-way', participative framework.

2.1 The big picture: the Indigenous Australian cultural context

To begin with, we need to set Aboriginal English in its general social context. Bourke (1994), Coombs, Brandl and Snowden (1983) and Edwards (1988) provide readable introductions to Indigenous Australian culture, while Edwards (1998) and Hiatt (1978) contain a number of indepth articles on specific subjects. The reader needs to be aware, however, that most of these have a bias towards describing 'traditional' societies. In contrast, Keen (1988) and Keeffe (1992) offer accounts of more recent developments and of Indigenous culture in an urban context. Since the identity of 'urban' Indigenous Australians is often challenged, we need to address this issue before going on to overview aspects of Indigenous Australian culture.

2.1.1 Challenges to Aboriginal identity

The present project has found confirmation of remarkable similarities in Aboriginal English across Australia, and in particular in Western Australia. Aboriginal English has been described in many 'remote' or rural communities, often as a second or first language where other Indigenous languages are also spoken (eg. Alexander, 1965; Elwell, 1979; Kaldor & Malcolm, 1982). But we also recognise that Aboriginal English is particularly prevalent in urban and rural townships. This is significant in the light of struggles over Indigenous identity in these areas.

Indigenous Australians in urban contexts have had to battle against non-Indigenous accusations that they are not 'real Aboriginals' at all due to stereotypes of Aboriginal people on the basis of location, 'tradition' (including language), or even skin colour.

Eckermann (1977) observed that Aboriginal people in south-east Queensland who were seen to live in socioeconomic conditions similar to those of working class 'whites' were labelled by non-Indigenous people as being 'assimilated', 'integrated' or 'acculturated'. In contrast, she noted that "a strong and positive sense of being Aboriginal" persisted, and the culture was perpetuated through child-rearing practices and "a rich and flourishing system of folklore" (p.288).

In response to such pressures, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers have actively defended urban Indigenous identity and demonstrated the reality of Aboriginal culture and language in an urban context (Behrendt, 1994; Keeffe, 1992; Keen, 1988). Langton (1981; 1994) refutes the external imposition of remote/rural/urban divisions by pointing out that, aside from anything else, such divisions fail to take into account the high rate of mobility and exchange between urban and rural/'remote' areas. She argues that an Indigenous worldview can continue to thrive when many of its traditional contexts are denied it, because it comes to be expressed in new media and new ways. This is of course precisely what has happened with Aboriginal English (see below). In the process, Aboriginal English has become a very significant marker of identity for Indigenous Australians (Gallois, Callan, & Johnstone, 1984).

2.1.2 *Indigenous worldview and language*

We will now highlight some aspects of the cultural context with which most Indigenous Australian students are familiar and begin to point to some ways in which this context has been found to impact upon Aboriginal English and cross-cultural relations inside and outside the classroom.

Family / kin relationships and the ownership of knowledge

Family relations, usually along with relationship to land, are a key to Indigenous Australian identity (Coombs *et al.*, 1983:Ch 1) throughout Australia. People are defined by who they are related to, and relationships between any individuals or groups are largely determined by their association in terms of kinship.

Further to this, the relationship between people and knowledge is also determined by kin relations. Knowledge in Indigenous Australian society is not abstract and 'objective', but strongly linked to context and owned by individuals and kinship groups (Coombs *et al.*, 1983:Ch 3). Rather than being codified in a set hierarchy in the way of much Western knowledge, different elements of the Dreaming (see below), for example, assume different importance (and different content) for different family/clan groups and at different times (Rudder, 1993).

This concept has many implications for cross-cultural communication. For example, assumed knowledge is signalled in English by grammatical features such as use of the definite article, *the* (Hatch, 1992:175). When non-Indigenous hearers or readers try to interpret discourse in Aboriginal English, they often lack the general cultural and linguistic context which is signalled by the speaker or writer. But they also lack the 'givens' provided by the intimate relational context and can fail to grasp how a text is determined and structured by relationships with the various people mentioned in the text.

The ownership of knowledge also has more general implications for research. As Sansom (1980) puts it, "[i]n an Aboriginal encampment wealth is contained in words not things". As a result, Indigenous views of knowledge conflict with the academic ideal of 'objective' knowledge belonging in the public domain (Keen, 1988:21). This implies that research should be done by, and under the control of, Indigenous people. These issues will be discussed further in Section 2.4 below. It is also not surprising that conventions for questioning and providing information are a major issue in the classroom.

The spiritual/material context

Indigenous Australians are generally very much influenced by a holistic, spiritual view of the world, often referred to as 'The Dreaming'. It provides a historical framework as well as a general ordering of life in the present, both for the land as a whole and for the individual (Charlesworth, 1984:9-10; Stanner, 1956/1998). Dreaming beings and spiritual forces are not merely in the 'long long ago', but active in the present day and intimately linked with both people and their land. This generalisation applies not only to those in 'rural/remote' regions but to most 'urban' Indigenous people as well, and even where Indigenous Australians have adopted other faiths such as Christianity, they still tend to live by a distinctive spiritual view of the world (Pattel-Gray, 1996).

This conception of the world has considerable impact on aspects of communication, from considerations of what is appropriate behaviour to the nature of genres expressed in Aboriginal English. For example, the content of 'true stories' often includes supernatural entities belonging to an Indigenous worldview, whether the *devil-bullock* in north or *mamaris* in the south west (Kaldor & Malcolm, 1982; Roe, 1983). Similarly, far less distinction is made between human categories and entities which most non-Indigenous Australians regard as part of the 'natural' world. Bain (1992a:30-36) notes, for example, that Aboriginal classification systems take into account spiritual associations between human beings and other animate and inanimate parts of the world.

Time/space relations

Key reference points are far more spatial and relational than based on precise time. In the Central Desert, at least, Aboriginal languages do not appear to have a specific word for time itself, as an abstract concept (Bain, 1992a:27; Stanner, 1956/1998). The concept of the Dreaming emphasises the eternal nature of time - of all times existing *now*. On the other hand, space, in terms of sites and land, is crucially important, since the 'country' into which a person is born is intimately linked to that person's identity, and to his or her family and kin (Bain, 1992a:28). Kearins (1976) has demonstrated superior skills in spatial memory tasks among young Western Desert Aboriginal children, compared with non-Aboriginal children.

This emphasis leads to the structuring of texts around space and spatial movement. Klich (1988) recounts research showing how exceptional navigation skills in Central Australia are linked to knowledge of cultural narratives, and Tonkinson (1991) likewise describes the use of 'songlines' - which encode spatial representations in song - to familiarise the Mardu people with hundreds of sites they may never have visited. As we will see in Section 4.6, the role of space in structuring texts is still significant in Aboriginal English.

The communicative context

Indigenous Australian children grow up in a complex communicative environment incorporating not only a verbal level, but highly developed non-verbal gestures, sign language, sand drawings, other art forms and song (see the useful introduction by Edwards, 1988:Chs 7 and 8). Such children are generally accustomed to attending simultaneously to a variety of signals transmitting meaning.

Edwards (p.95) notes the importance of "preparation" time in Indigenous meetings such as ceremonies; the preparation has as much value as the finished product. This contrasts with the relatively strong emphasis in standard English on work which has 'finish' or 'polish', whether it is a material product or a written or oral text.

On the merely verbal side, high value is placed on linguistic competence and flexibility (Brandl & Walsh, 1982): in some parts of Australia, it is common for people to speak three or four languages or dialects (see Kaldor and Malcolm, 1982; Sandefur, 1983; Walsh and Yallop, 1993, for overviews of the other Australian languages spoken by Indigenous

Australians). Hence the communicative environments of Indigenous Australian children are generally very linguistically complex as well (Jacobs, 1988). They are aware of different speech styles and sounds from an early age; for example, Bavin (1993) reports a Warlpiri child as young as four imitating the English speech of local non-Aboriginal people by uttering nonsense words with initial [s] (a sound not found in Warlpiri). The idea of children learning more than one dialect or language from early years is not the problem it is for some other Australians who have been brought up in the unusual context of a relatively monolingual society.

Indigenous Australian ways of learning and teaching

In line with other aspects of lifestyle and worldview, Indigenous Australian cultures emphasise holistic, contextualised learning in a generally cooperative social context. Coombs *et al.* (1983:Ch3) provide a useful introduction to Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, including:

- involvement in adult activities from an early age;

- emphasis on observation and imitation rather than direct instruction or question and answer;

- a preference for learning by doing, not for learning how to do;

- learning in a way that makes use simultaneously of several different mental processes;

- the social cost of making a mistake is greater than that of admitting ignorance;

- a tendency to reinforce correct behaviour rather than penalising error;

- competition is directed primarily outside the kin group; within the kin group there is a strong emphasis on cooperation;

- learning tends to be by person-orientation rather than information-orientation;

- non-verbal communication is used more, and more consciously, than by non-Indigenous Australians;

- exploratory behaviour, persistence and repetition are important learning strategies.

As Christie and Harris (1985) show, Indigenous students often come with quite different views from those of teachers regarding what happens in the classroom - not only because of differences in learning styles but due to differences in worldview (such as the view of knowledge mentioned above). In combination with language differences, these factors often contribute to breakdowns in classroom communication. (Other key sources on this topic include Gray, 1990; Harris, 1980; Harris, 1982; Malin, 1989; Malin, 1990b).

Some Indigenous groups, such as the Yirrkala school community (Christie, 1995a), are now experimenting with the use of schools as new contexts for passing on their own knowledge. Likewise, inside and outside of schools, Indigenous people are making use of technologies such as audio and video recorders to preserve their own knowledge for future generations (eg. Bennell & Collard, 1991).

2.1.3 A bicultural world

Indigenous Australians today live within a bicultural world where they are constantly crossing over from Indigenous domains into 'white' culture and back again (eg. Barker, 1988). By and large, this has not led to a dilution of Indigenous identity. Rather, the identity of Indigenous Australians today is often defined by Aboriginality in contrast to

non-Aboriginal identity. It should also be noted, though, that as part of their efforts at promoting their cultural survival, most Indigenous Australians today are returning to (or maintaining) regional and local clan affiliations (such as Nyungar, Bardi, Gubrun etc.) as their main identity indicators (eg. Birdsall, 1988).

This separation of two worlds is not simply a cultural matter. It is also a product of recent Australian history, during much of which Indigenous Australians were either in conflict with, or excluded by, the dominating Anglo-Celtic society (eg. Biskup, 1973; Haebich, 1988; Reynolds, 1987; Rowley, 1970). One aspect of this history has been the deliberate suppression (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 1992, Ch 2; Wilson, 1997:298-299) and extinction of many Indigenous Australian languages (Bell, 1982; Fesl, 1987; 1993; McKay, 1995).

As Malcolm and Koscielecki (1997) have shown, this history of conflict and exclusion has led to the adaptation of English as an Aboriginal language which resists the pull into the 'mainstream'. For example, due to the 'culture of resistance' which developed, Aboriginal English has developed to include many features which actually decrease the level of mutual intelligibility of Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English, such as the deliberate inverting of meanings to produce words which have opposite meanings in the two dialects (see page 18 for further discussion). In this way, the separateness of Aboriginal identity continues to be maintained.

As they try to maintain cultural integrity in the face of a dominant non-Indigenous society, a number of Indigenous Australians (see McConvell, 1982; Yunupingu, 1990) are now looking for a 'two-way' or 'both-ways' approach to interaction between the two worlds. They feel that Indigenous Australians need to gain control of two knowledge bases and linguistic systems. But they also wish non-Indigenous Australians to come to see things from the same 'two-way' perspective - seeing the value in Indigenous culture rather than dominating most interactions with their own cultural and linguistic framework.

2.2 Describing Aboriginal English

The research literature on Aboriginal English has previously been reviewed by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982; 1985; 1991), Harkins (1994) and Koch (1985), among others. Young (1996) has reviewed some of the research literature with a view to defining Aboriginal English, but her analysis sometimes lacks clarity. Chapter 4 will consider trends in the research from a more theoretical perspective, while in this section we will summarise research in each key area.

2.2.1 Defining Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English

An extended definition of Aboriginal English can be found in Kaldor (1991). We will use the following summary, in which Aboriginal English is defined as:

> a range of varieties of English spoken by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait
> Islander people and some others in close contact with them which differ in
> systematic ways from Standard Australian English at all levels of linguistic
> structure and which are used for distinctive speech acts, speech events and
> genres.

(Malcolm, 1995a)

Aboriginal English shares many features with other dialects (varieties) of English, including Standard Australian English, as well as with Indigenous languages and creole languages. While it has its own linguistic rule system, it is described as a *non-standard* variety of English, since it exhibits variation from situation to situation and person to person and incorporates features not recognised in wider communication.

As can be seen from this definition, Aboriginal English is frequently described in comparison to Standard Australian English. As Wolfram and Christian (1989:12-13) point out, 'standard English' in an English-speaking society is not in fact a single dialect of English, but a composite of the varieties of English spoken by certain powerful people in a region or country. Wolfram and Christian differentiate between the *informal* standard - that which is actually spoken by people - and the *formal* standard, enshrined in grammar books and generally found in written language.

In the Australian context, Standard Australian English has been loosely described as "that dialect which is spoken by native-born non-Aboriginal Australians" (Collins & Blair, 1989:xii). But as was noted by Malcolm (1995a:20), it is useful to focus upon the *grapholect*, the formal written standard just referred to, when we are considering educational implications of dialect usage (cf. Ong, 1982).

The varieties of English found in Australia are a small sample of the diversity in English around the world. There are excellent accounts available of British English accents and dialects (Hughes & Trudgill, 1996), international standard Englishes (Trudgill & Hannah, 1994), and 'new Englishes' of the world (Bailey & Görlach, 1982; Kachru, 1992).

2.2.2 *The development of Aboriginal English as an Indigenous language*

The origins of Aboriginal English are discussed in Malcolm and Koscielecki (1997) and Malcolm (forthcoming-a; forthcoming-b), and in summary in Malcolm (1995a). A typical path for development of Aboriginal English in parts of Australia included:

- development of an English-based pidgin (a limited kind of trade-talk) for basic communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (Donaldson, 1985; Dutton, 1983; Troy, 1990; 1993)

- leading on to development of a creole (a true language based on English words and Aboriginal structures) such as Kriol or Torres Strait Creole (see Crowley & Rigsby, 1979; Harris, 1991a; Mühlhäusler, 1991; Sandefur, 1981; Sharpe & Sandefur, 1977). General accounts of pidgins and creoles are provided in Todd (1984) and Romaine (1988).

- then movement to the post-creole - Aboriginal English, a variety (dialect) of English, relatively mutually intelligible with Standard Australian English

However, in other parts of Australia, Aboriginal English developed straight from pidgin English without an intervening creole, or as a variety of English which Aboriginal people adopted as a second language without an intervening pidgin (See Malcolm, 1995a, for useful diagrams summarising this diversity). Regardless of the paths to its present form, the development of Aboriginal English involved the transformation of English into a complex language suitable for expression of an Indigenous worldview.

Explanations of the development of creoles and new dialects are themselves subject to the influence of ideology. Languages which have developed from creoles tend to exhibit a high degree of variation. This has been traditionally explained by the notion of decreolisation (Malcolm, 1995a), where it is assumed that a creole or post-creole language variety is gradually shifting toward the 'target' lexifier language. Such an assumption has the potential to reinforce the idea of a new language such as Aboriginal English being an inferior, temporary lect (Baker, 1990; see also Mufwene, 1994) . However, this assumption is now being rejected by researchers who argue that post-creole speakers exhibit a stable range of lects from 'basilect' (most creole-like) to acrolect (most standard-like) between which they switch according to situation, rather than evidencing an overall shift toward more standard speech (de Rooij, 1995; Mühlhäusler, 1992). An example of such a range in Aboriginal English spoken in the Kimberley region of Western Australia has been provided by Blumer (work in progress).

On a micro-level in Aboriginal English, this view has also been supported by the study by Malcolm and Kaldor of the development of the verb phrase (Malcolm, 1996b). They found that Aboriginal school students observed over time and across different age levels did not, in general, drop their use of Aboriginal English verb forms in favour of the standard, even though they also acquired the standard forms. In some cases, use of non-standard forms was actually greater amongst the older students.

Malcolm (1995a) has summarised the processes involved in development of the linguistic features of a new dialect such as Aboriginal English as involving "Simplification" (a regularisation of forms and selective use of lexis resulting in increased multifunctionality and decreased redundancy), "Nativization" (development of the contact language to enable its use as a native language complete with its own complex system) and "Transfer" (incorporation of features from another language or variety known to speakers of the new dialect or language).

2.2.3 Formal characteristics of Aboriginal English

The earliest studies of Aboriginal English focussed upon describing the sounds (phonology), grammar and lexis of the dialect. The first, in Queensland, included the Queensland Speech Survey (Alexander, 1965; 1968; Dutton, 1964; 1965; Flint, 1971; Readdy, 1961, etc.) and research associated with the Bernard Van Leer Project (Department of Education, Queensland. Bernard Van Leer Foundation Project, 1970; 1972).

In Western Australia, Douglas (1976) provided an early description of English varieties in the South-west, while Kaldor and Malcolm began extensive studies across the State (1979; Kaldor & Malcolm, 1982; Malcolm, 1996b). Studies of Aboriginal English were also undertaken in Alice Springs by Sharpe (1978; 1977b; 1979) and Walker (1982), in Melbourne by Fesl (1977) and in Sydney by Eagleson (1978; 1982). In North-East Arnhem Land, Elwell (1979) studied English as a second language amongst Millingimbi Yolngu.

Information about the phonology and grammar of Aboriginal English is also available from later studies including Koch (1985) in the Northern Territory, Harkins (1994) in Alice Springs, Sleep (1996) in Ceduna and Wilson (1996) in Adelaide. The account by Koch highlights many instances in which phonological and grammatical features caused miscommunication in Aboriginal land claim hearings.

While miscommunication can be caused by formal differences between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English, the significance of these differences in the classroom is often not a matter of students being misunderstood but of teachers being concerned about 'correctness' of form. Such perceptions - and corrections - are often intuitive, and as Malcolm (1980b:39) found, Aboriginal English itself is often perceived by teachers in terms of differences in accent rather than substantial linguistic and semantic differences. Teachers need to be aware that focussing on surface features where they are not the main priority of an activity can be disruptive and self-defeating In a study of reading lessons, Malcolm (1980a) concludes that dialect features and reading errors need to be distinguished, and any correction needs to be explicit rather than taking students' knowledge of standard forms for granted.

2.2.4 Meaning in Aboriginal English

Studies of meaning and language use in Aboriginal English are mostly relatively recent, but some useful work has already been done. An invaluable account of meaning (and other aspects) in Aboriginal English, is found in Harkins' (1988; 1994) study in the Yipirinya school community of Alice Springs. Harkins had previously published an analysis of the concept of 'shame' in Aboriginal English and its interpretation as 'shyness' in the classroom (Harkins, 1990). ('Big shame' is also the subject of a small collection of Aboriginal quotes by Coghill, 1975).

Meaning is not only determined by individual words but is encoded at every level of language, including sentence structure, intonation, non-verbal gestures, and so on. Harkins demonstrates how differences in meaning between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English are inherent in each level of analysis from grammar through to pragmatics. She describes the possible combinations of form and meaning differences (same form - same meaning, same form - different meaning, etc.) and considers differences in classification systems (Ch 6). Harkins utilises Wierzbicka's (1985) 'natural semantic metalanguage' to investigate the meaning behind different structures and forms.

During the process of 'simplification', many words in Aboriginal English have acquired a large number of potential meanings. This makes it difficult to define the meanings of words in Aboriginal English without their context, as earlier non-Indigenous authors have sometimes attempted to do. Jay Arthur's (1996) compilation of Aboriginal English words avoids these pitfalls by gathering words into domain areas and giving many examples gathered from written records of Aboriginal English from across Australia.

The studies by Kaldor and Malcolm and by Koch, mentioned above (see also Koch, 1990), include discussions of semantic aspects of Aboriginal English. They describe the existence of many words in Aboriginal English which are not found in Standard Australian English and note their origin in a number of different processes, such as compounding of nouns and transfers of words and bound morphemes from Indigenous Australian languages.

The origins of new meanings for standard English forms also appear to lie in a variety of processes. Harkins (1994:160ff) discusses the process of linguistic reanalysis, such as conflation of English words through phonological confusion. From a sociolinguistic point of view, Malcolm (1996a) discusses 'semantic inversion', in which Aboriginal English adopts meanings for evaluative words which are opposite to their meanings in Standard Australian English. For example, Eckermann (1977) described the inversion in Queensland of derogatory terms such as 'black boong', 'blackfellow' and 'dirty black', which were used as terms of affection both to inure children against future racism and to promote their sense of Aboriginal identity. Some years later, Carter (1988) found the same phenomenon in a south NSW coastal town, and anecdotal evidence suggests it also exists in south-west Australia (Collard, personal communication). Malcolm suggests that this process can be attributed to an 'oppositional frame of reference'. In this respect, the development of Aboriginal English parallels the process described by Smitherman (1994), whereby African Americans use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to differentiate themselves from White American society in the context of a "culture of struggle". (As a consequence of this effort at differentiation, African Americans regard with suspicion 'crossovers', or words which have been adopted from AAVE into the English of white Americans).

Differences in both form and meaning can have a considerable impact in the classroom. The *FELIKS* kit (Catholic Education Office Kimberley Region, 1994) identifies examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings based upon differences between meanings of words with the same form in Kriol and Standard Australian English - some similar to misunderstandings of Aboriginal English. Shnukal (1996:44) notes that 'mismatches in meaning' between Torres Strati Creole and Standard Australian English - similar to some of those between Aboriginal English and the standard - can lead to teachers drawing incorrect conclusions about students' cognitive abilities and moral integrity. She recommends explicit teaching of differences at all levels.

Bucknall (1995) describes a number of instances in which concepts and linguistic forms used in school mathematics may be confused with, or fail to relate to, concepts and language in students' everyday life outside the school. This applies whether students' home language is Aboriginal English or a 'traditional' Indigenous Australian language. She recommends that students should be encouraged to discover mathematics in their own, meaningful, community context. Teachers can thereby discover their students' existing mathematical knowledge base, build upon it, and provide explicit language needed to extend students' mathematical knowledge and their ability to express mathematical concepts in more abstract forms. Differences in vocabulary need not be an insurmountable barrier.

Some light can be shed on semantics in Aboriginal English by work in other Aboriginal languages, and in general studies of Aboriginal culture. Malcolm (1980-2:Pt 2) reviewed literature on semantics relevant to speech use, while Bain (1979; 1992b) has conducted a detailed investigation of semantics and worldview in an Aboriginal context. As indicated in this report, the *User-Friendly Project* has taken some further steps into this vast field, and Malcolm (1996a) describes some preliminary findings. Still more insights continue to emerge from our data at the time of writing, and there are undoubtedly many more discoveries awaiting researchers who care to do the detailed two-way analysis required.

2.2.5 Language use in Aboriginal English

While sociolinguistic aspects of Aboriginal English have been considered as early as Flint's (1972) rather assimilatory discussion from Queensland, the most significant research in this area began to appear in the eighties. An important exception to this is Malcolm's (1979; 1982a; 1989; 1994b) work on discourse and interaction in Aboriginal classrooms. Malcolm (1982b) identifies seven fundamental speech-act categories governing classroom communication in Standard Australian English (eliciting, bidding, nominating, replying, acknowledging, informing and directing) and shows how the differential realisation of functions assigned by teachers to Aboriginal students may have significant implications for the functioning of classroom interaction and the achievement or non-achievement of teacher objectives. Malcolm (1980-2) also undertook to survey existing literature relevant to speech use in Aboriginal society in general, utilising the list of speech components proposed by Hymes (1972b) for the ethnography of communication.

Diana Eades is one of the most important writers in the area of pragmatics, as a result of her studies of Aboriginal English in South East Queensland and her involvement in forensic linguistics. She ably demonstrates the continuity of Aboriginal culture in aspects such as information-seeking (Eades, 1982; see below), ways of talking about the future (Eades, 1984), making and refusing requests, seeking and giving reasons, use of kin terms and so on (1983; Eades, 1988b).

A fascinating account of speech use can also be found in Sansom's (1980) insightful ethnographic study of communication and interaction in a Darwin fringe community. While several Indigenous languages were spoken by the community, the chief language used was Aboriginal English. Sansom found that the use of different modes, words and styles for different social actions and for different social groupings had exceptional significance for members of the community (p.23). He detailed many of the specific functions for which Aboriginal English is used, and the styles and forms characteristic of speech for those functions. In another article (1982), he described in detail the communicative norms surrounding sickness in the community.

An important recent contribution is the *Desert Schools Project* (Clayton, 1996), which examined the functions and educational implications of English (including Aboriginal English) and local Indigenous languages in the Central Desert area of Australia. Amongst many findings was the perception that in most regions, Aboriginal English had many similar functions to those of the 'traditional' languages, but Standard Australian English tended to be isolated in functionality.

Many pragmatic issues become salient in the course of intercultural communication, and various writers have endeavoured to provide guidance for non-Indigenous people who interact with Indigenous people (and vice versa; Hargrave, 1991). Von Sturmer (1981) provides advice on cross-cultural interaction in Northern Queensland, while Harris (1980; 1983; 1987b) discusses communication issues inside and outside the classroom, mainly in North East Arnhem Land.

As noted in this report, code-switching is an important area of interest for classroom teachers. Gale (1993) provides useful background on the educational issues involved; McConvell (1985; 1991b) also addresses them.

One of the most complex pragmatic phenomena is code-switching. From the earliest studies of Aboriginal English onwards (eg. Dutton, 1969; Flint, 1972; Harkins, 1994), researchers have noted the ability of speakers of Aboriginal English to code-switch, whether from Aboriginal English to Standard Australian English, or to another Indigenous language, or to a 'heavier' or 'lighter' form of Aboriginal English. However, comprehensive descriptions of code-switching in a variety of situations are still needed.

Some Indigenous people themselves are highly aware of differences in the kind of English they use from situation to situation, as seen for example in Vic Hunter's discussion in Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm (1982). Asela (1993) provides an brief personal account of multilectal code-switching from a Torres Strait Islander perspective. Malcolm (1997) conducted a preliminary study of code-switching by speakers of Aboriginal English, including a survey aimed at eliciting the conditions under which they would use one code or another. He noted that a person could code-switch on linguistic aspects of language yet retain pragmatic features - whether deliberately or unintentionally.

Code-switching by non-Indigenous people can also be of interest in relation to Aboriginal English. The phenomenon of 'crossovers', where members of one speech community adopt some of the speech forms of another speech variety (Smitherman, 1994; see also Rampton, 1995), is likely to be a fruitful area of investigation in future. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in rural Western Australia at least, adoption of some Aboriginal English by non-Indigenous peers is not uncommon. Elsewhere, Wignell (1997) describes his informal observations of non-Aboriginal (*Balanda*) primary school children and blue-collar males in late teens in Darwin, noting their use of a number of Aboriginal English idioms and terms of address.

In the broader context of bilingual education, the appropriateness of code-switching in the classroom as well as its implications for long-term language shift have been a matter of hot debate (McConvell, 1985; 1991b). Gale (1993) takes a relaxed stance, showing that code-switching and code-mixing can take place for a variety of reasons in an educational context and need not imply either language confusion or language loss. The ability to code-switch is central to programs for bidialectal education such as the De Kalb program and Koorie English Literacy Project mentioned below, as well as the *FELIKS* program (see also below).

Pragmatic concerns are also mentioned by researchers investigating the social and communicative development of Indigenous children. While not specifically concerned with Aboriginal English, Jacobs (1988) provides a description of bilingual language development in the Eastern Goldfields area, while Hamilton (1981) provides a general account of Aboriginal child rearing in Arnhem Land. Eckermann (1977) also comments on the use of language in child rearing.

Research into pragmatics has gained particular impetus from the field of law, in which the nuances of speech acts are particularly important. Eades has written extensively in this field (Eades, 1988a; 1991; 1992; 1993a; 1993b; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; 1996), but other researchers have also contributed to this area (Chambers, 1983; Lester, 1973; Liberman, 1981). One interesting observation by Walsh (1994; see also Walsh, 1991) concerns clashes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous turn-taking norms in English: he asserts that while non-Indigenous conversations are fundamentally dyad-based (ie. two-person), Indigenous conversations normally operate on a multiple-channel basis in which no single person 'has the floor' but each contributes equally to the conversation. This observation accords with work by Liberman (1982a; 1982b; 1985) in Pitjantjatjara language contexts.

2.2.6 The texts of Aboriginal English: Discourse, genre and writing

In this section, we focus on the texts of Aboriginal English, although issues here overlap with those in the previous section, and hence some of the sources mentioned previously are relevant here also.

The study of genres assumes that speakers of a language use a particular set of text forms which they choose for appropriate purposes, following the conventions associated with that text. Hatch (1992:164) describes two categorisations of genres whose classifications and conventions are typically assumed as 'given' by speakers of Standard Australian English. The classical set of genres includes narrative, descriptive, procedural and suasive genres. Shaughnessy (1977, cited in Hatch, 1992:164) refines this classification by listing narrative, description, comparison/contrast, causal/evaluative and problem solving genres. Within these broad classifications there is a range of forms which may be popularly differentiated, such as autobiography, historical novel, etc.

When we view texts from languages and dialects other than Standard Australian English, the 'default' structures and conventions may constitute quite different sets, according to the different worldviews and priorities of their respective societies. Hence the importance of research to map the range of genres occurring in Aboriginal English. To date, research of this type has been fairly limited.

One significant contributor to the study of Aboriginal English genres is Stephen Muecke, who analysed Kimberley men's stories in Aboriginal English and described various types of texts and rhetorical devices contained within them (Muecke, 1981; 1983; 1988; 1992). He was able to identify six different kinds of story sequence in the texts he recorded: law, payback, hunting, *bugaregara* (Dreaming story), travel and devil story. He also took note of non-verbal features of story-telling and endeavoured to include them in the written record.

Sansom's (1980) anthropological description of talk in "Wallaby Cross", mentioned above, also contains indepth analysis of genres of Aboriginal English. Malcolm's (1980-2) review includes mention of several genres used by Indigenous Australians.

With respect to text structure, several of the studies previously mentioned have noted the structuring of texts around spatial movement (Malcolm, 1994c; 1981; Muecke, 1983). Malcolm (1994c) has also noted more complex structures, including complex parallelism. Harkins (1994:Ch 5) rebuts claims by certain individuals regarding the 'illogicality' of Aboriginal English texts, demonstrating how different devices are used for the purposes of textual cohesion. Text structure has also been investigated in the context of other Aboriginal languages (eg. McGregor, 1987a; 1987b).

Malcolm (1994b; 1994c) compares texts from individual story-tellers and classroom contexts and shows how many of the norms of discourse in the classroom conflict with norms with which Indigenous children are familiar. Overseas, Sato (1989) found that dialect differences affected Hawaiian students' comprehension of texts, and Michaels (1996, cited in McGroarty, 1996) found that teachers could more successfully scaffold the performance of children with whom they shared similar discourse conventions. Ruptures in classroom communication due to a mismatch of discourse conventions have been found in other bidialectal situations overseas (Leap, 1992; Tharp & Yamauchi, 1994). Research by Carrell (1981, 1983, cited in Hatch, 1992:172) indicates that differences in discourse structure may also affect memory for texts. Carrell found that standard English-speaking people had difficulties recalling the gist of American Indian folktales. As Hatch points out, in cases like these where stories have been translated from other languages and cultures it is not easy to determine whether it is story structure or content that is responsible for the memory lapses. Nevertheless, educators should be aware that this issue is likely to affect Indigenous Australian children since they frequently encounter unfamiliar content, *let al*one text structures.

New Indigenous genres are beginning to reveal themselves as Indigenous people begin to commit themselves to writing. Research in other Indigenous languages is finding that Indigenous Australians do not simply adopt Western genres. Goddard (1990) reports that newspapers and magazines written by Pitjantjatjara speakers contain new genres of *reportage,* involving a combination of factual material and personal comment, and

advocacy, a genre incorporating a distinctive 2-part structure and various rhetorical devices, including graphical means of expression.

The growing flow of works written in Aboriginal English also offer fertile grounds for analysis - although the effects of the editorial process are highly significant. Narogin (1990) comments that Western publishing houses have struggled with, and in the past even censored, Aboriginal English - not only in terms of its linguistic features, but because of the difficulty of fitting many contemporary Indigenous works into standard Western genres. Perhaps in response to this, a number of Indigenous publishers have arisen; the most notable success in Western Australia is probably Magabala Books, based in Broome.

One example of the clash of genres is the Western genre of fiction. 'Fiction' is a category which by definition does not belong to anybody (cf. the comments on knowledge ownership above), since it is not 'truth'. In fact, for many Indigenous Australians, it is simply "liar" (ie. 'pretend') (Muecke, 1992), and therefore not worthy of serious consideration. Nicholls (1994) reports the dislike by Lajamanu (NT) school students of Western children's stories containing talking animals and other fictitious subjects; Glenyse Ward's autobiographical *Wandering Girl*, by contrast, met with great approval and interest from the senior girls.

Works which have been published cover a wide range of (Western) genres from poetry and autobiography to drama, and a range of styles of Aboriginal English (eg. Bennell & Collard, 1991; Bennett, 1995; Board of Studies NSW: Aboriginal Curriculum Unit, 1995; Chi & Kuckles, 1991; Crugnale *et al.*, 1995; Davis, 1982; 1986; Davis, Johnson, Walley, & Maza, 1989; Gilbert, 1978; Merritt, 1978; Napanangka *et al.*, 1997; Neidjie, 1989; Olive, 1997; Roe, 1983; Roughsey, 1984; Ward, 1987; 1991). Aboriginal English is increasingly included in television dramas such as the ABC's outstanding *Heartland* series and films such as those by Murri director Tracey Moffatt. The use of Aboriginal English in dramatic productions such as *Bran Nue Day* (Chi & Kuckles, 1991) can at times deliberately exclude non-Aboriginal audiences (Macintyre, 1995) and provide the effect of an 'in-joke'.

Indigenous writers and directors have found many ways of getting around Western writing conventions. They include:

- Highly effective use of expressive genres such as poetry, drama and film (for example the films of Tracey Moffatt);

- a considerable amount of writing of autobiography - a genre in which a more personal style is easily accepted by standard English audiences;

- incorporation of oral devices such as the use of direct speech; graphical methods of representing aspects such as intonation;

- different methods of recording, such as tape recording first and then writing, in order to retain the naturalness of oral structure and rhetorical devices;

- growing use of multimedia, reincorporating written text into graphic and auditory contexts. Multiple means of representation have long been a part of Indigenous society (Christie, 1995b). In many ways, we could expect Indigenous Australians to come to grips more quickly with the new non-linear technologies of hypertext and the Internet than Standard English speakers who have been brought up on a diet of strictly linear writing (with few exceptions).

Given that these varied techniques have arisen out of the work of successful Indigenous writers themselves, it is likely that they could be usefully modelled and applied in the classroom.

With respect to multimedia, many recent publications in Aboriginal English, such as Crugnale *et al.* (1995) and Napanangka *et al.* (1997), incorporate paintings and photos which are intimately related to the written text. In the case of Crugnale *et al*, (1995), artwork for the book was created at the sites referred to in the stories, and the sites

themselves appeared in photographs, producing a published result as close as possible to 'traditional' ways of transferring knowledge *in situ*. Western writers such as Street (1995) and Walton (1996) have criticised the division drawn by others such as Ong (1982) between so-called 'oral' and 'literate' cultures, arguing that it has been constructed by Western 'literate' cultures and served to denigrate Indigenous cultures. They point out that literacy can be viewed narrowly as simply writing, or more broadly, encompassing other forms of discourse in culture and society, including visual and artistic means, and new forms arising out of changing technology - hence terms such as 'computer literacy'. This is certainly the view taken by the New London Group in their 'multiliteracies' approach (Kalantzis & Cope, 1997; New London Group, 1996).

The continuing development of Aboriginal English genres clearly has implications for literacy education. Literacy can be viewed as self-expression in a social context or as conformity to externally prescribed norms (Malcolm, 1999). The recent push for teaching a range of written genres (Norman, 1993; 1994) recognises the need for skills to cover a diverse range of situations. There is a need, however, to take into account not only 'given' standard English genres but the genres with which Indigenous students are familiar (Dunn, 1991; Gale, 1995; Malcolm, 1994b). Torres Strait Islanders van Harskamp-Smith and van Harskamp-Smith (1994) argue that Indigenous students need a critical literacy acknowledging the cultural and political status of the various genres studied.

It should be acknowledged here that many Indigenous Australians are averse to writing. Two reasons which Harris (1990a) considers significant in the failure of writing to take off in Aboriginal languages are the lack of Indigenous functions for writing, and the potential threat posed by the decontextualised authority of written text to the oral authority of the social group. He suggests that there may need to be a functional differentiation between English and Aboriginal writing materials, and he recommends that Aboriginal people themselves need room to develop their own functions, and not be constrained by the expectations of the dominant society. This idea can clearly be applied to writing by speakers of Aboriginal English, and it demonstrates the need for recognition of the appropriateness of different modes of communication for different purposes and settings.

In a study of Aboriginal student literacy in a tertiary context, Malcolm and Rochecouste (1998) found that Aboriginal students frequently resisted the academic 'frame' of the classroom, taking over the decontextualised language of higher education and recontextualising it by making it personal and specific. There were some indications that this was happening also in writing, although as their courses progressed, the written work of these students evidenced increasing conformity to the norms of Western academic discourse.

The resistance of many Aboriginal people to literacy can often be accounted for by the perceived ties of literacy to non-Aboriginal culture. (This also applies in other primary oral cultures; see Malcolm, 1999). During work with Aboriginal English-speaking student teachers and with Indigenous people in the prison system, Taylor (1994:10-11) identified three key reasons for their choice not to write. In summary:

1. They believed that any writing *must* be in standard English, but they felt they could not achieve the required standard. Hence they felt inadequate and fearful of writing. [This is also borne out by anecdotal evidence that such speakers of Aboriginal English may produce writing in a very formal and sometimes archaic form when they actually do write. Similarly, most articles in Indigenous newspapers such as the *Koorie Mail* are written in Standard Australian English].

2. Given that they felt they had to write in standard English, the *shame* factor in acting *flash* deterred them: the language of writing was not the way they talked, and so they were seen as being inconsistent and 'putting on airs'.

3. They might be identified as a white person.

Some Aboriginal people have of course chosen - or been obliged - to conform, since colonial times. Telfer (1939, cited in Malcolm & Koscielecki, 1997) tells of an Aboriginal

boy writing around the turn of the century, who retold an Aboriginal story in flawless standard English and from a non-Aboriginal standpoint. The boy was rewarded for making such a culture shift by winning a gold medal.

The equation of writing with an alien code and culture obviously has implications for school classrooms. It provides a justification for the provision of texts in Aboriginal English in schools and for students to be encouraged to write in their home language in appropriate contexts. Gibbs (1995; 1998) has investigated the use of Aboriginal English in published writing and the use of Aboriginal English texts in Western Australian schools.

One further example of the power of writing and the social dilemmas it engenders can be found in a comment from an oral historian in New South Wales who found that at least one of her informants was extremely reluctant to be quoted verbatim because she spoke Aboriginal English. She noted that her Aboriginal interviewee was conscious not only of the relative status of her variety of English but of the implications of committing oral speech to writing:

> *In her letter Kathy acknowledges the power relations that are played out in language. . . After our initial disagreement about the way I had transcribed her talking, Kathy listened to the tape again and agreed that I had more or less got her way of speaking right. She realised that this way of speaking is regarded as of less worth, even so far as to describe it as sounding 'as an old black gin'. When that way of talking is translated into written form it is subject to all the power relations of written discourse. It is there, fixed for all to see and perhaps pour scorn on.*

(Somerville, Dundas, Mead, Robinson, & Sulter, 1994:14)

The growth in the number of published works in Aboriginal English does indicate, however, that Indigenous Australians are finding their own ways of reconciling the dilemmas of writing.

2.2.7 Contemporary Indigenous attitudes to Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English

Malcolm (1994a) summarises the ways in which Aboriginal English reflects an Aboriginal worldview, at each level of linguistic analysis. This integration of the dialect with Aboriginality is not always recognised by Indigenous people themselves, many of whom have been taught to feel 'shame' at their home talk (Malcolm, 1995b).

> *We are taught by Kardia, the non-Aboriginal people.. 'that is not how to speak or write, that's broken English' or it is usually just put bluntly: 'That is rubbish English.'*

(Hampton, 1990:181)

> *... my mother and father, uncles and aunties would constantly tell me not to use Aboriginal English and to speak far more slowly than I did and to speak in standard English. ...you had to because you went to a white school I would imagine and the whites were the people that you had to sort of mimic and be like...*

(Vic Hunter, interviewed in Eagleson, Kaldor, & Malcolm, 1982:237)

But the use of Standard Australian English is itself ridiculed in many Indigenous settings (Eagleson, 1982). Aboriginal English is the accepted language of many Indigenous homes and communities, and those who attempt to speak Standard Australian English in these environments are often teased for trying to talk *'flash'*. Thus, as Baugh (1987) points out, the status of a code may vary in different domains and in the eyes of different speakers.

Most Indigenous Australian parents, regardless of their attitude to Aboriginal English, are keen for their children to learn Standard Australian English, for various reasons (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994a). There is an awareness however that just learning school English is not necessarily learning the language of power (Martin, 1990); Indigenous parents are evidencing a growing consciousness of different levels and domains of English (see also Kemelfield, 1996:47-48).

2.3 Aboriginal English and Education

2.3.1 Grounds for change

At an institutional level, extensive statistical indicators of the educational inequities experienced by Indigenous students can be found in the *Statistical Annexe* of the *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994b). Western Australian sample testing in Monitoring Standards in Education (Education Department of Western Australia, 1996) indicated that Aboriginal students' performance was well below that of other students in basic literacy (reading, writing and listening) and numeracy skills. In the course of the *National School English Literacy Survey*, Masters and Forster (1997) found that the literacy of Indigenous students in Years 3 and 5 was well below the average of all students. They attributed these results to factors such as absenteeism, use of languages other than English (although 71% of the students in the sample only spoke English at home), lack of reading and failure to complete homework regularly - all of which appear to place blame on the students and/or their backgrounds.

In contrast, schooling-related reasons behind the overall trends are more evident when we look at experiences on the ground. Malin (1990a; 1990b) carried out an indepth study of interactions in urban classrooms which showed that Indigenous students were progressively marginalised by even the most well-meaning teachers, through a complex set of factors including differences in communication styles and values stressed at home which tended to conflict with those of the classroom (eg. independence and cooperative learning). Christie (1985) relates similar observations and Malcolm's evidence, already cited, adds to this picture. Indigenous people themselves cite examples both of direct racism and of constant pressure to relinquish their home talk:

> *When I started high school I did really well in Maths. One day I heard the teacher explain my success to another by saying 'It must be the white in her'.*

> (Board of Studies NSW, 1997:35)

> *Teachers are always correcting what we say and how we say. They say it is bad English. It makes us feel bad.*

> (Board of Studies NSW, 1997:36)

In Western Australia, Glenyse Ward's (1991) autobiography likewise includes examples of direct racism as well as constant (and generally ineffective) pressure to relinquish the use of Aboriginal English markers of Aboriginality, such as *unna*.

Clearly, efforts must be made at changing the school, rather than simply blaming the home.

2.3.2 Development of 'two-way'/'both-ways' perspective

As we mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter, one initiative of Indigenous people has been to advocate 'two-way' education for Indigenous students (McConvell, 1982; Yunupingu, 1990). Interestingly, one of the elders interviewed by the *Desert Schools Project* said that "Both languages should be spoken in the community because there are more European people coming into Aboriginal communities, and they should try and live both

ways too" (Barbara Petrick, quoted in Clayton, 1996:41). The concept of 'two-way' education arose in the context of bilingual education, and so we will briefly consider this initiative before moving to bidialectal education.

Bilingual education and Indigenous Australian languages

Bilingual education in Australia arose out of the need to improve literacy among Indigenous students. It recognised that students learn more effectively if they are introduced to literacy in their home language (Bachelor, 1976). There now exists a considerable body of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of bilingual education for students whose home language differs from that of the school (Cummins, 1989; Reyhner, 1992:62). Studies have found that far from being handicapped academically by their use of two codes, bilingual children gain in cognitive skills such as concept formation, metalinguistic awareness, abstract thinking and cognitive flexibility (Hakuta & Diaz, 1985). Furthermore, bilingual education reinforces students' own identity so that they are able to participate in the dominant society without a sense of duress.

Australian educational systems have often assumed that the goal of bilingual education is transition to English - and certainly it is effective in providing students with access to English. However, from the beginning of bilingual programs in Australia there was also a recognition of an alternative aim: language maintenance (McKay, 1995). Indigenous Australians are often highly proactive in promoting their own languages as a key part of maintaining their cultural identity.

In areas where the original Indigenous languages have fallen out of use, one response of Indigenous people is the reclamation of those languages as a way of maintaining their identity and culture (Amery, 1994; 1995; McKay, 1995). Existing Indigenous LOTE (Languages Other Than English) programs have acquired further impetus through the advent of the *Australian Indigenous Languages Framework Project* (1994a; 1994b; 1996). It is significant that the *AILF* contains an informative module on Aboriginal English, along with Australian creole languages, since Indigenous Australians themselves are becoming more conscious of their ownership of Aboriginal English as a contemporary medium for their culture.

There is a clear sense from the parents quoted in the *Desert Schools* report (eg. Mühlhäusler, 1996:38) that they want their children to learn English in order to be able to defend their land and retain their Aboriginal life, rather than to learn English as a replacement for their Aboriginal identity. This is similarly expressed by Torres Strait Islanders van Harskamp-Smith and van Harskamp-Smith (1994), who assert that while Islanders would ideally like an education system which they conceptualise and control themselves, they recognise the current requirement for 'survival skills' in English literacy and oracy in order to respond to the "historical and contemporary situation of contact and oppression". These authors are very clear, however, that the literacy agenda should not be dominated by 'top-down' (non-Islander) agendas, but rather should be approached from a critical literacy perspective.

Two-way education in a bilingual context

The principle of two-way education has been recognised in the national context of Aboriginal education for some time (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994c:45). On the ground, it has received some of its strongest support in North-East Arnhem Land, where Yirrkala school principal Mandawuy Yunupingu has been an active proponent (Eggington, 1992), and various non-Indigenous teachers and academics have become strong advocates (Harris, 1989; 1990b; 1993; McConvell, 1994). Various other schools - both government and non-government - have also adopted the two-way bilingual approach (Rankin & Ramsey, 1991; Richards, 1984).

In Western Australia, Catholic schools in the Kimberley region have had a two-way education policy for some years (Catholic Education Office Kimberley Region, 1987; Kimberley Catholic Education Language Team, 1988). Particularly through the efforts of linguist Joyce Hudson, Catholic schools in the Kimberley were among the first in Western Australia to implement ESL strategies for Aboriginal students (Hudson, 1984; Hudson & Taylor, 1987). The professional development packages *Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools* (FELIKS; Hudson, 1992) and *Making the Jump* (Hudson & Berry, 1997) have been developed to assist in this endeavour within a Kriol-speaking context. Strategies from *FELIKS* have been adapted by the present project and its predecessor (Malcolm, 1995a) for use in SESD teaching.

In the bilingual context, there have been debates over whether 'two-way' education should involve separation of the two cultures into different times and domains in the school (Harris, 1990b; 1991c; McConvell, 1991a). In a bidialectal setting it is clearly impossible to separate the two worlds since they often exist in the same place at the same time - although, as shown by the experience of the present project, there may be occasional situations when students from different cultural groups in a class can benefit from time in groups focussed on their own culture and language, provided that there are also opportunities to share diverse experience and insights with members of the other cultural groups in the class.

To avoid any confusion, it is worth noting that programs exist in the United States which are termed 'Two-way bilingual programs' (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Christian, 1994). However, the two-way concept involved is somewhat different from the Australian version, since it involves two groups each learning each others' languages at school and interacting with each other. Most programs are Spanish/English but others include Navajo/English (Christian & Whitcher, 1995). The *Two Way Bilingual Program* at Holyoke Public Schools in Massachusetts, for example, involved "native language and English as a Second Language instruction for linguistic minority/limited English proficient students as well as Spanish language instruction to monolingual English speaking students interested in acquiring Spanish language skills" (Groesbeck, 1984:23). These programs have generally produced success and positive reviews from their students, although they do at times face misunderstanding from parents who are unaware of the benefits of home-language schooling (Lambert & Cazabon, 1994).

2.3.3 Bidialectal Education

Wolfram and Christian (1989:15) point out that there are two main areas in which differences between students' home talk and school talk can affect their education. One is the possibility of interference with acquisition of skills and information. The other is the effects of negative attitudes of teachers and other students. Malcolm (1996c) discusses four general responses to non-standard dialects in the classroom: they can be viewed as *incidental* (students must simply conform to the standard) or *inferior* (students have a 'disability'), or as an interlanguage on the way to an *imposed* standard, or as *inherent* in the life of the student and significant outside of the school. The first three approaches all take a negative point of view and assume that the problem is in the student; they fail to take account of the social and educational significance of the divergent dialect. Malcolm advocates the fourth response, which requires bidialectal education recognising that students come from a complex speech ecology where different language varieties function effectively in different contexts.

Historically, the implementation of bidialectal education has had mixed success. Since bidialectal education originated in American attempts to assist speakers of Black English, we will look first at its introduction overseas.

Bidialectal education overseas

Equal education became an imperative in the United States following the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The educational implications of non-standard dialects became a

focus of concern, with efforts concentrating particularly on the English spoken by most African American students, variously known as Black Vernacular English, African American Vernacular English, Black English, Ebonics, and so on. It was assumed that students speaking this dialect needed help to acquire standard English in order to succeed in the wider society - although this assumption has also been hotly debated (Adler, 1987).

Some early programs took for granted the 'inferior', or at least stigmatised, status of the dialect, and attempted to replace it with standard American English (Taylor, 1989). Not only did these programs meet with limited success, but they produced a backlash condemning their eradicationist ideology as another example of white supremacy.

In contrast to the narrow aims of these programs, a growing body of research, particularly by sociolinguists, has established the legitimacy and value of Black English and sought educational methods which take this into account (eg. Bailey, 1993; Bailey, Maynor, & Cukor-Avila, 1991; Barnitz, 1980; Burling, 1973; Chambers, 1983; Dillard, 1972; Kochman, 1981; 1972a; Labov, 1972b; Toon, 1982). The new Teaching Standard English as a Second Dialect (TSESD) approach (Bryen, Hartman, & Tait, 1978; Fasold & Shuy, 1970; Shuy, 1964; Wolfram, 1970) recognised that 'difference' did not mean 'deficit'. As in the context of other non-standard Englishes, such as Hawaii Creole English (Sato, 1989), the goal became additive bidialectalism rather than eradication or 'remediation'. TSESD aimed to base teaching on accurate linguistic description and thereby derive appropriate pedagogy.

Even given this more advanced approach, TSESD in the United States has not always been successful (Malcolm, 1995a). Malcolm (1995c) argues that this can be attributed to a number of factors, including in some cases underestimating dialect speakers' competence in the standard; the attitudes of both educators and the dialect community; and most crucially, from the point of view of the present project, a failure to take account of the non-linguistic elements involved. As we have seen throughout this Chapter, linguistic differences do not arise in a vacuum; they are part of the whole complex of social and cognitive reality (Malcolm, 1996c).

Examples of overseas programs

In spite of the issues just mentioned, there is now ample evidence that a bidialectal approach produces significant gains at school. While we will summarise several examples from the United States, studies elsewhere, for example Sweden and Norway, have also demonstrated that students' home language is relevant to success at school and that bidialectal education is effective in promoting competence in the standard variety (Rickford, 1997).

A storm erupted in the United States in 1997 over a resolution by the Oakland School Board which officially recognised 'Ebonics' (African American Vernacular English) as a language, as part of the Board's intention of introducing a limited form of bidialectal education. The public debate illustrated the potential social controversy generated by ignorance of bidialectal principles. It not only raged in America but received coverage in Australian media and academic forums (Lo Bianco, 1997), and at least one Principal involved in the present project initiated an animated discussion with a team member on the implications of 'Ebonics' for the project. As a result of the volume of uninformed debate receiving air, the Linguistic Society of America (1997), among others, issued a resolution affirming the validity of African American Vernacular English and the importance of its recognition for teaching of literacy in standard English.

While controversy has raged in the west, another bidialectal education program, visited in 1997 by Ian Malcolm (Cumming, 1997), has been steadily making progress for more than 12 years. The De Kalb County School System Bidialectal Communication Program in Georgia has consistently demonstrated tangible results in terms of student improvements in state school system standardised tests (particularly in reading). Such results have guaranteed the program Title 1 funding each year. The program, developed by speech pathologist, Kelly Harris-Wright (1987) concentrates on linguistic features but also considers some pragmatic elements involved in communicating to a standard English-speaking audience.

The program has retained strong parental support through the expression of all explanatory information in non-technical English and provision of easy-to-read quarterly project reports to parents, together with videotapes of each child showing their pre-course and post-course oral communication skills.

The model of bidialectal education used in De Kalb differs from the Australian two-way education model. Rather than addressing the whole school curriculum, the program focuses on providing two hours of specialist instruction in communication per week to students throughout Years 5 and 6. The program accepts students' "home language" (usually African American Vernacular English) but attempts to extend their communication options by developing their communication skills using the "school language". This involves a preliminary stage of language awareness building and ear training, followed by activities focussed on 'organisation' (including pragmatic rules), enunciation, grammar, non-verbal communication, and 'voice'. In the process, various methods are used to maintain a high level of motivation. Students receive feedback through videotapes, and they are also observed in their mainstream classrooms by teachers from the bidialectal program. The program has benefited significantly from the research foundations provided by Walt Wolfram and others.

A number of other programs for speakers of non-standard dialects are in operation in the United States, including programs for speakers of American Indian English (Leap, 1992) and efforts in the tertiary (Taylor, 1989) and adult education sectors (Anderson, 1990; Schierloh, 1991). These programs use a range of strategies to promote competence in Standard American English, including dialect feature comparison, translation, training in code-switching, discussion of both 'mainstream' and minority cultures, education about American dialect histories and links to culture, and a fundamentally positive attitude to the students' own dialects as used in their appropriate contexts - again, a perspective of 'difference' rather than 'deficit'.

Bidialectal education in Australia

Education systems around Australia are gradually recognising the need to address Aboriginal English. The Department of Education in Queensland contributed early with its Van Leer Project (1970; 1972), designed to address the needs of students who speak Aboriginal English, although its emphasis in the beginning at least was on transitional bidialectal education. In Alice Springs, research and educational work was carried out at Traeger Park School (Gray, 1980; Northern Territory Department of Education, 1985; Sharpe, 1977a; Walker, 1982). South Australia drew on the work at Traeger Park for its *Aboriginal Students and English Language Acquisition* program (Education Department of South Australia, 1993), which deals with the needs of both ESL and SESD students. Aboriginal English is accepted and used in the classroom in appropriate contexts.

In Victoria, Enemburu produced an introduction to *Koori English* (Enemburu, 1989), and in Gippsland the *Koori English Literacy Project* produced a kit for professional development of teachers (Atkinson & McKenry, 1996; McKenry, 1994; 1996). In NSW, the *Aboriginal Literacy Resource Kit* (NSW Board of Studies, 1995) was produced, incorporating input from Diana Eades. *Langwij comes to school*, a national publication promoting literacy amongst speakers of Aboriginal English and creoles, has also been released (McRae, 1994).

Through the work of Susan Kaldor at the University of Western Australia, and Ian Malcolm at Edith Cowan University, Aboriginal English and bidialectal education have been on the agenda in Western Australia for several decades. However, it is not until recently that it has been implemented. A key development was the *Critical Steps* program in the Education Department of Western Australia, which initiated the first State School programs for Indigenous speakers of ESL or SESD. In the Catholic system, the *FELIKS* program (Catholic Education Office Kimberley Region, 1994; Hudson, 1992) pioneered work with speakers of Kriol. The Catholic system also promotes two-way education (Catholic

Education Commission of Western Australia, 1994; Catholic Education Office Kimberley Region, 1987; Kimberley Catholic Education Language Team, 1988).

The predecessor to the present project, *Language and Communication Enhancement for Speakers of Aboriginal English* (Malcolm, 1995a) involved teachers in their own research to uncover formal aspects of the speech varieties of their students and develop appropriate programs for those students' needs. It also resulted in the development of the two graduate units mentioned in Chapter 6 of the present report. The approach to bidialectal education advocated in Malcolm (1995a) invokes an *ABC of Bidialectal Education*:

- Accept Aboriginal English at school - recognising and valuing Aboriginal English, and allowing use of the dialect in appropriate situations

- Bridge to Standard Australian English - build upon what students already know, provide explicit instruction in what they do not know

- Cultivate Aboriginal ways of learning - utilise the strengths of Indigenous learning styles and culture.

Support in Australian Indigenous education policy

Recent developments in Australian policy on Indigenous education have supported perspectives advocated in the present project. A key input was the *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994a; Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994c; Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1995), which, as we have noted recognised the need for 'two-way' education. It also advocated support for recognition and support of Indigenous languages, for greater participation by Indigenous people in decision-making and for an increase in training of educators involved in the education of Indigenous students. The *Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991) recognised the need for provision of appropriate assistance for Indigenous students who were speakers of English as a Second Language, or speakers of non-standard English.

These concerns are reflected in Federal education policy documents, including the *National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 1996-2002* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1995a; 1995b). The *National Strategy* notes a tension between 'equitable' and 'appropriate' educational achievement:

> *Equitable and appropriate achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requires more than just succeeding at the same rate as non-Indigenous on the usual quantitative performance indicators. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the cultural dimension that they require in their education must not be overlooked. Programs must ensure that their teachers use culturally inclusive methodologies and provide an education to Indigenous students which develops and strengthens their identity and cultural values.*

> (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment,
> Training and Youth Affairs, 1995a, p.5).

Concerns for such cultural inclusivity, as well as for appropriate gains in educational achievement, have led to significant funding for initiatives such as the present project. As we will seen in Chapter 6, these priorities have also fed into Western Australian education policy, which was influenced in addition by local reviews such as the 1990 *Review of the ESL curriculum* (Herriman, Oliver, & Mulligan, 1990), which noted widespread confusion amongst teachers over the language backgrounds of Indigenous students. As noted in Chapter 5, substantial efforts are now being made to address professional development needs in the State.

2.4 Ownership and Empowerment

Cultures meet in Aboriginal English research

We come finally to applying a 'both-ways' perspective to research in Indigenous Australia. As described in Chapter 3, there has been a general shift in approach in linguistics over the past few decades from the positivistic outlook which attempted to investigate linguistic phenomena to research *with* and *for* informants rather than simply *on* them (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1992). The newer paradigm involves informants at each stage, from determination of research design and methodology, to analysis and dissemination of knowledge.

Choosing a cooperative, 'empowering' research methodology is not simply a matter of ethics or social responsibility; in many cases it produces arguably more accurate research - especially in any in-depth examination of semantics. Rampton (1992:54) questions the view "that useful critical discussion is only possible within the academic community", and indeed the team workshops in the present project showed that valuable insights can arise out of cooperative, cross-cultural discussions of the data and its context.

Elsewhere in Australia, the trend towards truly participatory and empowering research has also been evident. Indigenous people themselves have become increasingly outspoken and insisted on greater accountability to their own communities. Some, such as Fesl (1993), have come to view the Western research industry as a further act of colonialism aimed at subordinating and neutralising Aboriginal culture and language (see also Nakata, 1991; van Harskamp-Smith & van Harskamp-Smith, 1994). Others, by contrast, have taken the initiative to establish cooperative relationships with non-Aboriginal linguists to achieve goals for both parties.

Aboriginal members of the Yipirinya school community in Alice Springs, for example, have taken an active role in encouraging researchers such as Jean Harkins (1994) and David Wilkins (1992) to investigate the languages of their community under the supervision of the community. Wilkins' experiences in this context led to his development of draft ethical guidelines for linguists working with Aboriginal communities which stress the importance of cooperation and consultation not only in the setting up and carrying out of a research project, but in determining the appropriateness and ownership of outputs. In some cases this has of course required considerable modification of the linguist's original agendas, but with fruitful results.

One of the recent inputs into research in Indigenous Australian communication has been the field of pragmatics itself. As we saw earlier, Diana Eades (1983) has taken a particular lead in this area. Her study of information-seeking methods amongst Aboriginal people of south-east Queensland highlighted a number of important principles relevant to research in Indigenous communities.

We saw above that Indigenous communities across Australia share a concept of the ownership of knowledge, which implies that not all information is considered appropriate for sharing and dissemination in the broadcasting fashion which is taken for granted in most Western academic contexts. Eades found that in this context, information-seeking was subject to strong social constraints, and direct questions were generally not responded to. She highlights several key requirements for gaining information in an Indigenous Australian context:
   a) the development of relationships
   b) sufficient background knowledge
   c) active participation - eg. travelling to historically important areas
   d) identification of the appropriate source person

She also notes that it is particularly helpful to work in liaison with an Indigenous member of the group. In summary, she says:

consider information exchange as a part of your relationship with someone, and for specific issues start with known information and share it, then use trigger devices and wait until the knowledgeable person is prepared to give information. Furthermore, accept that the person may exercise his right to withhold the information.

(Eades, 1983:80-81).

A growing number of Indigenous Australians are conducting their own linguistic research using the Western research paradigm. Sleep (1996) and Fesl (1977) provide examples of studies of Aboriginal English. As we have observed earlier, Fesl has used her inside knowledge of Western research to critique it from a *Koori* perspective. Van Harskamp-Smith and van Harskamp-Smith (1994), Nakata (1991) and Kale (1995) have done likewise, as Torres Strait Islanders.

Indigenous researchers operating within the Western paradigm have a certain advantage in terms of their access to naturalistic data covering the full range of speech continua. But it should also be noted that Indigenous identity, or even native speaker competence in Aboriginal English, do not automatically ensure the attainment of completely naturalistic or 'valid' data. As Rampton (1992) comments, in the context of overseas research,

Plainly, shared biological 'race' is not of itself sufficient to generate a constructive understanding between scholars and local communities... and even if they come from the localities in question, it is necessary to ask how it is that the long process of graduate initiation and linguistic training presents no threat to their shared experience and interests.

(Rampton, 1992:50)

Rampton's statement points to a key dilemma faced by members of a minority group: the problem of how to maintain roots and relationships in their home society while negotiating success in the new - whether in research or education. In the present project, it has proved quite common for Aboriginal interviewers to slip unconsciously into a *Wadjela* - non-Aboriginal - role when carrying out research - particularly when they are accustomed to working within a formal *Wadjela* setting such as a school. And of course, as with most interviewees the world over, the sight of a tape recorder will tend to elicit features associated with varieties of speech linked to more formal domains (Labov, 1972c provides a variety of techniques for data elicitation which attempt to overcome some of these limitations). Nevertheless, the involvement of Indigenous people in research is essential to true cross-cultural understanding.

Cultures meet in education of speakers of Aboriginal English

Similar considerations apply in the educational application of research. We can generalise from the experience of researchers described above and that of Australian teachers that the cross-cultural knowledge that school staff require cannot be derived simply from books or from external observation. Two-way education is greatly facilitated by close cooperative relationships between non-Indigenous staff and Indigenous staff or community members who can negotiate and interpret cultural and linguistic difference. A strategic resource for this already exists in the presence of Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers. The *Ara Kuwaritjakutu* project - a review of the working conditions of AIEWs - recognised a number of key characteristics of AIEWs which are relevant here, including the large quantity of time spent consistently with Indigenous students; their knowledge and connections with the local Indigenous community; their maturity and deep concern for Indigenous students; their insight into the problems faced by Indigenous students and strategies for addressing them; and their knowledge of Indigenous culture (Buckskin & Hignett, 1994:4).

Recommended competencies of AIEWs include the development of appropriate materials for students, community and home liaison and educative work amongst the wider staff

school community (Davis, Woodberry, & Buckskin, 1995:51-53). At the same time, however, the project found that they work under conditions of relatively low pay and status, and often with inadequate understanding of their expertise, combined at times with varying levels of racism (Buckskin & Hignett, 1994:81).

Davis *et al.* (1995) include several recommendations highlighting the importance of training for AIEWs - training which recognises their existing expertise and is geared towards local community needs and aspirations. Guidelines in the Education Department of Western Australia now place a high priority on training and recognition for AIEWs.

These documents therefore highlight the need for endeavours such as the present project, which can draw out under-utilised expertise of AIEWs on subjects such as Aboriginal English, as well as providing training which will enable them to more effectively articulate, expand and apply their knowledge.

2.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has presented a range of issues related to Aboriginal English and Indigenous education. Within the constraints of our report paradigm, we have attempted to foreground Indigenous perspectives in each of these areas. Chapter 3 introduces the project methodology and describes how the *User-Friendly Project* as a whole attempted to operate according to a 'two-way' principle.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Project management

The *User-Friendly Project* comprised a unique management and research structure. The research involved two major parties, Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia and two major research teams, the base team and the field team. Relations between the University and the Education Department were formalised in a Collaborative Research Agreement. As part of the Education Department of Western Australia's commitment to the project, six schools were selected to provide members for the field team and to carry out the field work. These participating schools and field team members included South Kalgoorlie Primary School (Tanya Tucker), Cable Beach Primary School (Georgina Dodson), Roebourne Primary School (Allery Sandy), Kellerberrin District High School (Alison Smith), Geraldton Secondary College (Fred Taylor), and Girrawheen Senior High School (Kevin May). Charlie Comeagain, from Mullewa District High School, also participated in the early months of the project but was replaced by Fred Taylor when he changed employment.

The base team included Ian Malcolm and Toby Metcalfe from Edith Cowan University, and Yvonne Haig and Patricia Königsberg from the Education Department of Western Australia. This team also included three research assistants, Glenys Collard, Alison Hill and Louella Eggington, and a curriculum writer, Rosemary Cahill. The project linguist during early 1996 was Penny Lee, but later in 1996 this position was transferred to Judith Rochecouste. Project administration was carried out by Alastair McGregor at Edith Cowan University. Members of the base team took responsibility for keeping in contact with field team members and visiting them to assist with data collection and raising the profile of the research within their schools.

Each member of the field team was further supported by a school-based partner who was a member of their school's teaching or administration staff. These field team partners were Bob Green (Broome), Peter Beckenham and Don Boyes (Roebourne), Nicki Patterson (Geraldton), Lorraine Walster (Kalgoorlie), Pauline Wray (Kellerberrin), and Vicky Masters and Jackie Nell (Girrawheen).

The project was also advised by an External Reference Group, the Education Department of WA Internal Reference Group and the Edith Cowan University Aboriginal Research Steering Committee. Members of the External Reference Group were Verna Vos (Chair), Susan Kaldor, Gary Partington, Dianne Kerr, Meredyth Crossing, Cedric Jacobs and Fred Collard. The Education Department Internal Reference Group consisted of Ken Wyatt, Carol Garlett, Gavin Morris, Iris Forrest and Margaret Banks. Members of the Aboriginal Research Steering Committee were Jennifer Sabbioni, Troy Pickwick, Jill Milroy, Simon Forrest and Graham Gower.

During the course of the project a number of other schools were also invited to provide input and data. Additional data was provided by Culunga Aboriginal Community School, Dryandra Primary School, Koongamia Primary School, La Grange Remote Community School, Narrogin Primary School, One Arm Point Remote Community School, Oombulgurri Remote Community School, Kent Street Senior High School and Warriapendi Primary School, as well as through professional development workshops in Narrogin and the Kimberley.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Research activities

a) Recording

A major aim of the User-Friendly Project was to collect evidence of language use by Aboriginal students at school and at home. Of particular interest was data that demonstrated pragmatic and semantic differences between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English. Pragmatic differences occur when speakers' expectations about a speech event might differ, while semantic differences result from very different meanings being attached to what might appear to be similar words or phrases. Studies of cross-cultural communication frequently demonstrate that it is not necessarily the linguistic differences *per se* that cause miscommunication but the expectations and inferences that go with the different linguistic codes. Such differences can have a remarkable impact on classroom communication. To this end the field team of Aboriginal Islander Education Workers collected samples of student speech in the following situations.

    i)   Tape-recording of free speech activities including:
- one-to-one interviews;
- group sessions in class or on excursions.

    ii)   Tape-recording of formal speech events such as:
- story telling sessions;
- news sessions;
- formal elicitation tasks such as sentence repetition.

    iii)   Recording of tasks:
- family tree exercises;
- regional word meaning tasks;
- translation tasks;
- barrier games.

AIEWs were assisted in their data collection by their school partners, members of teaching staff selected to support each field team member, and by base team members when visiting the particular schools for which they were responsible. The data collected in school was sometimes supported by additional data recorded by AIEWs in their homes or communities.

These recordings were subsequently sent to the base team at Edith Cowan University for transcription. Transcriptions were checked by those who had done the recording and reviewed by the Aboriginal research assistants. Salient points were marked and discussed with the project linguist.

b) Workshops and meetings

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal base team members met regularly to discuss the language examples provided by the data. These sessions were also attended by visitors interested in the project and those carrying out other research on Aboriginal English. Because the workshops included all members of the base team, interpretation of the data by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers and by both linguists and education specialists provided a valuable means for bridging the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worldviews and between the linguistic analysis and its interpretation into curriculum materials. Each workshop was tape-recorded and the tapes transcribed, enabling the explanations, ideas, and models generated in them to be added to the research materials.

c) Camp workshops

During the course of the research there were four Camp workshops where field team members and, on one occasion, their school partners, were brought to Perth to meet with the Base team. These live-in sessions were invaluable for assisting the field team members with their understanding of the research project and of language issues, in particular the role of Aboriginal English in schools, homes and in Australia generally. These sessions also enabled relationships between field and base team members to be built and strengthened. They also provided an opportunity for tentative results and interpretations of the data to be reviewed by the field team.

d) Additional data sources

Data were also obtained from adults involved in professional development workshops in various areas of the State. These data included association and categorisation tasks, text analysis and other activities.

3.2.2 Data corpus

A break down of the main material gathered is provided in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Corpus of Data

LOCATION	AUDIO TAPES	VIDEO TAPES	WRITING SAMPLE SETS	SEMANTIC EXERCISE SETS
Cable Beach (PS)	4			
Culunga (ACS)	6	1		
Dryandra (PS)	2			
Geraldton (SC)	3		3	1
Girrawheen (SHS)	8	1	1	
South Kalgoorlie (PS)	14	1	5	1
Kellerberrin (DHS)	2			
Kent St. (SHS)			1	
Kimberley (AIEW Conference)				1
Koongamia (PS)	10			
La Grange (RCS)	1/2			
Mount Lawley (ECU)	2			
Narrogin (PS)	1			
Narrogin District PD				3
One Arm Point (RCS)	1/2			
Oombulgurri (RCS)	1			
Perth (Team Workshops)[1]	est. 4 (out of 31)			7
Roebourne (PS)	6		2	
Warriapendi (PS)	3			
TOTAL	**67**	**3**	**12**	**13**

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[1] Most team workshops were recorded; however, most did not contribute directly to data gathering

3.2.3 *Limitations of the research activities*

The complex chain of research procedures described above was not without its problems. A major problem arising from the methodology was that the most difficult part of the research process, the data collection, had been allocated to the least experienced and least empowered team members. Data collection, even by experienced researchers, requires a high degree of diplomacy and tenacity. It is even more difficult when it must be carried out within a busy workplace environment without creating any disturbance. The difficulty is augmented if this is one's own workplace and one is the least empowered member of it. Such was the position of some of the AIEWs. All field team members expressed difficulty in finding the time to carry out their data collection even though this had been allocated through special arrangement by the Education Department of Western Australia. Furthermore, most did not feel sufficiently empowered in the system to request that subjects leave classes for recording sessions. Some relied heavily on their school partners to organise this.

3.2.4 *The two-way research experience*

To date, most research into Aboriginal language and society in Australia has been carried out by non-Aboriginal academics looking at Aboriginal situations. The positivist research methodologies of the past have viewed their subjects as objects to be observed and recorded in as objective a manner as possible. "It has been argued that historically, this structure whereby 'we' study 'them' has been institutionalised in the disciplines we represent, and that practitioners of those disciplines have been trained to perceive it as natural; they may have experienced some pressure to repeat it, in order to contribute to 'important' scholarly debates" (Cameron *et al.,* 1992:3). Such a research process, called 'ethical research' by Cameron *et al.,* is no longer appropriate given the climate of reconciliation currently being nurtured in Australia. Other research methodologies take an 'advocacy position' (Cameron *et al.,* 1992:15) where the research is not only *on* particular subjects but also *for* them. Such research seeks to promote the cause of its subjects either by 'error correction' (Labov, 1982:172), where the researcher takes on the responsibility of correcting erroneous views about the subjects, or by 'incurring a debt' (Labov, 1982:173) which can be repaid by using the knowledge gained for good of the community at some other time (Cameron *et al.,* 1992:16).

A research methodology more acceptable in the contemporary context is one which empowers its subjects in some way. Such research uses "interactive or dialogic research methods, as opposed to the distancing or objectifying strategies positivists are constrained to use" (Cameron *et al.,* 1992:22). Interactive methodologies "oblige the researcher not only to listen but also, if called upon, to respond" (p.24) by sharing knowledge and taking into consideration the subjects' own agendas. By considering these, new insights can be incorporated which will enhance the research process. This might also be likened to Milroy & Milroy's (1997) "principle of linguistic gravity" whereby the research "is more positive and proactive, in that it involves the active pursuit of ways in which linguistic favours can be returned to the community" (p.126) and "is committed to a creative search for a community-based collaborative model" (op cit).

The method of data collection and analysis for this project was designed to achieve, as much as possible, a two-way research process with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interpretations of data being considered. This two-way involvement has continued through to the final writing up to ensure that all interpretation is consistent and accurate. This is important given that "research inevitably involves the recontextualisation of utterances", for "however the data is collected and however negotiated the agendas have been, when the researcher produces representations of the research for an outside audience, control of the data and its meanings shift very much towards the researcher" (Cameron *et al.,* 1992:132).

The interactive research model has meant that the examples under discussion could be described both in terms of the meanings intended by their Aboriginal speakers and in terms of their interpretation by non-Aboriginal listeners. This research methodology provided, for

both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal team members, a voyage of discovery into each other's worlds. For non-Aboriginal researchers it meant learning to access information in a different way. When the words and structures which made up our data were discussed by Aboriginal members they were contextualised within talk about family and personal experience, for example, words and/or phrases might trigger contextual knowledge which was required to adequately explain the data in question. For an Aboriginal person the isolation of units of information (such as the words and phrases of linguistic data) from their context is often meaningless. Such units can only be explained in the context of the culture from which they have been taken and this means contextualising them within stories/yarns about family and other personal experiences: the very things that are generally omitted from the academic research process. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal project members were well aware that such exchange of knowledge could only take place once a relationship of trust had been built and that this could only happen if time and circumstances were favourable.

Another part of the two-way research process involved the feeding back of expertise, in this case, on language description and language variation. With such expertise the research team succeeded in reversing many attitudes to Aboriginal English which had hitherto been held by some Aboriginal team members. These attitudes had earlier been reflected in words like 'broken English', 'rubbish talk', 'slang' etc. A similar situation confronted Deborah Cameron, in her study of Afro-Caribbean youth speech in London, who "discovered that most of them shared a common perception of Caribbean creoles as 'broken language' – a view transmitted not only by the wider culture but more specifically by their parents, who in some cases took steps to prevent them learning their ancestral patois" (1992:118). The subjects in this study were subsequently empowered by Cameron's expert knowledge.

Cameron points out that knowledge is frequently unequally distributed: "Some kinds of knowledge, grounded in experience, tend to remain in the community and are not expressed in academic discourse (the prevalence and significance of racist verbal abuse is an example...). Other kinds of knowledge remain the province of the 'experts' and do not get back to the community. The net effect is disadvantageous to the community. On the one hand, its experience and priorities are marginalised, while on the other it is denied knowledge that would be interesting and useful to it." (p.119). Indeed, Milroy & Milroy (1997) point out that linguists have a responsibility to share the truth about dialects and to address the social consequences that derive from the failure to understand the fundamental nature of dialect in society (p.126). By the same token however, as Cameron *et al.* note, "any social relation in which an expert tells a group about itself is interactionally hazardous" and must be handled with sensitivity (p.134) that is, linguistics must "be sensitive to the symbolic role of language and to preserve this unique artifact that has been shared with [them]" (Milroy & Milroy, 1997:126).

In the course of our research, the contextualisation of the data helped each group to see that, while there are many differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worlds, there are also many similarities. Team members would frequently share similar stories of life, children, partnerships etc., and surprise themselves with these new-found commonalities. Team members also acknowledged the marked differences and worked consciously at finding ways that these differences might be explained to teachers and other education professionals. Arising from this experience is an understanding and appreciation of two very different worlds which are operating within much the same space. Permanent links between the two worlds occur only under special circumstances, for example, when Aboriginal people excel at sport, when they share their workspace with non-Aboriginal people or in special situations, such as this project, they seek to work together closely to improve the relationships between the two cultures. These two worlds and the links which are created between them might be modelled as in Figure 3.1:

Sporadic and mainly
tenuous links

Aboriginal world

Non-Aboriginal world
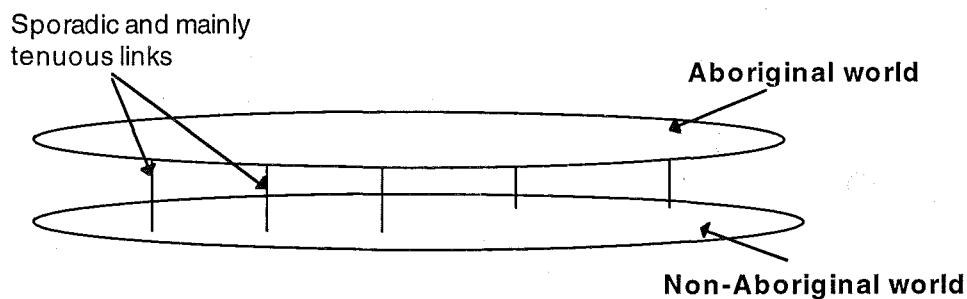
Figure 3.1: Two Worlds

In this illustration, the two different worlds of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are represented as two separate discs which occupy the same space but quite independently of each other. These two discs are only linked occasionally, as represented by the vertical lines.

Most of the time, non-Aboriginal people are not aware of the Aboriginal world. For the majority group, it is not needed and rarely entered. Being a minority group, Aboriginal people are forced to be more aware of the non-Aboriginal world because, unless they have a family member to mediate for them in this world, they have to participate with or enter it, if only to go to the shop, to school, to Homeswest, to the hospital or doctor and, for some, to go work. It is significant that even when Aboriginal people are employed in mainstream sectors, such as the Public Service, they are frequently occupied with issues that involve interaction with other Aboriginal people.

An important consequence of these parallel worlds arises when Aboriginal children begin their schooling. Teachers are not always aware that Aboriginal children sometimes have not participated very much in the non-Aboriginal world. They may not be familiar with concepts readily accessible to non-Aboriginal children of the same age and they may not have heard many models of standard Australian English. Like many children coming to school for the first time, Aboriginal children think that their world is the only world but they soon find out that they need to learn about other worlds which share the same space.

3.2.5 Evaluation

Along with empowerment during the research, this project also offered the opportunity for evaluation of the research process by the AIEWs and the Aboriginal research assistants. This evaluation, carried out by Glenys Collard, included an in depth study of the AIEWs' perceptions of the project and their roles therein. Also investigated by this evaluation was the degree to which AIEWs became sufficiently confident in their knowledge to inform school staff and the wider community about the research and the subsequent changes to curricula.

The evaluation program demonstrated that while AIEWs were willing to continue 'owning' the project, they were confronted with considerable barriers in terms of skills, knowledge and confidence when within their school environments. The evaluation report is included in this document as Appendix 1.

In addition to the evaluation conducted by Glenys Collard, brief evaluation questionnaires were also completed by all members of the team at the conclusion of most of the live-in workshops. These served mainly to fine-tune procedural matters.

CHAPTER 4

LINGUISTIC RESEARCH REPORT

4.1 Developments in the study of Aboriginal English

Over the period since the early 1960s when Aboriginal English first became the subject of linguistic investigation, it has been studied from a number of theoretical orientations.

The earliest work, carried out in association with the Department of English in the University of Queensland, (eg., Flint, 1968, 1971; Alexander, 1965, 1968; Dutton, 1964, 1965, 1970; Readdy, 1961) was concerned with linguistic description, essentially in terms of deviations from standard English, on the basis of small scale data collection. The analyses provided a useful initial documentation of the dialect with the focus primarily upon form, although there was some recognition of variability on a situational basis.

In 1976 an illuminating study by Douglas suggested that, within Aboriginal communities in the South-West of Western Australia, there were a number of English-based varieties being spoken. Douglas gave the indigenous names by which these varieties were known, showing that the most strongly Aboriginal variety was identified with Nyungar, although it was an English based form with some lexical borrowings from Nyungar which was no longer widely spoken. This study provided the first evidence that English had been indigenised in South West communities outside of the hearing of non-Aboriginal people.

Another angle on Aboriginal English was provided in the 1970s as a number of linguists began to carry out in-depth studies of pidgins and creoles in northern communities (Fraser, 1974; Sharpe, 1975; Sharpe and Sandefur, 1976, 1977; Steffensen, 1977; Sandefur, 1979; Crowley and Rigsby, 1979). These studies enabled the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contact varieties to be viewed in the light of pidgin and creole studies worldwide and helped to provide some information relevant to the processes which had led to the development of Aboriginal English- processes which were later to be further explored by J. Harris (1991a) and Troy (1990).

The 1970s also saw the first descriptions of Aboriginal English in Alice Springs (Sharpe, 1977b, 1979) and in inner Melbourne (Fesl, 1977) and Sydney (Eagleson, 1976). The most widespread study yet of Aboriginal English was carried out in Western Australia by Kaldor and Malcolm commencing in 1973 (see Kaldor and Malcolm, 1979; Malcolm, 1979; Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm, 1982). By this time the approaches to data gathering and analysis were significantly influenced by the work of Labov (1972a), Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1969) and Wolfram and Fasold (1974) on Vernacular Black English in the United States, although the focus was still basically on linguistic description with little attention to situationally based variation.

In the early 80s the direction of study showed a significant change under the influence of Dell Hymes (1962) and the ethnography of speaking. Hymes's arguments on the need to provide a fully culturally-situated linguistic description were reflected in studies already referred to in Chapter 2 carried out by Sansom (1980), Malcolm (1980-82) and Eades (1982, 1983). Eades, in particular, emphasised the fact that, in terms of its cultural and sociolinguistic continuity with vernacular languages (even where they were no longer spoken), Aboriginal English in South-East Queensland was an Aboriginal language. The same theme was taken up with respect to Torres Strait Creole by Shnukal (1985). Meanwhile, Muecke (1981) provided the first in-depth study of discourse patterns within Aboriginal English.

The initial interest in formal difference from standard English had, then, been supplemented by interest in sociolinguistic variation, in processes of pidginization, creolization and

decreolization and in the cultural situatedness of the dialect, including its discourse patterns. Further dimensions of interest in the 1990s came to include the semantics (Harkins, 1990, 1994; Arthur, 1996) and the pragmatics (Eades, 1991; Malcolm, 1994c, 1997) of the dialect.

In summary, we can say that the study of Aboriginal English has been moving progressively from predominantly structural and formal interests, related especially to contrasts with standard English, towards semantic and pragmatic interests, informed increasingly by knowledge from Indigenous culture and languages. This direction of movement inevitably leads (as in the present study) towards insights and approaches which have recently been brought into linguistic inquiry from cognitive and cultural linguistics.

4.2 The linguistic foundations of the present research

As has been suggested above, some of the most productive advances in the study of Aboriginal English have come as the dialect has been approached from a broad, culturally-situated point of view rather than as simply a variety of English which contrasts with the standard variety. This has, to some extent, reflected developments in the study of creole-related varieties in other parts of the world (Morgan, 1994).

The theoretical point of departure for this study has, then, been the ethnography of communication as put forward initially by Hymes (1962) further expounded by Saville-Troike (1989) and illustrated in a wide range of studies in diverse cultures (eg. Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Bauman and Sherzer, 1974; Bauman, 1986; Hymes, 1996).

This approach provides an analytical framework for the study of what Saville-Troike (1989:1) has called "the patterning of communicative behavior as it constitutes one of the systems of culture, as it functions within the holistic context of culture, and as it relates to patterns in other communicative systems." The ethnography of speaking is indeed concerned with the study of the code of the speakers, but not in an isolated way. The code is integrally related to the other elements of the communicative system, and the whole system is informed by the culture in which it has developed. Another way of putting this is to say that the code is studied as part of an overall social and cultural ecology.

In 1972, in a landmark paper written as an introduction to a collection of studies of communication in culturally diverse educational settings, Hymes proposed the principles which he said should inform *the ethnography of speaking in classrooms* (Hymes, 1972a:liv). Ten principles may be abstracted from this paper which have informed the present study at a fundamental level. These are:

1. the research must "start where the children are", that is, it should recognise the children as members of their own speech community;

2. the research must recognise the authority of members of the community, as those who have the fullest expertise on the way in which speech is used in that community; in so doing, it must recognise research as "participatory democracy" (Hymes, 1972a:xiv);

3. the values of the speakers must inform the data;

4. if the children are accepted within the community as socially competent, it follows that they may be assumed linguistically competent;

5. if the children are linguistically competent, then that competence should be duly recognised in the school context;

6. the children's dialect must be understood in terms of its social and cultural ecology;

7. 'performance' in communicative behaviour must be recognised as what the community evaluates as performance;

8. the impression of the use of a shared language variety in the classroom should not be taken to assume that the speech communities represented there completely overlap;

9. all members of speech communities make *choices* among means of speech: we should be seeking to understand the choices made by the Aboriginal children, and to increase the range of choice open to them;

10. linguistic repertoire has an important relationship to cognitive repertoire.

These understandings have been taken essentially as axiomatic and have informed the project at all levels of its design and implementation.

4.3 From the ethnography of speaking to cognitive linguistics

The tenth point made above anticipates the fact that the ethnography of speaking, with its focus upon social behaviour, looks beyond its own concepts for a deeper level of understanding of the behaviours with which it is concerned. Increasingly through the 80s and 90s, certain linguists have been moving towards an approach to language which will enable it to be analysed at that level.

Cognitive linguistics has been described by Harder as seeing language as "a window on the mind" (1995:108). It attempts to provide an account of language which approaches it not in terms of its structures but in terms of its conceptualisations. This development focuses upon the ways in which the world is categorised by language (Taylor, 1995), the ways in which experience provides a template for the underlying meanings of linguistic items, through prototypes and schemas, the ways in which connections are made between concepts through associative chains and processes of metaphor and metonymy, and the ways in which speakers express relationships of backgrounding and prominence (Langacker, 1990; Ungerer and Schmid, 1996).

The way that a society interprets reality becomes fixed, over time, in its language and, as a result, the way human beings represent their view of the world is 'very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society' (Sapir, 1949:142). Concepts will only have been identified and individually named in that language if they are salient to the culture and, as a result, '[c]omplex meanings codified in separate words may differ from language to language because each language may choose a separate word for a different combination of simple ideas' (Wierzbicka, 1992:9). These language specific ways of 'packaging reality' have been described by cognitive linguists as *schemas* which are, according to Chafe (1990:80-81), 'supplied by our cultures'.

Having embarked on an attempt to understand better the underlying semantics of Aboriginal English, we found a number of the procedures and concepts of cognitive linguistics particularly relevant to our intentions. We found a helpful integration of the ideas of cognitive linguistics with those of the ethnography of speaking (developing on that anticipated by Hymes) in the work of Palmer (1996), who, with his theory of *cultural linguistics*, has attempted to bring into a unified descriptive theory the work of Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, the ethnography of speaking and cognitive linguistics. What Palmer puts forward as uniting these pursuits is the concept of imagery:

> *Cultural linguistics and cognitive linguistics are fundamentally theories of mental imagery. They seek to understand how speakers deploy speech and listeners understand it relative to various kinds of imagery. Some of these kinds*

> *are cognitive models, symbols, image-schemas, prototypes, basic categories, complex categories, metaphor, metonymy, and social scenarios.*

(Palmer, 1996:46).

The imagery which Palmer is referring to informs (and comes from) at the same time both language and culture. It provides a powerful concept to help inform us as to why, and how, Aboriginal English speakers have been able to maintain their dialect as a self-contained and autonomous system alongside the standard English to which they have been so intensively exposed through education and the institutions of Australian society. Contrasting cultural imagery may be sustained even through an apparently (but deceptively) intercomprehensible linguistic system. As we have become aware of this we have become increasingly aware of the problematic nature of the surface similarities between Aboriginal English and standard English, and, consequently, of the need for curriculum and methodology reform to be radically informed by inputs from Aboriginal community members.

4.4 The application of cultural and cognitive linguistics to this research

Cognitive linguistics, as it has been pursued in relation to this project, is dependent on cooperative involvement with the members of the speech community being investigated since it recognises the dependence of linguistic and cultural features upon conceptual processes for which subjective data from the speakers concerned provide the chief means of access.

From the ethnographic tradition, cultural linguistics maintains a stance which sees language and culture as an ecological whole (Saville-Troike, 1989:1, 169). Language is seen to occur not in isolation but in speech events which entail the balanced involvement of multiple components: setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms and genres (Hymes, 1972b). The right management of speech events is part of the communicative competence of members of a speech community and the authority of the members of the speech community must prevail over that of the researcher (Hymes, 1972a:xvii). Some of the implications of this approach to research are summarised in Figure 4.1.

From the cognitive linguistic tradition, cultural linguistics is guided by three basic principles:

1. Language implies and expresses conceptualisation (Ungerer and Schmid, 1996:x)

2. Conceptualisation is derived from experience of the world (Ungerer and Schmid, 1996:x)

3. Significant dimensions of thought, emotion, language and non-verbal behaviour are all inter-related (Palmer, 1996:32).

Some of the typical features of cognitive linguistic research are summarised in Figure 4.2 (on page 42). In the User-Friendly Project we have exploited some of the possibilities of such research. One of the first priorities has been to establish a spirit of bicultural bonding among the team members so that genuine two-way exchange and the mutual disclosure of subjective data would be possible. This was accomplished by means of the four week-long live-in camp-workshops and also by pairing each Aboriginal member of the field team with a non-Aboriginal member of the base team who maintained regular contact and visited their partner on location.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

DATA: 1.   Means of speech (or other communicative forms)

            2.   Contexts of situation

            3.   Relations of appropriateness

                                  (Hymes, 1972a:xxxiv)

DATA GATHERING:

            1.   Observation - participant/non-participant

            2.   Interview - group/individual

            3.   Questionnaire

DATA ANALYSIS:

            1.   Assume communicative competence (Hymes, 1972a:xx)

            2.   Work inductively - look for structure in the use of language: acts, strategies, genres, etc. (Hymes, 1972a:xxii)

            3.   Assume two levels of meaning: referential and social (Hymes, 1972a:xxv)

            4.   Employ situated interpretation

                  a)   by participants

                  b)   signalled by indigenous categorizations

                  c)   be watchful for communicative competencies in conflict across culture

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Figure 4.1:   The Ethnography of Speaking as a guide to research

The authority of the Aboriginal speech community was recognised in that the Aboriginal team members were deferred to with respect to the identification and interpretation of speech events, speech acts, speech forms and genres within Aboriginal contexts (*cf.* Rickford, 1987; Malin *et al.*, 1996).They were also trained and employed as the main gatherers of linguistic data. All tapes were transcribed with reference to Aboriginal consultants and interpretations of analyses were submitted to Aboriginal team members for approval.

As the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the team became increasingly used to one another they were able to help one another to see the multiple "readings" which texts in different Englishes allow and they became more willing to trust their intuitions with respect to incompletely shared meanings- sometimes signalled by a vague sense of discomfort about the use of a word, sometimes by a stronger sense of irritation or frustration at communication which seemed to be getting nowhere.

Inevitably, language sharing led to culture sharing, as, for example, when the non-Aboriginal team members were confused by "Tom's story" where one old Aboriginal man was talking about his childhood, and said:

> *Well, when they took me over, out in the bush...*

(Bennell and Collard, 1991)

The Aboriginal group understood without prompting that this was referring to the experience of Aboriginal people under the 1905 Act when families would send their

children to be adopted by bush relatives rather than to risk having them be taken away from their parents and put *behind bars* (ie., into institutions).

On the basis of prior experience, the AIEWs were trained in gathering linguistic data from the students in their schools by means of structured and unstructured group interviews. They were also encouraged to record naturally-occurring events, including family or community events, school outings, or ordinary talk in their homes.

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

DATA: 1. Linguistic forms (from phoneme to discourse)

2. Contexts of situation

3. Relations of meaning

DATA GATHERING:

1. Observation and recording of natural language

2. Controlled elicitation,

      eg. "What is X?"

      " Is X a kind of why?"

      "Is Z a good example of A?"

3. Introspection

      eg. "Where do your feelings come from?"

DATA ANALYSIS:

1. Taxonomies
   - exemplification (prototypes)
   - polysemy
   - categories (basic/complex)

2. Schemas
   - image schemas
   - event schemas
   - story schemas
   - phrase schemas
   - sentence schemas
     etc.

3. Relations
   - lexical chains
   - associative networks
   - animacy
   - metaphor and metonymy
   - profile/base relations
   - relations of elaboration between schemas

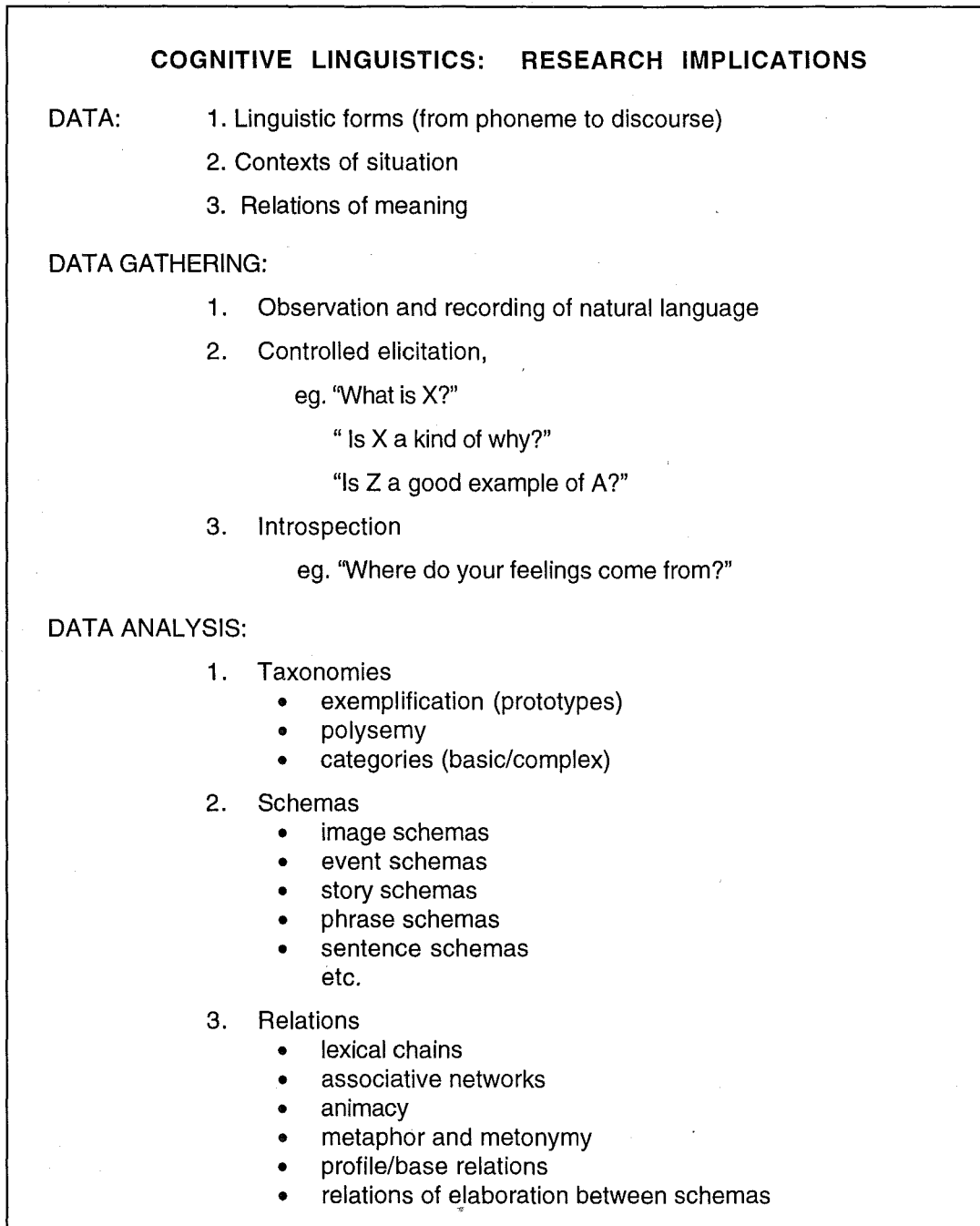*Figure 4.2: Cognitive linguistics as a guide to research*

A second level of data gathering was that which took place between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the research team, both in the concentrated live-in workshops and in the ongoing data analysis sessions with the research assistants. In these situations various means were developed for exploring meanings. Some of these were:

- exploring prototypes by asking for best examples of ....

- exploring lexical chains by brainstorming in groups with a whiteboard, or one-on-one

- exploring lexical chains by asking for common features in a list of words

- exploring associative relations by inviting groups to produce words associated with given words

- eliciting metaphorical and metonymic expressions by offering some suggestions and allowing the group to take over

- exploring metaphor by inviting metaphors to be used to describe common experiences, like schooling, sickness, sport and relationships

- exploring schemas by offering a scenario (eg. a walk in the bush) and inviting the groups to accumulate associations that came to them.

- working together in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pairs to go through texts and share reasons why the speaker or writer would be identified as Aboriginal or otherwise.

A third level of data gathering took place as members of the team repeated some of these and other experiments on students in bidialectal classrooms and on teachers and AIEWs in professional development sessions. This is where the links between research approaches and bidialectal pedagogy became apparent. The classroom became a realm of linguistic inquiry where all students were equally experts and where dialectal difference was a matter for serious investigation rather than shame and reproof. Various schedules were developed to enable the students to provide the meanings of words which, for bidialectal speakers, are polysemous, like *wicked,* or *solid,* or *granny*; or to illustrate concepts like *family*; or to provide free associations related to particular schemas or vocabulary items. The material surveyed in classroom contexts, while not produced under experimental controls, allowed trends to be observed among larger numbers of respondents than would have otherwise been reached in this study and compared with data obtained from other sources.

Another unexpected data source arose. The Aboriginal members of the team, once their awareness of the significance of Aboriginal English had been raised, began to observe and report on what took place in speech events and situations within their own community. From observation, supported by introspection, they provided input leading to the identification of schemas relating to picnics, funerals, the expression of condolence, relations between old and young people, sibling caregiving among children, visiting friends, travelling out of one's own territory, the use of ashes, and many other things. They also offered interpretations of discourse markers like *choo choo* ['this might be embarrassing for somebody'], or *ting* ['we all know what I means so I won't be explicit'], or *ne ne ne* ['don't speak until you've heard this']. Glenys Collard and Louella Eggington, Indigenous research assistants on the project, provided acute perceptions on both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal use of English from the standpoint of Aboriginal culture and developed a range of techniques for eliciting and communicating relevant information. On one occasion Glenys left the tape recorder on a typical morning at home and then provided a commentary on the non-verbal information which would be required for interpreting it. Another strategy was to cut out paper figures and have children from her extended family arrange them on a poster to show, by their positioning, how the children conceptualised the family in terms of their place within it.

A clear line between data gathering and data analysis was often hard to draw in this process. Often as observations on linguistic forms were introduced by Aboriginal team members in the process of introspection, the relevant schema would be invoked at the same time- just as cognitive approaches to linguistics might lead us to expect. Thus, for example, remarking on the apparent fluidity in the way in which Aboriginal English uses prepositions, Kevin

May, an AIEW from Perth, observed: "Boundaries are more important for *Wadjela* [non-Aboriginal] than for Aboriginal kids. This carries over into words which refer to boundaries." Similarly, Fred Taylor, an AIEW from Geraldton, observing the differences between the ways in which the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal members of the team operated, commented: "Non-Aboriginal people start with all the little bits and slowly, slowly build the big picture, but Aboriginal people start with the big picture and then look for the little bits."

Although a substantial corpus of Aboriginal English was accumulated during this project, the analysis provided here, in keeping with the project objectives, is selective, focusing upon areas where it was considered knowledge important for two-way education was lacking. Our concentration, then will be on semantics, some aspects of function in relation to form, discourse conventions and genres.

4.5 Semantics

Our discussion of semantics in relation to the data will be restricted to a consideration of two major areas: categorization and schematization.

4.5.1 *Categorization*

According to Taylor (1995:viii), "[c]ategorization is fundamental to all higher cognitive activity" and linguistic categorization is based not only upon nominalism, or mere linguistic convention, but on conceptualisation. By categorising we are able to handle the vast numbers of unique objects which make up our world (Markman, 1983). From the investigation of how humans categorise objects, ie., into what classes they place objects, we can learn what the salient conditions for membership to these categories are and how these classes and conditions vary across cultures. Labov (1973) reflected on the role of linguistics in the study of categories, which is fundamentally 'the study of how language translates meaning into sounds through the categorization of reality into discrete units and sets of units' (Taylor, 1995:1). Cognitive linguistics studies categorization in terms, for example, of the *basic categories* that the speakers of a language use in order to organise the world (categories based on native, experiential rather than formal taxonomic criteria), the extensions which occur from basic to *complex categories* (often using *metaphor* and often resulting in *polysemy*) and the ways in which members of categories are chained together in *associative networks*. It is also concerned with the ways in which instances are identified as members of categories by the speakers of a language. The study of categories has given rise to the study of category membership and *prototypes* or 'the clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people's judgments of goodness of membership in the category' (Rosch, 1978). It has been found that certain instances are typically viewed by speakers as good exemplars of a category whereas others are poorer examples (as, for example, *chairs* and *tables* are viewed as good exemplars and *telephones* and *lamps* as rather less good exemplars of the category *furniture*), showing that there is a certain fuzziness about the categories we use.

Further methods for investigating the ways speakers of a language arrange the world have resulted from the study of *metaphor* or the process by which one concept is used to describe a concept from a different domain (Palmer, 1996:103); the study of *metonymy* whereby the name of one entity is used to refer to another entity which is contiguous to the first; the study of *synecdoche* whereby 'reference to the whole is made by reference to a salient part' (Rosch, 1978:122-3); and through *linguistic animacy* whereby life is attributed to natural phenomena (p. 148).

It is characteristic of varieties of the same language that they may employ the same lexical forms in association with differences of categorization. This is, of course, a highly relevant area of divergence for the purposes of education. In the course of this project a data base of items exhibiting semantic shift was established and the various directions of semantic shift

associated with both English and Aboriginal language words in English were investigated. This has been illustrated in the companion volume to this one (Malcolm *et al*: 1999:Ch 3) and will not be repeated here.

Our main attention in this section will be given to the investigation of prototypes, associative networks and metaphor.

Prototypes were investigated directly and indirectly. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups (at team retreats, and in staff professional development sessions) were asked to provide lists of instances of certain items, such as *bird*, *tree*, etc. Then they were asked to rank their lists from the best to the most marginal examples of the category. In some cases there was not a great deal of consistency within the groups and cross-group comparisons were difficult to make. However there were cases where there was clearly an agreed focus in one group which was not found in the other. One case where this clearly occurred was with respect to the item *bird*, which was, virtually unanimously among the Aboriginal informants, prototypically a crow. This was much more of a marginal example to the non-Aboriginal informants. This might be attributed to the fact that, for most of the Aboriginal informants, the crow carried totemic associations.

Informally, prototypes were explored as cross-cultural communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal team members revealed communication gaps. It was found, for example, that the prototype of the *roast* was for Nyungar team members an outdoor event involving the cooking of meat (preferably kangaroo) in a fire, whereas to the non-Aboriginal team members it was a sit-down meal with potatoes, gravy and peas. The prototypical *story* from the Nyungar perspective was a tale based on experience which was passed on as an interactional event, whereas to non-Aboriginal team members it was associated with imagination and likely to be found in a book. It was found that, because of this confusion, some Nyungar people had developed a bidialectal strategy of employing the term *yarn* to distinguish the prototypical Aboriginal story from that envisaged by standard English speakers. *Dinner* was found to evoke for Aboriginal informants a prototype of dining away from home (for them, *supper,* or simply a *feed* was what one had at home), whereas it was for the non-Aboriginal informants a regular meal at home, usually in the evening. A *picnic*, from a Nyungar perspective, prototypically involved a group larger than the nuclear family and the outdoor cooking of food, while for non-Aboriginal informants, it evoked a prototype of food prepared beforehand and eaten in the open, often with just the nuclear family, and not necessarily involving cooking.

Another matter of semantic interest is *associative networks*, which are chains of concepts to which people often assign a single term (Palmer, 1996:92). The connections between items in such networks are related to patterns of extension existing among prototypes and have a basis in cultural assumptions. In order to explore associative networks, groups of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal informants drawn either from the team or from Education Department professional development groups, were provided with a stimulus word or phrase and invited to free associate. Terms were written down and then compared across groups. Sometimes the same technique was employed with individuals. In some cases, highly distinctive associative networks were shown to exist. For example, the associations yielded by the word *kangaroo* in participants in a professional development session in a South-West district were:

Aboriginal group (initial 13 items in chain):

taste→food→onions→tomatoes→head -in ashes→tail -in ashes→kangaroo dip → sitting in the shade→fire→family, brothers and sisters→night time hunting→ day time hunting→hides, pegging in the sun.

Non-Aboriginal group (initial 12 items in chain):

national emblem→dangerous→long tail→pouch→tourists→coins→graziers→joey →clever→hops→beautiful→soft.

When Glenys Collard, Nyungar research assistant on the team, was invited to free associate on the word *ashes,* the chain of association was as follows:

fire→cleaning the bush→open the ashes to put in the damper→close the ashes when the damper comes out→heal the wound of the earth→don't let others find your ashes→ cover your ashes before you leave→don't build your fire on [somebody's] old ashes→ rub ashes on the baby to keep it warm.

It is clear from this latter list that English carries cross-cultural differences not only in its chains of associations but in the *metaphors* which it accepts and uses as a tool for thinking. In the English of standard speakers, of course, it is possible for the idea of fire cleaning the bush and of a person opening and closing the ashes or healing the (fire-caused) wounds of the earth to be used in poetic expression, but these metaphors have not been integrated into the everyday metaphorical usage of the language. Such metaphorical usage is basic to the use of language as a mediator of reality. As Sweetser (1990:8) has put it, "Metaphor allows people to understand one thing as another, without thinking the two things are objectively the same" and as such, is "readily motivated within a cognitively based theory which takes not the objective 'real world', but human perception and understanding of the world to be the basis for the structure of human language" (p. 2). There is a great deal remaining to be explored here, but it seems clear that, while some metaphorical expressions seem to come equally readily to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal speakers of English, others have developed separately and represent a response to the world according to alternative perceptions about it. To the Aboriginal English speaker, by contrast with the standard English speaker (on the basis of our data), the expression *long way* may be metaphorically extended to apply to time, *behind bars* is metaphorically extended to refer to being in any institution, not just a prison, *peeling* a fruit is metaphorically extended to skinning a rabbit or a goanna, *hunger* is metaphorically extended to needs other than food and *bony* is metaphorically extended to include reference to trees.

4.5.2 *Schematization*

The other concept, *schematization*, has been defined as a "process that involves the systematic selection of certain aspects of a referent scene to represent the whole, while disregarding the remaining aspects" (Palmer, 1996:64, quoting Talmy, 1983). We use schemas at many levels to organise concepts, as where we use a *container* schema to describe a person who let his feelings out or blew her top, or a *horizontal* schema to refer to the earth below us by calling it *land,* rather than *ground*. According to Palmer (1966:63), "[i]t is likely that all native knowledge of language and culture belongs to cultural schemas and that the living of culture and the speaking of language consist of schemas in action." There are many kinds of schema: *event schemas*, which enable us to anticipate what will happen in a given situation (Palmer, 1996:61), *story schemas*, which are action sequences in an expected order, *orientational image-schemas*, which derive from universal physical experiences, like location on the earth and subjection to gravity (Palmer, 1996:292). It is possible for us to shift perspective on something we are contemplating by moving from one mental image of it to another, something described as *image-schema transformation* (Palmer, 1996:68-69).

Event schemas are manifest in Aboriginal society with a high degree of shared knowledge about things that have happened and how they happened. Events are seen as repeating themselves again and again (generation after generation) in a cyclic passage of time which is familiar to everyone. As a result of this shared event schema Aboriginal English speakers have particular presuppositions as to what is known and what needs to be told. In Aboriginal English conversations, for example, a number of people will frequently speak at the same time, contributing to the information which they all share. Therefore a speaker is under no obligation to provide all the information required for understanding. The responsibility for understanding lies with the listener who is already familiar with the context or the event schema.

Image schemas in Aboriginal society are reflected in non-specific quantification. While in non-Aboriginal society space is contained within boundaries which stem from the Western traditions of quantity and measurement (Harris, 1991b:94), the focus in Aboriginal society is on open and shared spaces (Coombs *et al*, 1983). Aboriginal culture places greater importance on direction than on measurement, in particular cardinal directions or compass points. In the modern Western world cardinal direction has lost its prominence in favour of a strong orientation to the left and right sides of the body (Harris, 1991:28). The following example shows how Aboriginal students involved in a barrier game blend a non-specific directional mode of description using the word 'way' with a left-right mode of orientation:

> Student 1:   *Nah- das the front, das like- das de house here- an das dere- e's goin dataway, like that*
>
> Student 2:   *Which way? This- a –way?*
>
> Student 1:   *It's goin upwards*
>
> Student 2:   *Which one?*
>
> Student 1:   *On the left- no on de right, I meant on de right I meant*

Differences in schematization may be seen to underlie the perceptions of objects, events and stories as illustrated in our data. The horizontal schema which is associated with length, as opposed to tallness, does not apply in Aboriginal English, so that a tall, thin person, tree or building may be described as *long*. (The obvious possible exception, "Long John Silver" is not representative of standard English usage and perhaps originates from a maritime variety- possibly one of the influences reflected in Aboriginal English).

Cultural schemas which de-emphasise individuality recur in the discourse patterns of Aboriginal English speakers, which favour group rather than monologic or duologic modes in interaction and which incorporate a rich range of affiliative and confirmation-eliciting tags, as mentioned in Chapter 2. They are also reflected linguistically in the modification of the pronoun system to allow for dual as well as plural number as alternatives to singular and in the adoption of additional group-reference terms, such as *alla* and *(big) mob*. They are reflected in narrative genres, where narrations about individual human beings are rare, and where protagonists are normally dual or multiple.

In recounting their experience, children often give as much prominence to the participants with whom an experience was shared as to the experience itself. This is apparent, for example, in the following record of a fishing trip told by year 4 boy to his AIEW:

> A: *I went fishing with my dad at.. One Arm Point an we went with some of our cousins... and Joe and Shane and my Uncle Jack and my Aunty Laura.. wid my sisters.. my sisters came too an my two brothers.. an my stepmum.. me an my big boy cousins me an Brian we were doing backflip off of the.. sand-dunes.. and.. he kept on doing backflips off de sand-dunes but I just did one an den I aksed im to flip me back - when e flipped me.. I landed in the water cause we were playing next to the water.. and... when... when I was... when we ad to go fishing.. my dad pulled out the drag net wid my Uncle Jack... and we caught about seven sharks and one of em was jerrrup??? and we got lots of salmons... but one of em got... eaten up halfway from one a these sharks an dere was..*

The participant schema is clearly a priority part of the information the child is conveying. By it the child locates his activities in the social context of the group and also, in this case, ensures that the hearer knows that he was not venturing into unfamiliar territory without appropriate company to authorise his presence there.

We would propose the title *proximity schema* to refer to a manner of conceptualising locations in terms of a focal site and an area of territory around it which is seen to belong to that site and its custodians. This may affect the communication of Aboriginal people in two

ways. First, as in the example above, Aboriginal people moving away from one focal site and into the territory surrounding another are aware of a need to relate their presence in the area they are going into to witnesses who can testify to the legitimacy of their presence and activities in that area. Thus, in giving account of their travels, speakers will make a point of explicitly naming the co-participants or witnesses who were present in that place. Secondly, it seems that this schema is maintained in urban contexts where the focal site may be a house, or a school, with its controlled surrounding area delimited by a fence. Thus, when Aboriginal speakers refer to such a setting, they distinguish between being *in* the focal site, being within the area belonging to that focal site (ie., within the boundaries) and being outside the area. This is reflected in a distinctive prepositional usage. Where, for example, K tells an Aboriginal research assistant:

um.. we always.. from school.. there we play marbles most times

the expression *from school there* is recognised as referring to being *at* school (ie., within the boundaries) but not *in* school (ie. in the building or courtyard). The same may apply to children playing outside of a house, but within its property fence. All the children (including those whose houses are elsewhere) are recognised by virtue of the presence of those who *do* belong there, as being *from* that house while they are there.

Questions of space and direction exhibited in Aboriginal children's storytelling are discussed further in the companion volume to this (Malcolm *et al*, 1998:Ch 3).

4.6 Genres

Aboriginal children whose speech was recorded in the course of this project exhibited a variety of genres. Some of these may be specific to particular localities though others are certainly widespread in Western Australia and even beyond. The social significance of the genres within Aboriginal communicative contexts remains to be further investigated. Four "genres" will be reported on here, all of which served the children for the purposes of organising their informal communication when interacting with AIEWs and with one another. Perhaps they might all be best identified as sub-genres of first person narrative which may be employed in turns in informal conversation.

4.6.1 Tracking

Tracking has been identified by Malcolm (1994a, 1994b) as a genre used by children from desert areas of Western Australia whereby experience is reconstructed in a travelling context, with the narrative maintaining an ongoing alternation between moving and stopping episodes. This genre was in evidence in speech of children from widely separated parts of the state in the present study. The following example comes from a Year 6 boy in the Kimberley:

T:	*Well... on the Wednesday of the first week of holidays*	
	I went to Weedong	[moving]
	with my relatives my Nan and my cousin and my Aunty	[participants]
	and there was lots of fish there.... and....	[stopping]
	we caught lots of mud crabs about thirty	
	and.. we went.. walking through the mangroves	[moving]
	and we saw.. a croc	[stopping]
	and., after we got back we tried to drive somewhere else	[moving]
	and we got bogged..	[stopping]
	and.. after that when we went home...	[moving]

we.. my cousin came to play and ..   [stopping]

then I went over his house for a few days   [moving]

I slept there for.. um.. two or three days..   [stopping]

an then.. we... played round the house

and.. um.. I just.. stayed at home and played the computer

and.. rode my horse in gymkhana.. ou' a' the Jack Knox arena

and..... mm that's all...   [discourse completer]

There is some evidence that the "tracking" schema may serve Aboriginal children as a scaffolding device which is called upon for the advance organisation of information to be expressed in a communicative context. An example of this may be seen in the following exchange between an AIEW and a group of Year 6/7 Aboriginal students in a metropolitan school:

AIEW: *Start talkin now, tell me the story what you did on the weekend or something.*

...

X: *You mean on Christmas.. or all days?*

AIEW :   *Anywhere.. Anytime...just...talk about anything*

X: *Annnn.. then I went.. to.. xx to my sister.. umm.. I went to my cousin. .who died.. thas died...then..af'dat..I went.. Went to um.. went to*

In this case, the speech act the child was engaged in was identified by the AIEW as "skimming." It was clear to her that the child was engaged in thinking out what she was going to say and that her utterance was not to be seen as yet having communicated the main content. Later she provided elaboration of why and where she went, although in this case she did not fulfil all the possibilities of the tracking scaffold which she had prepared. Another child who was listening in followed up this child's turn using a quite consistent tracking structure:

M: *um on d weekend*

um me and my uncle an dat.. we went up to visit my dad   [moving]

..me'n cousin an' Marvyn an' .. an' um..

we um.. We when.. We went up dere..

when we was comin.. An we went to.. Um big tree   [stopping]

an' um .. an' we went.. To to our aunt's.   [moving]

an' me an' Marvyn.. when we firs' got in dere.   [stopping]

aun'y said

do youse..want to come to the pools.

an den.. We went to d pool.   [moving]

an we was started swimmin.   [stopping]

an den afta that.. we got out..

den we w-we went out.   [moving]

an' we 'ad feed   [stopping]

an' den we camped out dere.

an' (th)en .my uncle said

> *we're gonna go huntin*
>
> *so we went huntin.. Wiv our..xx*　　　　　　　　　　　[moving]
>
> *den..when we was goin huntin..*
>
> *we were.. look my uncle Mark*
>
> *he was xx.*
>
> *he was walkin in dis big bushy part*　　　　　　　　　[stopping]
>
> *where dere was bushes up to dere.*

It is not uncommon for Aboriginal children to structure their contributions on the basis of a scaffold provided by a previous speaker. This may occur at the discourse level, as above, or at the sentence level, as in the following exchange between an AIEW (in a small group situation) and S, a girl from Year 1:

> *AIEW:*　　*What about football? Did you go and watch your brother play football?*
>
> *S:*　　*Yeah, na.. I play- I watch myself play football.*

Further investigation is necessary to determine whether or not this tendency to employ discoursal and syntactic scaffolds from previous speakers is general among the population of speakers of this age, or if it is a particular strategy of Aboriginal speakers. Either way, it would appear to be of pedagogical relevance.

4.6.2 *Surveying*

"Surveying" is a discourse strategy (perhaps a sub-genre) exhibited in the oral narrative of Aboriginal child speakers whereby they depict an event in the context of the whole communicative setting in which it takes place. By contrast with non-Aboriginal speakers who are inclined to "zoom in" on the event which is the focus of attention and ignore other co-occurrent activity, Aboriginal child speakers may "zoom out" to record the peripheral along with the central to give, as it were, an authentic picture of the whole scene surveyed. The strategy in discourse can, perhaps, be related to the strategy of observation which was described by Judith Kearins (1976), whereby Aboriginal children, asked to observe an array of objects on a tray, and then to recall what they had seen when the tray was covered over, tended to observe and report with far greater comprehensiveness than the non-Aboriginal children. Skills of this kind are related by Kearins (1985:67) to observational demands of a hunter gatherer lifestyle, "requiring high levels of ability for finding and capturing game, finding and identifying edible vegetable foods and locating water". Such skills she found characteristic of Aboriginal groups even where they were no longer in close contact with such a lifestyle.

In the following example of "surveying", S, a six year old girl, is describing to L, an AIEW, an event at the football where her uncle ventured onto the field to recover his baby daughter who had crawled onto the field and, while he was doing so, was struck on the head with the ball.

> *S:*　*Dey got little cousin*
>
> *L:*　*Yeah*
>
> *S:*　*And they little cousin crawled in the way*
>
> 　　*and...Uncle Steve.. he- oh he got hit..*
>
> 　　*and there (gesture indicating the head)..*
>
> 　　*annnd like we watched Freda Bickley play-*
>
> 　　*thas her name..*

an 'er baby was like.. she's a nice girl wid about ten names..

an' I was only watchin' Uncle Steve watchin' football.

With respect to the use of this style, it should be noted that:

a) the focal event of the story (line 4) is not treated in the same way that a "climax" is treated in a story following Western conventions; it is embedded in the overall depiction of the ongoing activities, not reserved special treatment at the end;

b) the focal event is told with an inattention to detail recoverable from context or common knowledge, eg. the fact that the baby crawled in the way *of the players* (line 3), and that Uncle Steve *went onto the field* (line 4) to recover her; in this sense, the narrator treats the listener inclusively with herself as a vicarious co-participant in the event and presumes upon her inferential skills to fill in the detail;

c) the use of the past continuous to depict the narrator as present throughout the events (line 9), in contrast with the events described using the simple past tense (lines 3, 4, 6);

d) the inclusion of peripheral detail about Freda Bickley - a person unknown to the interlocutor (hence the interpolation "thas her name" in line 7);

e) the apparent equal attention given to the baby of Freda Bickley even though she is not an active participant in the events;

f) the balance achieved between the parent and baby in the focal event with a parent and baby to whom nothing unexpected happens, enabling the extraordinary to be viewed as coexisting with the ordinary.

Surveying is also used in the "fishing trip" example used above (Section 4.5.2) to illustrate participant schemas. A, the narrator, allows equal prominence in the story to the apparently incidental activities engaged in by the participants, as to the stated goal of the trip.

4.6.3 *Spirit encounter*

Many stories told by the children involve a spirit encounter of some kind. The stories always begin in the everyday world of the participants and involve some kind of experience in which the spirit world impinges on the everyday world. The stories usually show the protagonists retreating from the spirit encounter and thereby avoiding trouble. In more traditional stories, the encounter can lead to the death or transformation of the interfering persons. In the companion volume to this, we have referred to such stories as *control stories* (Malcolm *et al*, 1999:Ch 3).

In the following example, AIEW Allery Sandy is asking R, a Year 2/3 girl from the Pilbara, about where she has been recently:

> R: *Da other side a the railway line*
>
> *and um.. Kim an um wet my meat [meat of a plain kangaroo]*
>
> *an I had to srow the meat at im*
>
> *so e moved faster...*
>
> *the plain murla [meat] wen inside the um.. in the water.. in the water*
>
> *we seen the waters um xxx*
>
> *....*
>
> *And...we been see Maureen-watha [Maureen's kids]*
>
> *and...   and an so they um chuck the plainy mulla and*
>
> *and then... um where hI been wake the warlu up*

> *we ad to*
>
> *we packed up really fast*
>
> *and we went...*
>
> *an after that we went up right around Big Hill*

(Allery Sandy explained later that the plain kangaroo is a sacred animal and its meat may not be eaten near the river bed or used as bait. When you throw it on the water a big wind will come and a snake will then come after you).

The following story represents a variant of the same genre. This time it was recorded in the goldfields by a Wongi boy of Year 7:

> S: *All my all my all my um.. cousin dey teenagers..*
>
> *Dey was drivin at K--- in a dark nighd..*
>
> *an dey was dey was all you know stoned..*
>
> *Dey was all smoking ganga all of em..*
>
> *My cousin e's name G--..*
>
> *e was drivin an drivin..*
>
> *an.. an e looked in the rear vision mirror..*
>
> *an e saw a lizard wiv red eyes smokin wiv dem boys out the back*
>
> *an when e looked around..*
>
> *e wasn' dere..*
>
> *an e looked again.*
>
> *den he saw um.. a devil dere smoking with them boys.*
>
> *so he's... e just.. 's flat out drive to K---*
>
> *an when e got to K--- um..*
>
> *when e got to K---*
>
> *um e was walking along walking along by imself.*
>
> *cause e was ngoan [going] to e's aunty place*
>
> *cause.. everyone was full out dere.. out e's.. uncle's place.*
>
> *so he walkin to his aunty's place*
>
> *an e walked across the bas'b courts..*
>
> *an e saw an e saw dis.. saw dis bloke ere sayin..*
>
> *ay come over ere..*
>
> *I'll shoot you.*
>
> *an.. so he jus <u>ran</u> all de way to e's uncle's place.. xx..*
>
> *cause that place dere K---*
>
> *(th)a' place is a haunted.*

4.6.4 Persistence

In the persistence story schema an action is depicted in which a hunting opportunity presents itself and the protagonists need to make repeated efforts in order to capture their prey. The following example was recorded in the Pilbara. The child, J, in this case, is talking

to his AIEW, Allery Sandy, on the basis of pictures in a book which they both can see. Allery is prompting the child from time to time:

1.	J:	*man went hunting*
2.		*an e sawn a track*
3.		*an e followed to ees hole*
4.		*an e found a [da?] hole*
5.		*e digged it*
6.		*an digged it*
7.		*an e trying pullem de gundi*
8.		*but e went to go karl [=call] ees wife*
9.		*an*
10.	A:	*What e bin tell is wife?*
11.	J:	*but e come ere.. our grandad..*
12.		*goanna an .. da*
13.		*an uw wurdurna*
14.		*and a burruna*
15.		*an de girl m- carl ees ...daughter.. an ees daughter*
16.		*come ere come ere,*
17.		*I found a goanna*
18.		*an de girl was pullin and pullin n pullin*
19.		*an de g-girl went look for*
20.	A:	*Who did e find?*
21.	J:	*Jungurna [jarnkurna - emu]*
22.		*and.. de girl said*
23.		*come ere come ere*
24.		*I've found a goanna*
25.		*an.. the jangurna.. pullen.. pullen pullen pull..*
26.		*an dat jangurna e went to look for the kangaroo watjarri*
27.		*an de jungurna said*
28.		*come ere come ere*
29.		*we found a goanna*
30.		*an de jungurna*
31.	A:	*What's the kangaroo doing?*
32.	J:	*scratch*
33.	A:	*Scratch himself*
34.	J:	*scratch..*
35.		*and.. e's boorded in (th)ere*
36.		*an burrina*
37.	A:	*What are they doing there... they all what?*

38. *J:*   *pullin*

39.   *they're pull-*

40.   *na they're burrina da burrina burrina burrina...*

41.   *dey ... ate im up*

42. *A:*   *Ate im all up*

43. *J:*   *Yeah*

44. *A:*   *How big was the goanna?*

45. *J:*   *Big really big*

46. *A:*   *What's the man doing now?*

47. *J:*   *e was poortin it! [laughing]*

4.7   Discourse conventions

The data collected during this research give evidence of a range of discourse conventions employed in conversation and oral narrative.

4.7.1 Direct speech switching

This convention, which has been reported previously of Aboriginal child speakers (eg., Kaldor and Malcolm, 1979:414; Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm, 1982:101; Malcolm, 1994c:295) and is also characteristic of oral genres in other cultures (Gee, 1991; Bennett, 1991), is illustrated in lines 15-16 in the above narrative.

It is possible to relate the unannounced switching of a narrator from one speaker to another to what Palmer (1996) terms "image-schema transformation" where, in the interests of heightened dramatic effect, the schema of one speaker is supplanted by that of another. Such switching may entail some subtlety of linguistic and sociolinguistic awareness on the part of the narrator.

4.7.2 Repetition

Another convention common to other oral-based cultures (Ong, 1982) and also identified in a number of prior studies of Aboriginal children's narratives (eg., Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm, 1982:234; Malcolm, 1994c:296) is repetition, often multiple repetition, for stylistic effect. In J's story, above, there are several examples of three or fourfold repetition of a verb suggestive of persistent effort and of suspense associated with the anticipation of the success of the persistent effort. In this story, as in that reported in Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm (1982) it is clear that the speakers are bilingual and are significantly influenced by their Aboriginal languages in delivering their narrations. While J's story was probably also influenced by use of this story in a Yindjibarndi LOTE class, the same device can be seen in a narrative from a Nyungar adult:

> *but he couldn't get i off cause it was stake(??)*
>
> *so he xxx an banged it an banged it an banged it*

4.7.3 Orientation to land/people

Aboriginal culture maintains pervasive linkages between a people, their language and their land (Dixon, 1980; Elwell, 1982; Rumsey, 1993; Mühlhäusler, 1986; Malcolm, forthcoming-b). These linkages are reflected in the orientational image schemas (Palmer, 1996) which underlie Aboriginal English discourse. The discourse marker *side* has a

primary reference to orientation in space in the following utterance by A, a Year 7 boy from Broome:

AIEW:	*Where did you go fishing?*
A:	*We went out.. t' the Boda- Bodagujuk?? side*
AIEW:	*And?*
A:	*We went in dose rock pools.. cause it had some there.. an we caught big arlis(??)*

However, the same discourse marker assumes a human orientation at another point in the same conversation:

AIEW:	*Where d' ya people come from?*
A:	*We come from dis side eeya*
AIEW:	*Where are ya, dis side?*
A:	*Dis side..... BeagleBay side.*

The discourse marker *there/dere*, already observed in relation to what we have called a "proximity schema", serves a contextual orientation function, grounding the action referred to in the discourse in the location of its occurrence, as in A's comment:

We cooked up that stingray .. on the fire dere.

4.7.4 Profile/base signalling

In every use of language the attention of the speaker is elevating some aspects of meaning above others in a given field of reference. The terms *profile* and *base* have been used in cognitive linguistics to refer the ways in which the distribution of attention is symbolised (Palmer, 1996:100). According to Langacker (1987:183), "every predication evokes at its semantic pole a basic, two-part structure as follows:

(1) the *base*, or scope of predication;

(2) the *profile*, a component of the base that has special prominence within a predication...".

Aboriginal English differs from standard English both with respect to the encoding of the base and with respect to the devices employed to differentiate profile from base. We have already observed (under "Surveying") that there are differences between Aboriginal English speakers and standard English speakers with respect to the prominence context assumes in relation to an event which is taking place in that context and that Aboriginal English speakers show greater attention to context than standard English speakers do. The same characteristic may be observed with respect to the ways in which the profile is referenced to the base by means of appropriate discourse markers. Some of the main ways in which this may be done are as follows:

1. by the use of deictics

    a) demonstrative adjective *dat/that*:

    we bn still keep de flaps on that.. Stingray

    dat tide bin start comin in

    an we bin keep that chest bit

    (Year 7 boy, interviewed by AIEW Georgina Dodson, Broome)

b)   time adverbial *now*:

> *An e stayed out there for about a month now .. without food*

<div align="right">(Year 6 boy, Kellerberrin)</div>

2.   by the use of orientation image-schemas

These are illustrated in Section 4.7.3 above. The schema references the present context of utterance to the assumed base, the wider context of the land and its associated people.

3.   by the use of substitute form *ting/thing* to de-emphasise contextual features deemed assumed as common knowledge:

> G: *you'm bin win or.. Bidawuy bin win*
>
> J: *I dunna.. we wasn' **thing**... playing for liar [ie., we weren't playing for money...]*

<div align="right">(Year 7 boy, interviewed by AIEW, Broome)</div>

> *they gave me envelope so.. I put it in there.. and I writ down what I wanted on the **thing***

<div align="right">(Year 6 boy, Kellerberrin, talking with AIEW and teacher)</div>

> *the teacher. like.. tries to correct us but we. still don't know what she's.. **thing**...[ie., what she's on about] can't.. grasp?? that whole.. don't know what i(t) means*

<div align="right">(Year 6 girl, Kellerberrin, talking with AIEW and teacher)</div>

4.7.5 *Contextual implication*

Aboriginal English speakers put comparatively more emphasis on the interpretive role of the listener than do standard English speakers, who assume a correspondingly greater role for rendering their meanings explicit (Malcolm and Koscielecki, 1997:77). In this regard, Aboriginal English may be compared with other cultures where performative oral art is an area of cultural focus. With respect to such cultures, Edwards and Sienkewicz have stated:

> *Understanding a performance in an oral culture requires a special mind-set, a cultural harmony which excludes from the oral world any outsider, whether literate or not. In many ways an oral performance, which can be fully understood only by members of its audience, is as esoteric as a composition aimed at a literate elite, such as a poem of Ezra Pound.*

<div align="right">(Edwards and Sienkewicz 1990:3)</div>

The extent to which the interpretive role of the listener is essential to the interpretation of Aboriginal English discourse was brought home to the non-Aboriginal participants in the project many times as utterances which were (perhaps not knowingly) misinterpreted by them were given confident alternative interpretation by the Aboriginal team members.

Two examples of many may be cited from one interview with Year 6/7 children from a metropolitan school. In the first example, a girl is explaining her absence from school as follows:

> *I went to Kalgoorlie.. for my um ah Nana's funeral*

The Aboriginal listener was aware that this was 'Nana's funeral' because Nana was the one people were going to console, not because she was the one who had died (as non-Aboriginal team members assumed).

In the second example, a boy is talking about an Aboriginal football player, who has achieved the popular designation "roo boy" on the basis of his taking high marks:

> *my uncle makes fun of him cause they call him roo boy...*

> *my uncle goes.. roo boy got shot dere.. e dead.. e land in hospital.*

Here the Aboriginal listener recognised that the point of the remark was that the uncle associated roos with roo shooting and therefore was joking that the footballer might suffer the typical fate of roos. For non-Aboriginal team members, by contrast, this remark was cryptic.

4.7.6 *Topical progression*

A number of conversations of Aboriginal children with AIEWs have exhibited a pattern of topical progression whereby the impulse for switching to another topic repeatedly comes from a return in the course of conversation to known Aboriginal people or (in one case) a bush animal.

Example 1:

In the following example, M, a Year 6 Aboriginal boy is describing to an AIEW how, when he came to his present school in the country after having attended a school in the city, he had to learn a new arrangement for school lunches. The topic shifts as he begins to talk about his relations and moves to focus on Gabby, who burnt his feet on the radiator.

1. *I thought there was a canteen here*

2. *because.. I brang my money..*

3. *and they gave me the envelope*

4. *so.. I put it in there*

5. *and I writ down what I wanted on the thing..*

6. *an they get the lunch outa the tea room ..*

7. *an there's a um.. there's a .. K. Centre...*

8. *that's ummm Aboriginals own that...*

9. *an' we go there...*

10. *some a my uncles an' my cousins there* [reference to relations]

11. *or umm Ga- Gabby he always goes there...* [topic shift]

12. *he umm.. and ah.. he asked us for a ride*

13. *because he was runnin (?) down*

14. *an' when he was asleep*

15. *um he's heater.. the heater um um made made him got blisters on 'is feet*

16. *an' 'e can't walk.*

Example 2:

Abbreviated version of a conversation between four Metropolitan Aboriginal children and two AIEWs.

[following a sequence of 16 turns on the topic of football]

1.	S:	I was only watchin Uncle Steve watchin football	
2.	L:	mmm	
3.	S:	an Jade, man, he's like my brother	[reference to relations]
4.	A:	My brother lives at Cue	[topic shift]
5.	S:	about four, five years older then me...e's five	
6.	L:	mm	
7.	K:	yeah	
8.	A:	My brother	
9.		My brother he went to Cue	
10.		and... 'e got sick up there	
11.		cause it's too hot up there	
12.		an' when 'e come back on the airplane	
13.		'e was in the ospital	
14.		Cynthia and Mal go to ospital	

[a sequence of 13 turns follows on the topic of hospital]

1.	K:	Was it a big one or a little one?	
2.	A:	Big one	
3.	K:	Big one, mmm	
4.	L:	How many.. Ow many kids here have a guess	
5.	A:	six	
6.	S:	five	
7.	A:	six	
8.	S:	sixty-five.. five	
9.	K:	No it's four..	
10.	L:	How many Nyungars in school, na na how many	[ref to Nyungars]
11.		Have a guess...how many you reckon	
12.	A:	Undred and two	
13.	L:	Ha ha, aw come on	
14.	S:	Two NAA (screaming)	
15.		Can't be.	
16.		Too many (laugh) Wadjelas	
17.	A:	One undred an twenny	
18.	L:	You kids are lucky ya know...	

19.   *cause you got a school where alf nearly alfo of youse are all Nyungar kids in it*

20. *S:*   *Course*

21. *A:*   *Yeah*

[11 turns follow on the theme of Aboriginal people and culture at school]

                                [topic shift]

1. *A:*   *(referring to kangaroo) 'e been eatin mangarnt tree*

                                [reference to kangaroo]

2. *K:*   *Ooh*

3. *J:*   *Marlu*

4. *K:*   *Uh*

5. *A:*   *That is bush food*   [topic shift]

[25 turns follow on the theme of bush food]

6. *L:*   *Yeah, but your.. any of your family carve the emu egg?*

7. *A:*   *My dad can.. make cakes an thing.. Get money*   [reference to relations]

8.   *My two uncles trip ova like that dere*

9. *K:*   *Yeah*

10. *A:*   *I jumped up on em ... I jumped*   [topic shift]

11. *K:*   *uhu*

12. *A:*   *I caught the tail like dat dere*

13.   *my .. one of my uncles an.. an nephews*

[4 turns follow on the theme of hunting]

14. *K:*   *Yeah, oh I don't like snakes*

15. *S:*   *'e hates snakes*

16. *A:*   *They go- they kill 'em*   [reference to relations]

17. *K:*   *Yeah*

[34 turns follow relating snakes to experiences with family members]

                                [topic shift]

With respect to Example 2, it should be noted that:

a) the interactants seem to seek a point of reorientation before moving to a new topic and the reorientation is found in their shared family and cultural life;

b) one participant's reference to her own relatives may trigger another participant's move to talk about corresponding relatives (as in 3-4 of the first sequence);

c) reference to Aboriginal people in general (eg. Nyungars, in sequence 2 lines 10, 19) may have the same effect in facilitating topic progression as reference to relatives;

d) reference to an animal with cultural significance may also have the same effect as reference to a relation (as in sequence 3, line 1).

4.8   Functions and forms

The relation between form and function in Aboriginal English was pursued more at the level of discourse than of grammar within this project. With respect to the relationship between grammatical forms and functions, it is important to note the findings of earlier research (Malcolm, 1996b) that Aboriginal English speakers select from a relatively limited range of variants and that the variation cannot be assumed to be random. Some variation relates to their socially responsive movement along the stylistic continuum between "heavier" and "lighter" varieties of the language; other variation is responsive to culturally relevant meaning discriminations.

Mühlhäusler (1986) has pointed out that post-contact varieties incorporate variants relatable both to a "developmental continuum" (away from the acrolect) and to a "restructuring continuum" (towards the acrolect). There is a rough correspondence between these designations and those of "simplification" and "nativization" which were proposed in the project which preceded this one (Malcolm, 1995a) and which were used again in this project to help the project participants to recognise consistencies and linguistic processes in the variation inherent in the dialect rather than to see the variation as indiscriminate (see Chapter 2). Further research is needed to provide greater clarification of the social and linguistic meaning of the variation in Aboriginal English.

CHAPTER 5

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AND TRAINING

Alongside linguistic research and curriculum input, face-to-face training and professional development was a key part of the *User-Friendly Project.* This part had two main aspects: 1) training of team members, and 2) dissemination of information to people outside the team, including educators, speech pathologists and other interested parties. In this chapter we will describe the professional development that has been provided in both areas.

5.1   Training of team members

As described in earlier chapters, training within the Project was originally envisaged as being part of the 'mentoring' process for field team members. The emphasis was on imparting linguistic and curriculum knowledge to field team members in order that they would be able to undertake their research and information dissemination roles. However, this emphasis changed due to 1) the need for information to be translated into language which connected with the prior knowledge of field team members, 2) the need for learning opportunities more in tune with Aboriginal learning styles, and 3) the realisation that field team members themselves had significant contributions to make in training other members of the team from an Aboriginal perspective. Sessions became progressively less 'input from the front' and more democratic. That these discoveries should be necessary in a project with an emphasis on 'two-way' education is ironic; however it was a valuable and vital part of the entire process.

Within the context just described, the main vehicles for the mutual sharing of knowledge and expertise were the four live-in team workshops. Base team field visits also constituted another opportunity for training *in situ* .

5.1.1 Team workshops

The team workshops each had a planned emphasis and notional structure. As the project progressed, the content of the workshops tended to become more fluid, allowing for insights and issues which arose in the course of team interactions. It was found that the parts of the first two workshops, in particular, failed to make connections with the understandings of Indigenous members of the team, and in the latter workshops it was necessary to revisit the same topics from an Indigenous perspective, allowing Indigenous team members to develop their own definitions and understandings of key concepts. This process was facilitated by Glenys Collard and Louella Eggington, who had more opportunity to interact with other members of the Base Team on a regular basis and were therefore able to assist in translating ideas back and forth between the groups. As a result, Indigenous team members were able to share their own models and see them adopted, and they developed greater confidence in their grasp of key information and issues.

As was originally planned, the emphasis in the workshops also progressed from orientation to data collection and analysis to understanding curriculum change and development of ways of communicating Project findings to school staff and others. Detailed programs for the workshops can be found in Appendix 2, while the following summary gives a general guide to workshop contents:

Workshop 1: 27-31 May 1996

This workshop provided a general introduction to the Project, to Aboriginal English and the significance of Aboriginal English in education. After sharing their own concerns about education, participants were provided with basic linguistic training covering sounds, words, sentences, speech use and discourse, as well as some information on Aboriginal languages. They were also provided with input and practice in collecting, transcribing and analysing data, along with input on the ethical issues involved in research.. Practice in data collection took place on site at Culunga Aboriginal Community School. Input on Aboriginal culture and language from an Aboriginal perspective was provided by Carol Garlett, from the Education Department of WA, and Trevor Walley, from the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Workshop 2: 13-15 November 1996

Workshop 2 provided orientation to the School Partners and therefore revisited some of the material covered in Workshop 1 (the nature of Aboriginal English, data collection and analysis, etc.). It also included team reports on what had been happening in schools and input from Glenys Collard on Aboriginal English from a speaker's point of view. Participants looked at Aboriginal English texts in separate groups and discovered ways in which perceptions differed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers. This workshop also addressed issues of inclusivity and curriculum, looking at how Project findings could be applied in practical ways in schools. State curriculum developments were outlined by Michelle Gore, of the Department of the Curriculum Council.

Workshop 3: 19-23 May 1997

Workshop 3 aimed to introduce a Train the Trainer approach whereby Field Team members would be enabled to communicate the findings of the project to others. It therefore included input on Anglo/Aboriginal learning styles, listening styles, ways of facilitating change, school/staff equity issues and challenges. During this, it became clear that Indigenous team members needed to develop their own ways of defining and describing Aboriginal English, and hence much time was spent on 'Indigenising' both the information and the process with a view to developing a user-friendly professional development package. Further discussions and input included feedback on the data analysis of Aboriginal English sounds and grammar, a discussion of regional differences and commonalities in Aboriginal English, worldview, and Aboriginal meanings for English words. The team also shared their experiences of data collection and discussed the nature of bidialectal education in the context of the global diversity of English.

Workshop 4: 3-7 November 1997

Workshop 4 continued the processes begun in Workshop 3. Field Team members provided updates on work in their schools and were provided with a model presentation on an Indigenous worldview before continuing with development of the professional development package. Specific input was provided on how to talk about data in their schools, and Rosemary Cahill also presented an introduction to the Solid English curriculum package, which was to be available to teachers. As with previous workshops, some time was given to data collection amongst the group, including comparison of Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English texts and investigation into differences in categorisation and association.

5.1.2 Base Team - Field Team partnerships

At the first workshop, Field Team members each chose a member of the Base Team to be their team partner. This encouraged communication and support, mainly through phone

contact but also through field visits which Base Team members undertook at least once in each year. The training content of field visits varied considerably according to location. They often involved data collection in which the Base partners either encouraged their Field partners to do particular activities or joined in with those activities themselves. The visits were also an opportunity for trouble-shooting, particularly in relation to the vexed question of time allocation.

Formally and informally, both team members were often able to speak with other members of staff about the Project and Aboriginal English. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Field Team members were encouraged to develop their ability and confidence to share their expertise. Presentation sessions during team workshops were an opportunity for them to gain experience in this. Several Field Team members were able to organise meetings to speak to staff in their schools during the course of the Project, and Georgina Dodson also shared her understandings with other AIEWs at a regional conference.

5.2 Professional development beyond the Team

5.2.1 Context and implementation

In addition to training within the *User-Friendly* team, a considerable amount of information dissemination and awareness-raising took place outside the team. Some of this took the form of presentations in academic forums, described in Chapter 7. The most extensive work was undertaken by Patricia Königsberg, in conjunction with her role as an Education Officer (ESL/Aboriginal) in the Education Department's Student Support Branch. Both Patricia and Yvonne Haig (in her role as Consultant for Australian students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) already had professional development responsibilities through the *Critical Steps Project* and in support of Aboriginal Education Specialist Teachers (AESTs) and teachers in the English Language and Numeracy (ELAN) program. The concerns of these groups with students who speak Aboriginal English were integrally related to the work of the *User-Friendly Project*.

In addition to these groups, there was also a considerable range of other teachers, educational administrators, school psychologists, education students and even people from other fields such as speech pathology and juvenile justice who added to an ever-increasing demand for input on Aboriginal English and two-way approaches.

The professional development effort was greatly enhanced by the appointment of Glenys Collard as Aboriginal Research Assistant midway through 1996. From this point, the benefits of a 'two-way' presentation incorporating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives became clear, and as mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Project team adopted a principle whereby no professional development should be conducted without an Indigenous presenter or co-presenter. This models how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can collaborate and it honours the wealth of cultural and linguistic knowledge contributed by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Other team members, in particular Judith Rochecouste and Ian Malcolm, also presented at Professional Development sessions. Appendix 3 provides a detailed summary of most academic and professional development presentations conducted by team members in relation to, or informed by, the *User-Friendly Project*.

As a result of the demand for professional development surrounding the *User Friendly Project*, the Education Department of WA funded a new initiative from the beginning of 1998 to assist in dissemination of Project findings. The *ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning Project* is a three-year professional development program aimed at spreading information on Aboriginal English and two-way bidialectal education throughout the Education Department of WA. It is based upon a *train-the-trainer* model in which District Service Centre personnel (chiefly Patricia Königsberg and Glenys Collard, seconded from Edith Cowan University) provide training to district office personnel. This training will

enable district office personnel to incorporate understandings about *two-way bidialectal education* when working with schools. Ongoing professional support will be provided by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal officers in the District Service Centre.

The program aims to train all Education Department Curriculum Improvement Managers and Officers, all Aboriginal Education Coordinators and Aboriginal Liaison Officers as well as some student services personnel, including Student Services Managers, in the delivery of professional development in Aboriginal English and bidialectal education. It also aims to enable all AIEWs to develop a personal understanding of Aboriginal English and the way in which education is able to be two-way and bidialectal. It is anticipated that the *two-way* model will be adopted in future training by school districts: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel will both receive training, and be equipped to jointly deliver professional development in schools.

The *ABC Project* is supported by a collaborative curriculum development project entitled *Deadly Ways to Learn*, which is described in Chapter 6. Both projects maintain close contact with each other and with linguists at the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research at Edith Cowan University and the WA Child Literacy and ESL Research Node of Language Australia.

5.2.2 *Content of professional development sessions*

Sessions vary greatly in response to the needs of participants. The structure and content of sessions for schools and non-Indigenous audiences is negotiated in advance and then followed by the presenters. By contrast, sessions for Indigenous audiences such as AIEWs are driven by the agenda of the participants as it emerges on the day. We will describe some typical sessions below.

One-day AIEW workshop

As AIEW Fred Taylor said, with some incredulity, "teachers teach what they have decided beforehand!". To suit Indigenous preferences, a typical workshop with AIEWs begins with participants chatting about themselves, then filling an issues board with problems they perceive in schools and education. The day's program begins to take shape from here.

Following this, the presenters may provide some history and background to the *User Friendly Project*, explaining the two-way process and introducing the team members, talking about contributions of each to the research. A video of the *Milbindi* segment on the Project (see Chapter 7) is often shown, followed by open discussion. It is often at this point that issues and doubts come out, such as the common misconception that the Project might be trying to teach students Aboriginal English. This is a good time to break for lunch, after which the presenters answer such doubts by explaining in more detail what the Project is trying to achieve, and by working with the group to attain a common understanding on the nature of Aboriginal English.

During discussions by Aboriginal participants, Glenys Collard will often note down sentences in Aboriginal English which she hears being used. These are used later as examples to show participants the reality of Aboriginal English in their own context and to help differentiate it from Nyungar or other Indigenous language, or from 'broken English' or 'pidgin'.

The presenters explain why it is important to accept and respect Aboriginal English and why teachers need to understand its complexities and implications. The group discusses what 'two-way' means, and what it means to value two dialects: the aim for both languages to grow side by side to be strong together. The presenters also explain that not only Aboriginal students benefit, but non-Aboriginal students as well. The day usually concludes with further discussion and consideration of the issues board in the light of the day's insights.

A three-day workshop for District Office staff

Day 1 begins with Patricia Königsberg explaining the background to the *ABC Project* and Aboriginal language issues in the State, starting with the ESL Curriculum Review (Herriman *et al.*, 1990), the history of *Critical Steps* and the links with the collaborative research in the *Language and Communication Enhancement for Two-way Education Project* (Malcolm, 1995a) and the *User Friendly Project*, along with the *Deadly Ways to Learn Project*. The presenters explain the strategy of working both with AIEWs on the ground level as well as with all the Curriculum Improvement team and the Student Services team in a train the trainer approach.

The second session looks at the history of Aboriginal English and its status as a carrier of an Indigenous worldview. This tends to raise many questions from discussions about truancy to changing enrolment forms in schools, and so on.

Session 3 deals with Inclusivity and what is meant by the curriculum - that is, that it is not a course but encompasses everything to do with teaching and learning, including the structures of the school. Participants complete a 'jigsaw' brainstorm activity on how to make school more inclusive. Session 4 reviews the day and makes links to the Curriculum Improvement Program, Outcomes focussed education, the Curriculum Framework, Student Outcome Statements as well as other programs teachers may be involved in such as *First Steps* and *FELIKS*. It demonstrates how bidialectal education and inclusivity relate to all the curriculum from K-12, rather than being simply an add-on program. Day 1 ends with a feedback session.

Day 2 begins with a full morning of detailed information on Aboriginal English: linguistic definitions, the differences between pidgin, creole, Aboriginal English, etc. Aboriginal English is defined, and more detailed information provided on the history and significance of the dialect.

In these sessions, participants listen to tapes, and start identifying features at each linguistic level. They learn the difference between heavy and light Aboriginal English. Glenys Collard points out differences in narrative structure and what the speakers are talking about. Differences in genre and pragmatics are explained.

After lunch, the group spends an hour on Second Language Acquisition theory, including activities to connect the theories with strategies the participants had previously used in teaching. After a break they consider the differences and similarities between English as a Second Language (ESL) and Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD)[1], then conclude with a feedback session.

Day 3 starts with more specific findings from the *User-Friendly Project*, drawing out implications for the classroom. This usually raises a lot of discussion, with participants keen to work out what it means in their daily work and what advice they should be giving to teachers. At this point, the presenters reinforce the fact that the main objective of Year 1 of the *ABC Project* is awareness-raising, and that simply shifting philosophy to valuing Aboriginal English will make a big difference for students. With the knowledge they have already gained, they can begin in small ways to shift teachers' understandings.

Following lunch is a session in which District Office personnel attempt to come up with a common shared understanding of what two-way bidialectal education involves. The objective is not so much to come up with a statement as to get all the issues out, because during the process of attempting to form a statement, the doubts and deep questions surface and participants discuss them as a whole group. They generally find it extremely valuable.

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[1] This is sometimes referred to as ESD, but it is more properly called SESD, since it is a particular variety of English which is new to students, not English itself. 'English' is the global name for all varieties, or dialects, of the English language.

In the final session, the presenters hand over to the District Managers for Curriculum Improvement and Student Services, who lead participants in developing an action plan for the District. They determine how they will incorporate some of those understandings and implement change in their district until the following year's professional development. The resulting Action Plans vary greatly between Districts and range from ideas such as providing professional development to all Principals in the District to offering specific sessions on Aboriginal English in teacher inductions to changing enrolment procedures and forms at the school level, to incorporating some actions within the existing District Strategic Plan. The Workshop concludes with a final feedback session.

A three-hour session in a school

Throughout the *User-Friendly Project*, individual schools have requested professional development, and this is now organised on request through school Districts. The session includes historical background on Aboriginal English; definitions; the differences between pidgins, creoles, etc.; ways in which Aboriginal English may have regional differences but still constitutes one dialect. Tapes are played to illustrate features, and information is presented on an Indigenous worldview. The presenters talk about the *User-Friendly Project* to explain where their knowledge comes from, and show the *Milbindi* tape. A very fast coverage of all of this takes a minimum of three hours.

Participant responses

Responses to these sessions, as to any professional development, vary greatly depending on the prior knowledge and experience of the participants. By and large, however, participants express enthusiasm for the new knowledge, dismay that they have not previously received input on these matters and some trepidation concerning how they will apply the knowledge in their schools. It is hoped that the ongoing work of the linked professional development, curriculum and research projects will help them to bridge the gap into practice and truly make education more 'user-friendly' for their Aboriginal-English speaking students.

CHAPTER 6

REPORT ON THE CURRICULUM COMPONENT

6.1 The Western Australian education context

During the 1980's the emerging issue in the Western Australian curriculum context, as with all Australian states and indeed internationally, was a movement from inputs to outcomes based education. A major impetus for this movement was provided in 1988 by the Hobart Declaration of Schooling that set in train the development of national profiles in eight learning areas.

During 1994-1995, the Education Department of Western Australia trialed modified versions of the national profiles. At this time the profiles, now called the Student Outcome Statements, were to form a curriculum framework within which schools would develop relevant teaching and learning programs for their students.

However, in 1995, after the User-Friendly Project was designed, the Government announced the establishment of an Interim Curriculum Council charged with the development of a Curriculum Framework. The purpose of the Curriculum Framework is as follows.

> *The Curriculum Framework sets out what all students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of the programs they undertake in schools in Western Australia, from kindergarten through to Year 12. Its fundamental purpose is to provide a structure around which schools can build educational programs that ensure students achieve agreed outcomes.*
>
> *It is neither a curriculum nor a syllabus, but a framework identifying common learning outcomes for all students, whether they attend government or non-government schools or receive home schooling. It is intended to give schools and teachers flexibility and ownership over curriculum in a dynamic and rapidly changing world environment.*

(Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 1998)

The Curriculum Framework was developed during 1996 and early 1997. Research team members were involved in the development through early consultation processes and membership of the Inclusivity Working Party.

The consultation draft was published in August, 1997 with a call for public submissions to be received by October 28. During this period, the research team audited the draft document and provided detailed feedback to the Interim Curriculum Council. Research team members both organised forums of teachers to discuss the document and attended those organised by the Education Department of WA. This provided an opportunity to highlight issues related to the inclusion of speakers of Aboriginal English. Yvonne Haig was a member of the Inclusivity Working Party and through this group provided direct input into the development and review of the framework.

During 1996 and 1997, the Student Outcomes were being refined to take account of the modifications suggested by the trial process and to align them with the Curriculum Framework. The research team was also involved in this process, with Yvonne Haig sitting on the inter-branch committee responsible for the refinement process across the eight learning areas. Yvonne also served on the working party refining the English Student Outcome Statements.

In early 1998, the Education Department of WA established the Curriculum Improvement Program to support the implementation of the Curriculum Framework and Outcomes and Standards Framework (including the Student Outcome Statements) in schools. This program is managed from the 16 educational districts across the state. The research team is involved in the training of the curriculum officers involved in this program. This work, an important strategy for the dissemination of project findings and promotion of bidialectal approaches to education, will be on going through the *ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning Project,* which was described in Chapter 5.

The implementation of the *ABC Project* in schools will be supported through a second project, *Deadly Ways to Learn,* which focuses on curriculum development. *Deadly Ways* is a Commonwealth-funded Strategic Results Project bringing together the three main educational systems of Western Australia - the Education Department of WA, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools Associations of WA, supported by the Centre for Applied Language Research and the WA Child Literacy and ESL Research Node of Language Australia. It incorporates school-based action research to develop and trial two-way curriculum materials specifically supporting the implementation of bidialectal education. It aims to spread these approaches, using print and electronic based materials, through a Two-Way Curriculum Clearing House which will continue after the life of the project.

6.2   Development of bidialectal pedagogy

Aboriginal children come to school with a rich cultural and linguistic background. This background is not always obvious to (nor understood by) their non-Aboriginal teachers whose own background is often different. Fundamental to this difference of background is *world view.* This is relevant to pedagogy because it has implications for the way ideas and events are viewed and how new skills or understandings may be incorporated, learned and later applied.

> *In the white man's world, objects are discrete and quantifiable. Their nature and their relationship to other objects can be identified by empirical analysis. Man is seen as in a position of control over the physical universe. In the Aboriginal interactional world, on the other hand, people and things have a spiritual quality which transcends space and time and which is not subject to empirical analysis. As in dreaming during sleep, time and space are secondary to the interaction of the elements. The interactional theme is played out in ritual, and paralleled by secular activity. While this world view provides for the unity and coherence of Aboriginal man, land, nature and time, it does not lend itself to the purposeful manipulation and accumulation of objects from the physical world, as does the white man's world view.*

(Bain, 1979)

While Bain's manner of expression is somewhat dated, the interactional world view she sees as typical of Aboriginal people has profound implications for the way Aboriginal students view school and how they operate within it. It affects not only the way they perceive day-to-day social exchanges, but also the way they perceive the very fabric of what is valued and taught in schools and the instructional processes that are orchestrated there.

For example, an interactional world view reflects the way Aboriginal people place events over time. Instead of referring to precise dates, events are placed according to other things that happened at the same time, for example: *"when gran moved to Brookton"* or *"around that time pops cut his leg real bad",* etc. In a similar vein, Aboriginal children are likely to consider time to go home to be *"when it's gettin a bit dark"* rather than *"before 5 o'clock".* The implications that this has for schooling include the way time, space and quantity (number) are treated in mathematics and the fact that Aboriginal students may not share a teacher's preoccupation with timetables or deadlines.

Also fundamental to culture and world view is the way people attribute priorities. Things that are highly valued in schools are not always the same as those that are highly valued in Aboriginal (or other) families. For example, completing assignments on time is highly valued within the culture of schooling, while fulfilling family obligations is highly valued within Aboriginal culture. Sometimes, these two value systems conflict. When teachers make an effort to understand and respect the priorities and values of the families of their Aboriginal students, unwitting clashes of culture (between home and school) become less likely.

As with all elements of culture, values are learned and can become so taken for granted that they become invisible to those who hold them. In this sense, teachers need to look **at** the culture of schooling, rather than through it. It would be beneficial for teachers to examine the educational and social assumptions that underpin common school practice. For example:

- the nature of student - teacher and teacher - parent relationships;

- one controlling adult will be in charge of up to 32 students at a time;

- the students and the teacher will all assemble and stay in a room for up to one and a half hours at a time;

- the students are (typically) grouped according to chronological age;

- the students will sit for most of that time; and

- when the teacher talks, students are expected to listen (though the teacher reserves the right to choose whether he/she will listen to students when they are speaking).

While there may be compelling educational (and economic) reasons for many of these school practices, it is important that teachers are aware of the way they contrast with the home experience of many of their students. Teachers should be prepared to challenge and improve upon these practices, especially those that serve expediency over education.

By challenging the grouping of students according to age, for example, teachers embracing multi-aged grouping have found that Aboriginal (and other) students thrive in harmonious family groupings. In such groups, the benefits of peer tutoring and individualised planning can be maximised and a given teacher can stay with a group of students for a number of years. This enables continuity of learning and allows students and teachers alike to benefit from the close working relationships, the mutual respect and the trust that they can establish over an extended period.

6.2.1 Working *with* what Aboriginal students bring to school

The linguistic and cultural skills and understandings that Aboriginal students bring to school are often so different from those expected and valued by many non-Aboriginal teachers that these skills and understandings are often *invisible* to teachers.

Aboriginal members of this project group noted that, at parent-school meetings, it is nearly always *"How can you change your life to fit into our system?"* rather than *"What can we do for you to make things easier for you? How can we meet you half way?"*.

At the very core of the findings from this project is the recurring theme that teachers who are culturally aware and well informed are well placed to capitalise on the social, cultural, linguistic and cognitive foundations that Aboriginal students bring to school. They can *build upon* what the students bring rather than waste time, effort and goodwill (for both parties) trying to "turn it around" to the school's way.

A. Social, cultural and cognitive foundations

As with all children, Aboriginal children come to school with a wealth of knowledge about things important to them and their family. Most Aboriginal students will know a lot about their extended family (often numbering in hundreds) and the places they are from, about the bush and flora and fauna that occur there, about life and death, and about Aboriginal spirituality.

The student will know how to talk about:

- time (*loong time, drekly, liddle while, night time, all time, quick way, soon, before, days an days an days ...*);

- distance (*long way, ...*);

- quantity (*mob, big mob, bigges mob, some, bit, liddle bit, lots, too many, ...*);

- position (*over dere, jus ere, dat way, ...*);

- family (*gran, pop, nana, grandy, cousin, cousin brother, aun'y, uncle, sis, mum, dad, ol' gran, claimin cousin...*), and so on.

All these concepts and terms of quantification and time are highly effective within Aboriginal contexts, but are not often recognised or valued in schools, especially when Aboriginal students are assessed and compared alongside non-Aboriginal peers who, at home, may have been encouraged to describe quantity using numbers, to tell the time using a clock, and to refer to calendar dates, standard units of measure, etc.

Most Aboriginal children experience a greater sense of autonomy at home than do most of their non-Aboriginal peers. This independence detracts from normal classroom practice, where teachers expect to (and are often expected to) verbally direct and control students who, in turn, are expected to listen and respond immediately to commands. Ironically, in the later years of schooling, students are encouraged to become independent and self-directed learners.

The expectations and attitudes students bring to school are influenced by what they have heard about school from the people closest to them. If schools and teachers can establish and maintain positive relationships with these people (notably elders, women and older past students) they are more likely to encounter positive attitudes to schooling among their Aboriginal students.

Failure to respond to notes from teachers should not be taken to indicate a lack of interest. Other issues may be at play. Recollections that Aboriginal parents and elders have of their own schooling will be mixed, but are likely to include some experience of being "put down". A generation later, regular contact with teachers may still not seem very appealing. While notes and other methods routinely used by schools to initiate contact with their students' families may not be effective, other less conventional methods may be successful.

One way to engender positive attitudes is to demonstrate that the home culture and language is valued and respected by the school. Another is to make explicit the behaviours that are expected at school: to take the guess-work out of what students are expected to do (and not do) in the classroom and the school. It is desirable that teachers explain (for all students) things like when it is okay and not okay to move around the classroom, to talk, to use materials, to make choices, etc. It is also desirable that teachers reflect upon those management strategies: which ones are necessary and which are maintained out of habit or convention?

It was the experience of people working on this project and of other teachers with whom project members had contact that Aboriginal students are most likely to succeed at schools which embrace the following "naturalistic" learning conditions:

Learning by doing

Within an Aboriginal world view, experience and knowledge are context dependent. Things are learned in the doing, and through repeated doing you learn more and get better and better. It involves repetition and personal trial and error to solve an immediate problem. Learning stems from solving real problems in the here and now, not contrived or hypothetical problems that may or may not happen in the future. The Aboriginal child "learns by doing something not by learning to do it" (Harris, 1980).

Contextualisation

Underlying Aboriginal ways of dealing with knowledge is the notion that "*the whole is greater than the sum of the parts*". Within this view, attempts to tease-out key elements of a skill, event or idea are counter-productive because the context in which they occur is considered to be an important part of what has to be learned. When working with Aboriginal students, it may be more effective to focus initially on the whole and to gradually shift focus to explore component parts, having first established the place of those parts within the whole.

It is also desirable to "let the students in on the secret" so they know what learning outcomes have been set for them and what their work and actions will look like when they have attained those outcomes. If this information is kept "secret", students can only guess at what is expected of them, and their efforts to achieve those outcomes may become "hit and miss". Students who know what is expected of them can take charge of their own learning, make judgements of their own about the extent to which those expectations are relevant and realistic (and negotiate more appropriate expectations if need be) and they will be able to monitor and modify their own progress.

Look and learn

In Aboriginal communities, some things are learned by listening to the old people repeating familiar yarns and stories, but most learning is based on watching something being done, trying it out, then watching some more. While non-Aboriginal children also learn a lot by watching, their parents often accompany demonstrations with verbal cues and elaboration - this verbal input is not so prevalent in Aboriginal settings. This is not to say that verbal instruction hinders learning for Aboriginal students: merely that they may not be tuned in to verbal instruction to the extent that non-Aboriginal students are. Aboriginals are, however, adept observers so teachers should capitalise on their capacity to learn through observation.

Group orientation

Aboriginal students often work best when allowed to work together, so group activities often work well (such as shared book, assigning problem-solving activities to groups, etc.). Aboriginal (and other) students feel more comfortable and secure within the group and support each other's learning, one tutoring the other/s - sharing tasks, sharing risks, sharing outcomes, sharing learning. It is extremely uncomfortable for Aboriginal students to be under the spot-light or to be singled-out from the group: such situations bring about "big shame" (Coghill, 1979; Harkins, 1990). The reaction to this sort of discomfort can be manifest as problems with school discipline and/or absenteeism.

Relevance

As for all students, it is important that the things Aboriginal students are expected to engage in at school are things they can relate to so that a degree of continuity and consistency can be achieved between their life at school and their life at home. The best way of achieving such continuity and consistency is for teachers to tailor the sorts of experiences students have at school: subject matter, school culture, learning outcomes, texts, etc. Topics typically known and valued by Aboriginal students include family, the bush, animals, bush tucker,

football, community development, basketball, child care, cars, etc., but also the range of topics that interest most students of various ages *(ie*: dinosaurs, planets, movies, music, etc.).

> *For many Aboriginal children the education they are subjected to is a bit like having a tooth pulled: a big white person says its for your own good, but you don't quite see it that way yourself. One good reason for making the curriculum more relevant and meaningful is that the children will enjoy their education more.*

(Nicholls, 1994:19).

Orientation to persons

Teacher rapport is extremely important to Aboriginal students. Teachers who make a concerted effort to build with students (and their families) a relationship based on mutual trust and respect are likely to get further with their Aboriginal students than are teachers who opt to remain distant and aloof. Humour is an important key here. Aboriginal (and other) students respond well to teachers who use good-natured humour and who look for ways to defuse confrontations (without either side losing face) before they blow up.

B. Linguistic foundations

Chapter 4 describes in detail project findings regarding the semantic and pragmatic understandings that many Aboriginal students bring to school.

It is most important that teachers learn about the patterns, meanings and rules of use embedded in Aboriginal English, so they can:

- be better able to understand their students' meanings and intentions;

- be confident and comfortable about permitting the use of Aboriginal English in their classrooms;

- understand what kinds of demands the use of standard English may be making on them;

- be in a better position to teach their students to code-switch between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English;

- have a base from which they can discover more about the language and culture of their particular students; and

- convey an important message of cultural respect and inclusivity which has been missing from the schooling experiences of past generations of Aboriginal students.

Taking the linguistic and sociolinguistic facts about Aboriginal English seriously means adapting classroom processes and practices to take account of the dialect. The skills of the students in their own dialect will be best seen when the communicative atmosphere is relaxed and accepting and when students have as many opportunities as possible to initiate their own communication. The teacher has the responsibility for setting up a classroom tone that will facilitate this. As she listens carefully to the students' talk and keeps careful records of her observations (with interpretations from an Aboriginal colleague wherever possible), she will be able to see for herself the system and the levels of meaning exhibited by the dialect they are using. Then she can better determine what strategies are necessary to make that dialect an effective vehicle for school learning. The teacher can also build on the student's existing skills of code-switching to help them to see how they can control two dialects and thereby achieve a greater range of communicative functions.

In terms of code-switching pedagogy, teachers are encouraged to view Standard Australian English as a second dialect which needs to be taught in much the same way as a second language would be taught. Part of what needs to be learned is the ability to identify which situations call for which dialect.

Of central importance to teaching code-switching is a clear message that home talk is in no way less *valuable* than school talk; just less *appropriate* in some situations in the wider community. This is not because of features inherent to home talk or school talk, but because most people in the wider community use and expect school talk (Standard Australian English) in a range of settings.

The difference between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English is not as great as the linguistic difference that exists between two languages, but the relative smallness of this difference can be a hindrance as much as it can be a help. It is a help in that Aboriginal students hear the same *kinds* of words, grammar, phonology, etc. at home and at school so they get *close* to understanding school talk (and their teachers get close to understanding their home talk). It is a hindrance in that the two dialects are often assumed to be the *same*, so significant differences may go unnoticed. We saw in Chapter 4 that a single word, such as *roast,* can appear the same yet differ significantly in meaning between the two varieties of English. Other contributors to 'pseudointelligibility' (see Harkins, 1994) exist at all levels of language. Research overseas, summarised by Sato (1989), also shows that differences between 'similar' language varieties are often underestimated, causing real comprehension problems. Sato's own research confirms that such difficulties do show up in the classroom and need to be taken into account by teachers.

6.2.2 *Discovering what Aboriginal students bring to school*

The present project has added to an existing literature upon which educators can draw on to become aware of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students. However, for that knowledge to be applied and augmented in the classroom, an indispensable resource is the local knowledge which teachers can obtain from their own Aboriginal students and colleagues. During the course of this Project, the use of two-way research methods in an educational context naturally had a flow-on effect into classroom practice among the teachers and AIEWs who were associated with the project.

As early as 1972, Hymes was arguing for teachers to be their own ethnographers of speaking, implying that investigation of the uses of speech is a legitimate part of teaching. If classrooms are to be inclusive they need to have input from the cultural background of the student as well as from the wider culture. In the absence of pre-existing sources of such material, the students, with the teacher's help, become the resources of the classroom and the teacher assumes the role of a bidialectalism facilitator. The teacher will not impart bidialectalism. It will be already there, at least in the form of what Troike (1972) has called "receptive bidialectalism." The extension of this skill requires support from the teacher.

The language arts curriculum for bidialectal education may be defined in exactly the same way as the data source for bidialectal research: it embraces means of speech, contexts of situation and relations of appropriateness, but defined in terms of both the first and second dialects of the learner. The process of bidialectal education will respect the "implicit cultural patterning" (Hymes, 1996:139) which underlies the student's existing communicative performance, and it will be directed towards extending the student's communicative and cognitive repertoire, including skills such as code-switching which only those who command more than one variety may possess (Lewnau, 1973). A summary of a view of pedagogy informed by the ethnography of speaking is provided in Figure 6.1 (overleaf).

Ethnography of Speaking: Pedagogical Implications

CURRICULUM:

    1.   Means of speech (Dialect 1 and Dialect 2)

    2.   Contexts of situation (D1 and D2)

    3.   Relations of appropriateness (D1 and D2)

CLASSROOM DATA GATHERING:

    1.   The teacher as ethnographer

    2.   The class as provider of D1 sources for two-way learning input

FACILITATION OF BIDIALECTALISM:

    1.   Enhancement of bidialectal communicative competence

    2.   Observation and acknowledgment of structure in D1: forms, speech acts, strategies, genres

    3.   Development of code-selection and code-switching skills

    4.   Deference to Aboriginal authority:

        a)   through two-way (cross-cultural) tasks

        b)   through involving AIEWs

        c)   by acknowledging multiple 'readings'.

Figure 6.1: The Ethnography of Speaking as a guide to pedagogy

6.3 Curriculum application of Project findings

6.3.1 Implications of semantic analysis

Bidialectal education in relation to schematic knowledge

As we saw in Chapter 4, the importance of schematic knowledge to conceptualisation and communication has been emphasised by the work of cognitive linguistics. In the words of Wallace Chafe, schemas are "'ready made models' and 'prepackaged expectations and ways of interpreting'" (quoted by Palmer, 1996:63). Gary Palmer (1996:47) suggests that "conceptual schemas prime our senses to respond to a limited range of sensory experience, as when we scan a book looking only for certain topics" and "[i]t is likely that all native knowledge of language and culture belongs to cultural schemas and that the living of culture and the speaking of language consist of schemas in action" (Palmer, 1996:63).

The pervasiveness of schemas in approaching and interpreting experience makes them a key element in communicating inclusion or exclusion in cross-cultural communication. We have seen that the same English words and expressions can accommodate contrasting cultural schemas, so that speakers of standard English may think (on the basis of surface linguistic form) they are being understood by Aboriginal English speakers (and vice versa) but may be drawing completely different inferences from the communication from those which were intended.

The research task of identifying the schemas which inform the cultural and linguistic expression of Aboriginal English speakers is in its early stages (see Malcolm, 1998) and there is an enormous amount which remains to be discovered on the basis of two-way research. We have already noted that the use of Aboriginal English may be accompanied by the use of different *image schemas*, as when, for example, *behind bars* is used to refer to any institutionalization, not just imprisonment; feelings are seen as emanating from the environment rather than from within the person; to be *starving* is to be in need not just in need of food, and so on. There are also *event schemas* which determine the way one conceptualises and participates in *dinner out*, or a visit to friends, or journey away from home. There are *story schemas* which underlie what is recognised as a story and how to tell and listen to stories.

In addition, differing conceptualisations are revealed in different categorizations of experience which underlie Aboriginal English, shown in different patterns of polysemy, different word associations, different prototypes, or images invoked as the default form, or best example, of a class, such as birds or animals or ceremonies, and so on. Metaphor is another key area of distinctiveness which has been recognised as having clear implications about the ways in which Indigenous and other Australian people respectively may respond to experience, including educational experience (see Mühlhäusler, 1996:172-174).

Two-way bidialectal education will recognise and give equal respect to the schematic knowledge that Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students bring to education. The existence of alternative event schemas needs to be recognised and the child's repertoire of event schemas can be extended through various forms of role play. Where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students are represented in classes, their story schemas need to be given recognition along with those associated with standard English. This means bringing the concept of what constitutes a story to the level of students' consciousness, helping all students to develop listening and reading skills which enable them to appreciate a range of story schemas, and, in creative writing, recognising alternative schemas as appropriate to alternative storyteller objectives.

Hymes (1980, 1996) has argued for "narrative thinking and storytelling rights" to be recognised in education, on the basis that the narrative assumptions which are used in storytelling are also basic to the way in which, within a culture, a person perceives themself and their personal narrative.

The cognitive linguistic concept of *profile and base* is also relevant to making communication two-way. It is a basic property of language to invoke, in what is said, two components, one which is seen as the base or scope of what is being said, and the other as the profile, or that which is being given prominence against the base (Palmer 1996:100). What is seen as belonging to the base, as opposed to the profile (or vice versa) may differ across dialects. In Aboriginal English, which is characterised by a high degree of context-dependency, much may be unsaid because it is understood to belong to the base which can be assumed. However, the standard English speaker may not be aware of what is being assumed. Also, Aboriginal English may employ certain linguistic devices to signal certain aspects of the communication as belonging to the base (one common device is the demonstrative adjective *dat* or *that*) and standard English speakers may not interpret the signal correctly. Indeed, the signal *that* in standard English often implies that the word with which it is used is part of the profile rather than the base.

The area of schematic knowledge is that in which the most subtle differences between Aboriginal English and standard English exist, and therefore it requires the most work on the part of linguists and educators to develop two-way bidialectal approaches to learning.

Words and categories

At the classroom level, schematic differences are most easily apprehended in words which look and sound the same in both dialects. In fact some speakers of Aboriginal English define their dialect as "English words with Aboriginal meanings".

Although Aboriginal English contains many Aboriginal language words which will vary according to the region in which it is spoken, there are large numbers of English words which have undergone complete or partial change in meaning. Speakers of Aboriginal English will frequently be aware of the different meanings in the two dialects and utilise them to exclude Standard Australian English speakers. They can also exclude non-Aboriginal people by including a greater proportion of words from Aboriginal languages in their Aboriginal English.

Teachers may find that students use their dialect to deliberately exclude them and other non-Aboriginal students:

> Student: *So we always talk in our own language in class here*
>
> Interviewer: *Yeah yeah*
>
> Student: *She can't understand us*

They may find points of misunderstanding that arise from the different meanings given to many English words in Aboriginal English. One well documented example is the use of the phrase 'ole girl' as a term of respect in Aboriginal society but as a insult in non-Aboriginal society. Other examples might lead to the correction of a student when, in terms of his/her own dialect, there is no error. For example the use of the word *campin* to mean *staying over at someone's house* and *camp* to refer to *one's home,* even among rural and urban Aboriginal people. Teachers may find Aboriginal words used when the equivalent English word is not known or does not exist such as the distinction between 'roos' (young kangaroos with tender meat) and 'boomers' (older male kangaroos with tough meat) as in the following example:

> Student 1:   *Yep caught uum.. ten boomers.. an ten roos*
>
> Student 2:   *Uum kangaroos*
>
> Student 1:   *Yeah... they boomers - still kangaroos... they shot ten kangaroos an ten.. boomers uum we skunned em.. han put em in our fridge*

In this example we can see that the concept of kangaroo undergoes further categorisation in Aboriginal society. 'One of the most basic human cognitive processes is the ability to categorise' (Corrigan, 1989:2). We categorise reality to make it manageable. As we saw in Chapter 4, however, the way concepts are identified and grouped in a language depends upon what is important to the society of speakers of that language. In the present case, the simple category 'kangaroo' is insufficient to express the shades of meaning required by the Aboriginal speaker. Other differences have also been found in our data. For example the category 'furniture' does not appear to have an exact equivalent for speakers of Aboriginal English. The non-Aboriginal concept of 'furniture' is expressed in Aboriginal English as one's "things" and broadens to include everything that might be in a house.

It appears from the data collected from this project that categorisation of concepts among speakers of Aboriginal English is not as discrete as for Standard English speakers. When comparing the category of 'story' Standard English speakers' category members reflected the literary traditions of the Western world while those of the Aboriginal English speakers included the story-tellers (elders and parents) as well.

Teachers might investigate these categories with a number of words games and with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children discussing their differences. Through the process of recognising the different ways in which the world can be interpreted, speakers of the minority dialect are empowered.

A further important consequence of the semantic variation between the two dialects is the fact that Aboriginal English speakers may not understand all that Standard English speakers are saying. There will be words and concepts which are not part of the Aboriginal world at all. In the following example, the non-Aboriginal participant explains the word 'croissants' using the word 'pastry'. Both words were unfamiliar to the Aboriginal participants, one of

whom associates this additional vocabulary to the power and privilege enjoyed by Standard Australian English speakers:

Non-Aboriginal speaker: *Croissants – you know the one you like to eat for breakfast? Do you eat croissants for breakfast? You don't have those. Umm what's another word.. umm pastry, like on the outside of pies and stuff*

Aboriginal student: *Yeah*

Non-Aboriginal speaker: *Well that's borrowed from another language, we took that word from another language*

AIEW: *Sort of like dough?*

Non-Aboriginal speaker: *Yeah*

Aboriginal student: *That's why .. one of the reasons that they beat us 'cause they've got more English*

Evidence of this lack of understanding was found in our data:

> *Yeah the teacher- um says words that we don't know an then- they... an we don't take notice of em cause we don't know it an the 'ey aks us what it is an – we don't know.*

> *Like long words an you can't get ya tongue on em- work out what they are.*

> *If they say a big word t'en we don't know what e talkin about but we don't take notice of it an then ... then we can't say it an then like they puts our name on the board or something.*

Teachers need to be continually alert to the possibility of Aboriginal students not understanding them. They need to be aware of the strategies students use to try and understand, such as trying to equate the concept with one they know (eg. *Sorta like dough*, above) or grasping onto a single word that they do recognise to avoid total conversation breakdown. If teachers can recognise these cues to misunderstanding they can go back and rebuild the conversation ensuring better understanding. It is important to address these situations so that the students do not become frustrated and drop out of conversations (*"we don't take notice of it"*).

Investigating semantic differences in the classroom

The cognitive aspect of cultural linguistics will bear on the pedagogical processes of bidialectal education in different but complementary ways. The foundation understanding is that there are deep indigenous "undertows" (Kniffka 1994:371) which underlie the communication and conceptualization of the bidialectal Aboriginal child. The pedagogy needs to flow with and not against these. This means exploring existing meanings and ways of capturing meanings, talking about them and building on them rather than swamping the learners with "big words" from a dialect which operates according to principles different from those they are used to.

Mohan (1986) has pointed out with respect to reading comprehension how culturally different learners may be discriminated against unintentionally by teachers where students are left alone to read texts and answer comprehension questions on them which may "confound language knowledge and cultural experience" (p. 128). His advice to the teacher in this case is, first, to engage with students in open discussion of the comprehension questions so that the kinds of knowledge they assume may be made plain. Secondly, he urges that teachers recognize the difference between the two kinds of inference students depend on in reading: *semantic inference*, which depends on understanding the language of the text and *factual inference* which may be dependent on cultural experience. Proper two-

way education will not make unfair cultural demands on minority students which they cannot be expected to meet.

It has been observed that one of the tasks which must be accomplished in interlanguage is the restructuring of L1 schemas (Giacobbe 1992:234). No less a task may face the bidialectal learner although the fact that he or she does not speak a language other than English may cause this not to be observed. The student will, of course, bring schemas from his or her existing knowledge systems to the classroom and may need to be cued into "noticing" (Skehan, 1998:51) where the schema does not correspond to those under which other members of the class are operating. The student may be heavily dependent on the teacher to pick up where he or she needs to be cued in this way.

Bidialectal education involves learning the grammar of standard English. Cognitive linguistics reminds us that grammatical knowledge may be accessed by means of instances or prototypes rather than rules (Skehan, 1998:53-54, 60). The teacher needs an understanding of the prototypes which underlie the grammatical choices made by students and how to develop the capacity to switch to alternative prototypes in speaking standard English. For this, it is desirable that classroom practices be developed which will help the student to use the dialects separately rather than seeing one as a continuation of the other.

In summary, Figure 6.2 shows how the cognitive linguistic component of cultural linguistics may inform bidialectal pedagogy.

6.3.2 Implications of pragmatic analysis

Bidialectal education in relation to contextual knowledge

Contextual knowledge may be considered in relation to the physical and psychological context (Hymes's *setting* and *scene*) and in relation to the discoursal context or co-text.

It has characteristically been the way of European Australians to underestimate the complexity of the context in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived and of the ways in which they have conceptualized it. Similarly, the complexity of the bidialectal world into which European contact and the school introduce them tends to be underestimated. Indeed, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student is dealing with *two* complex worlds and their interrelationships - something which only a two-way approach to education will recognize. Despite the growing pressures of current political opinion towards homogenization and standardization, societies are typically composed of linguistically and culturally different groups and monocultural, monolingual, monodialectal education is tantamount to attempting to put square pegs into round holes.

One attempt at finding an alternative has been the "Foyer Model" in Brussels (Leman 1990), where an attempt has been made to provide an education in which multilingualism is recognized as the norm and monolingualism as the exception. This model involves what is called "encounter education", which is based on the assumption that

> *[t]he school can best prepare the pupils (native and foreign) for life in a multicultural society by allowing them to discover for themselves in their own school the problems and the possibilities of such a society.*

(Leman, 1990:12)

This kind of social-contextual awareness is something which is appropriate to an education in which the school brings together groups which are mutually unaware of one another's cultural assumptions, yet whose life space is multicultural and who need from the school a preparation for living in that multicultural life space. In the Australian setting, two-way bidialectal education requires enabling students to recognize multiple readings of the historical and socio-cultural setting in which they find themselves which lead to different layers of meaning and association in English. On the basis of two-way research we have

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

CURRICULUM:

1. Linguistic forms (D1 and D2)

2. Contexts of situation (D1 and D2)

3. Relations of meaning

CLASSROOM INFORMATION GATHERING:

1. Development of a data base of divergent D1 and D2 linguistic forms

2. Elicitation of D2 meanings by means of two-way exploratory encounters

3. Development of awareness of distinctive prototypes and associative chains through introspection

EXPLORATION OF COGNITIVE DIFFERENCE:

1. Taxonomies

   a) prototypes
      • verbal
      • non-verbal

   b) polysemy
      • translation between dialects
      • verbal art

   c) folk taxonomies - fauna, kin, etc.

2. Schemas

   a) event schemas: - from Indigenous narratives
               - from "interpretive schemata" used in approaching everyday events (Watson-Gegeo, in Morgan, 1994)

   b) story schemas - from Indigenous narratives

   c) image schemas - inferred from dialect features

3. Relations

   a) profile/base relations and means of expressing them

   b) lexical chains

   c) meaning extension through metaphor and metonymy

   d) relations of elaboration between schemas

Figure 6.2: Cognitive Linguistics as a guide to pedagogy

found that the English of Aboriginal people may be impenetrable to standard English speakers although they understand the words being used, because Aboriginal history has involved different experiences, for example, those affecting the "stolen generation", which have given rise to different conventional meanings of expressions like *take over* and *go away behind bars*. Similarly, Aboriginal English speakers often confess to being confused by the "big words" or even "secret English" (Martin, 1990) of standard English speakers which, from their perspective, seem deliberately designed to exclude them from understanding. Hymes (1972a:xvii) has said with respect to the attempt to use ethnographic methods to understand classroom communication, "the observer's analysis ultimately stands or falls on its success in understanding the values and meanings that inhere in the

observed behavior". The same is true of teaching. Two-way bidialectal education needs to pervade the whole curriculum so that the cultural experience and associated values which lie behind the dialectal difference may be understood.

Inclusive approaches to education will also be aware of the importance of co-text, that is, what comes before and after the communication which is being focused upon. Classroom communication is often characterised by exchanges in which the teacher calls for responses to an elicitation which is no longer explicit in the discourse. These often cause problems for bidialectal learners (Malcolm, 1979). Teachers in bidialectal classrooms need to adjust their discourse strategies to help to make the co-text more explicit. In reading, as Mohan (1986) has pointed out, processes of inference are fundamental. These include factual inferences, relating to knowledge assumed shared by the reader and semantic inference, relating to what is assumed to be able to be inferred from the linguistic forms of what has gone before. On both counts, readers who speak Aboriginal English may require particular attention when the texts are (as in most cases) culturally and linguistically based on standard English.

The system of Aboriginal English does not stop at the grammatical level. It involves the ability to perform a range of distinctive speech acts, participate in a range of speech events and structure and interpret language according to the conventions of a range of genres. Two-way bidialectal education will recognize the importance of giving expression to genres which express meanings associated with Indigenous thought as well as imparting the genres of standard English which are of transactional value in the wider community.

Examples from Project findings

a) Differences in assumed knowledge

Different languages have special words to signal to the listener whether the information being related is new or old. In standard English this is done with the definite article 'the' and the indefinite article 'a'. Roughly speaking, a speaker will assume what knowledge is not known to the listener and mark that information using the indefinite article 'a'. Information which is assumed to be already known by the listener is marked using 'the'.

In Aboriginal English 'a' and 'the' are usually used in the same way as in Standard Australian English. However, what is assumed to be new and what is assumed to be old information are often not the same as for the non-Aboriginal speaker. Consider the following passage:

Student:	So we went up there to stay wiv im... an we'v.. an on the way we seen our.. exs.. petrol break down.. we broke down.. an we put out our thumb and.. we put out our.. when we put our thumb out all the mud went on.. our.. when a big truck went past..
AIEW:	Oh no.. he splashed all over yous
Student:	Yeah
AIEW:	In he a terrible person eh
Student:	At night
AIEW:	Yeah... yes
Student:	He seen us.. but e just went straight past
AIEW:	Splashed mud (xxx) whats they want.. went like that.. he he went in the mud and squirted all over yous
Student:	Yeah and and Dad threw the rock at the tyre

In the example above, there has been no previous mention of a 'rock'. When questioned as to the marking of 'rock' as old information, a speaker of Aboriginal English replied 'But

everybody knows there will be a rock on the side of the road', ie., that such information was a 'given' and did not need to be specifically introduced.

If speakers do not share the same contextual knowledge as listeners then communication breakdown can occur. Had the above example been part of a writing exercise the student's use of the definite article 'the' would have been marked as incorrect without an adequate understanding of why the teacher and the student differ on its use. The teacher here would assume that the student had difficulties with article use - for example, not correctly applying 'the' and 'a'. The student, however, has correctly used the article but in the context of his own language and world view.

Classroom strategies used to address these differences might include a discussion of what is appropriate information in the two dialects (Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English). Texts from both dialects might be analysed for the distribution of old and new information.

b) Differences in the way time is perceived, expressed and measured

In the non-Aboriginal world, time is very important. It is measured by centuries, decades, years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, centi-seconds, milli-seconds and even nano-seconds. Time in the non-Aboriginal world is measured on a linear scale with divisions along the scale which can be cyclic or repeated (see Figure 6.3).
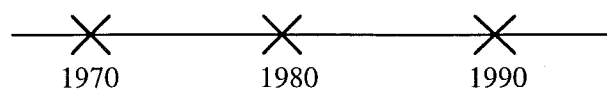
Figure 6.3: A Western timeline

Time in the world of the Aboriginal English speaker is very different, things are not measured along a timeline. Time is measured with surrounding events which provide a contextual framework. Events are placed in time by being related to other events in the speaker's or listener's life or experience. We have described this as a spiral rather than a timeline (Figure 6.4):
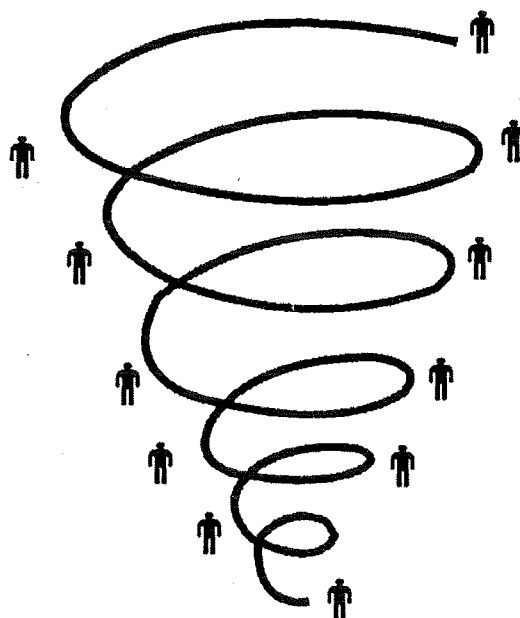

Figure 6.4: An Aboriginal view of time

This model is an alternative to Western linear representations of time on a Time Line. Aboriginal conceptions of time are better represented as cycles that coincide with significant historical and life events which are connected in a continuous spiral. The wider, more distant spirals represent times long past such as "in the time of The Dreaming" while more

recent cycles represent things like "when gran's gran was a liddle girl" up to "the other day when we was down the shops". This Aboriginal conception of time is characterised by connectiveness, continuity and by natural and social cycles.

The contexts which are essential to describing an event might then be placed in the past and linked to known past events eg.:

When Nan's mother had her baby...

When our people were moved to Moore River..

Or linked to the distant past eg.:

When the emu...

More recent events are described with a flatter spiral or spring (Figure 6.5):
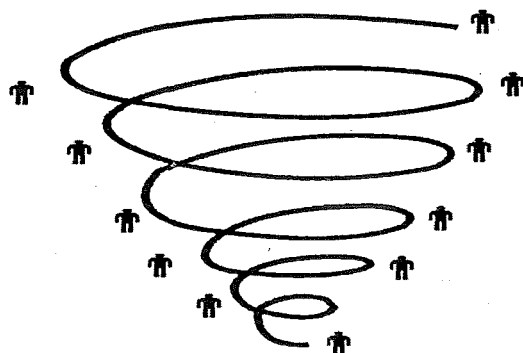
Figure 6.5: A spiral for recent events

These contexts might be reflected in the language as:

'When Uncle.. got his ole car..'

'When Auntie.. went to live in Kellerberrin...'

Of particular importance is the use of family and family events to establish the temporal framework:

'We went fishing an um and Auntie K... was dere an Billy...'

'When I went to my cousin I...'s house and when A.. gotta..'

Implications of this type may produce writing which, from the point of view of the Standard English speaker, is digressive and circular rather than linear. This reflects very much the structure of the oral tradition whereby yarns are continually supported with evidential sub-texts to generate a structure illustrated in Figure 6.6:
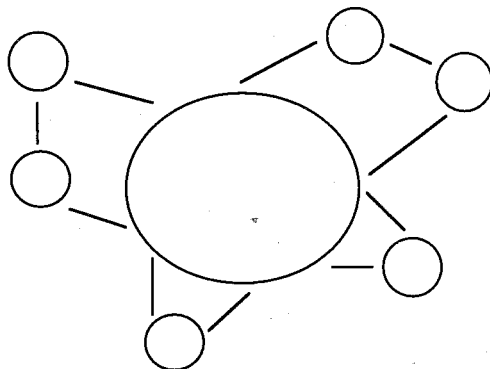

Figure 6.6: Structure in yarns (model developed with the assistance of Kevin May)

This is far from the tendency towards linearity in much expository text. However, if we compare this structure with the ultimate outcomes for writers, it can be quite desirable. Most 'best-selling' literature today involves the integration of numerous life experiences and plots which are tangential when introduced, but finally woven into the main textual theme. A further advantage of structuring reality in this way is its similarity with the presentation of text in information technology. Texts on the Internet gain their added dimension by way of tangential links to other sub-texts which exemplify or support in some way the earlier ideas. Such structure is deemed more appropriate in computer-based text than the strict linearity of much writing which in fact translates on screen as low-value "text-on-screen".

Classroom strategies might include comparing texts with linear and contextual timeframes and presenting these as alternative structures. It is important however that texts used to demonstrate the Aboriginal arrangement of time are authentic and not just adaptations of English genres.

Another implication resulting from non-specific time measurement is the concept of deadlines. Non-Aboriginal students come to school familiar with the strict sub-categorisation of time and the measurement of achievement against time. Such notions are introduced and reinforced in expressions and behaviours such as 'tidying your room before watching TV', 'waiting until tea time', etc. Not all Aboriginal children have been required to measure their activities in relation to a set timeframe. So when projects have to be done 'by next Wednesday' or stories written 'by Friday', there is ample opportunity for misunderstanding or even lack of understanding. In one of our participating schools an upper level primary teacher was surprised to find that her Aboriginal students did not know the meaning of 'fortnight'. Measurement in two weekly allocations was not therefore sufficiently salient in that culture for specific lexicalisation.

Teachers might explain the concept of the school year and its division into terms, weeks etc., and explicitly relate homework submission dates to this timeframe. This can be done using calendars to visually demonstrate the school year.

c) Differences in Quantification

Contrary to longstanding European stereotypes, 'traditional' Aboriginal languages are quite capable of expressing numerical precision in the uncommon circumstances when it is required (Harris, 1987a). But in practice in most contexts, measurement of space and quantity is usually general and contextual rather than precise and absolute. As a result words which are precise in English may be applied generally in Aboriginal English. This might be reflected in students' lack of familiarity with specific measurement. In the following examples students use quantification non-specifically; that is, 'ten', 'about twenty' and 'about a hundred' occur in the same way as 'lots', 'big mob' etc.

> *Student:* *Yep caught um ten boomers an ten roo-s um kangaroos yeah.. they boomers still kangaroos.. they shot ten kangaroos and ten.. boomers*
>
> *AIEW:* *Mmm.. and what did you with them?*
>
> *Student:* *Um we skunned em.. an put em in our fridge*
>
> *....*
>
> *Student:* *An.. when se .. yeah when .. an den we went camping somewhere else out.. out of ribba.. an den we went.. an catchen maroons when we was... an we caught lot.. um bout.. a undred um marrons.. an we ad bout twenty um.. eskies.. um.. and we ad a .. I ad my um .. my guns stolen.*

(Year 2 student from Narrogin)

A further difference with quantification is the merging of terms for extent and excess such as 'many' and 'too many' in the following two examples from Oombulgurri:

Student:	*All da balls- no bloon- no, yeah ball- de ball an all*
Teacher:	*There's not just one ball is there, there's?*
Student:	*Too many*
Teacher:	*There is isn't there*
Student:	*An all da kids playing. Tell em dat ting can really suffocate you eh- when you underneath it*
Teacher:	*We don't have those shops that sell lots of cheese and bread and meat and things do we?*
Student:	*(nods)*
Teacher:	*In Kununurra?*
Student:	*Mm yeah*
Teacher:	*We do?*
Student:	*Yeah dey got em dere, dey got too many shops.*

(See also Malcolm & Koscielecki, 1997:26).

As we noted in Section 4.5.2, Aboriginal culture places greater importance on direction than on measurement. Obviously the study of measurement and direction constitutes an important part in primary education which is evidenced by the many tasks and games which are directed at strengthening Standard Australian English speakers' knowledge of prepositions. For the Aboriginal child, however, such tasks may incorporate the added difficulty of understanding the construction of quantity and space in standard English. Teachers might find Aboriginal students have difficulty with numbers and the measurement of quantities. They might use numbers illogically from the standard English speaker's point of view. Aboriginal students may misunderstand spatial relationships expressed using particular prepositions and might need explicit instruction of differences between specific and general quantification and measurement.

d) Learning by repeated demonstration

Despite the emerging popularity of classroom strategies based upon integration of content skills and understandings upon problem solving activities and "whole language" learning, many classrooms teachers contrive to be influenced by the somewhat dated premise that learning is best achieved by breaking down whole tasks into manageable components so that each component can be taught separately. Once each component has been mastered it is assumed that the student is ready to master the next one and so on until the whole task is learnt. Within this 'mastery learning' framework responsibility for learning lies with the teacher who must identify and develop each component, teach it and then assess the competency of each student before introducing him/her to the next level. Such a learning process might be illustrated by the model in Figure 6.6:
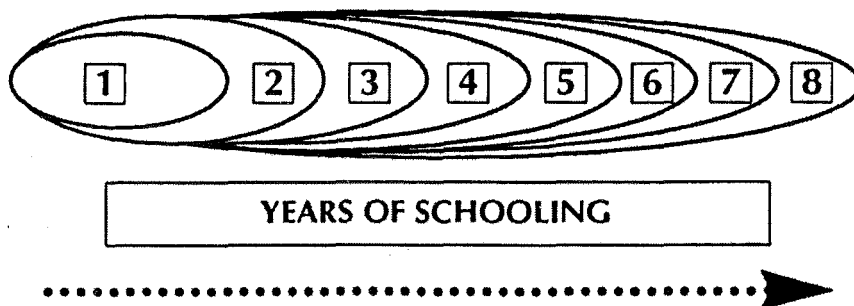

Figure 6.6: A componential 'Mastery learning' approach to instruction (Adaptation of diagram in Willis and Kissane, 1995:19

In Aboriginal society responsibility for learning lies with the learner rather than with the teacher (Harris, 1980:77). Children learn by watching repeated actions. The child learns the whole process and not, as in a setting dominated by 'mastery learning' and direct instruction, a process which is broken down into component parts each having to be mastered before moving on to the next. In the following example a primary student tells what he has learnt by watching his father work on cars:

Student: *I know it it's a four cylinder, six cylinder or V8 because it's got um liddle plug thing an it says one two three four..*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Student: *That blue car what you got that's a four-cylinder*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Student: *Because that's four plugs.. An um we got a V8 because you know the sound and on two three four s'got four..*

Interviewer: *Yeah eight*

Student: *Four on each side*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Student: *An um.. I know about I-I na watch .. um I-I know how ta tell three five one.. they go' one two three*

Interviewer: *Yeah and they got a smaller engine*

Student: *My Dad know how ta take engines out an all...*

This information is obviously outside the school curriculum but the depth of understanding gained by repeated observation of a model in a purposeful setting probably outweighs that which can be achieved within a direct instruction 'mastery learning' setting. The nature of this more holistic process might be illustrated as in Figure 6.7:
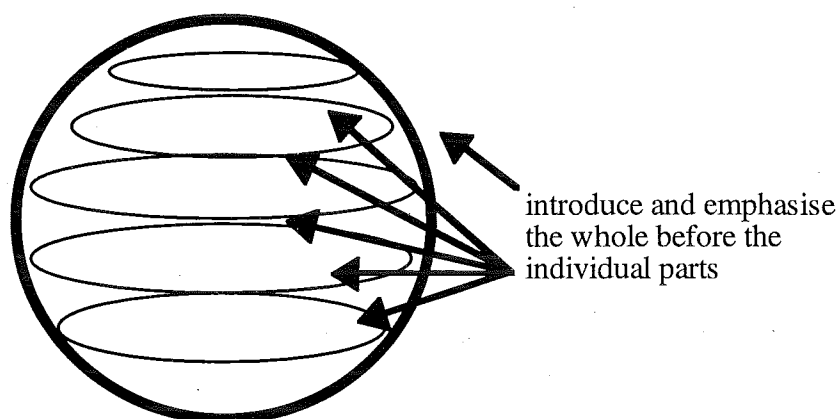

introduce and emphasise the whole before the individual parts

Figure 6.7: A holistic approach to teaching and learning

A consequence of this learning style for classroom practice might be that teachers find that their instructions are not understood or carried out. Students might need instruction at the same time, and as a complement to the modelled action. They may respond to repeated demonstrations before having the confidence to do the tasks by themselves. Expecting the students to 'have a go' before they are confident can induce shame for Aboriginal students. Students may need to understand the whole task and the purpose for it before learning only limited parts of it. A teacher from one of the schools in our project related her success in the English language area when she introduced the text of a song first and only after this was learnt by the students did she draw their attention to the sentences that made up the song. After that she focussed on the words and finally on the sounds.

e) Responsibilities and obligations for speakers and listeners

Different languages have different responsibilities for speakers and listeners. This is also the case for readers and writers (Kaplan 1988, Hinds 1986). In some cultures the writer is under no obligation to make what is being written especially clear for the reader and responsibility for understanding the written text lies with the reader. In non-Aboriginal Australian society listeners are obliged to continually let the speaker know that he/she is concentrating and understanding, agreeing or disagreeing with what is being said. Because of this non-Aboriginal speakers look straight at each other when they talk and the listener nods or smiles a lot and says "Mmm" and "Yes". If the listener does not do this then the speaker would be offended and probably stop talking. In Australian Aboriginal societies listeners do not have to look at the speaker or nod or make polite noises to show they are listening. In Aboriginal societies, conversation is ongoing and listeners can tune in and out as they please (Walsh, 1996). Harris (1980) points out that in Aboriginal (Yolngu) society 'everyone has the right to be heard and to speak,... but no-one guarantees to listen... listeners reserve the right to ignore the speaker and even get up and leave'. (p137) These behaviours are just as applicable with speakers and listeners of Aboriginal English in urban environments. The following example is a section of conversation which shows how the responsibilities of speakers and listeners in Aboriginal society differ from non-Aboriginal society:

> My grandmother.. well, she used to talk to us. I can remember, she never used to look at us face to face or anything. I mean it's not rude for you to sit down and not look at that person but because when.. an in European culture it's polite to sit down and look at someone in the face and nod and smile... like if I was in the room with A.., she don't have to look at me that often and say "Mmm, that's..". I know she's listening to me, she even be nodding and.. you know...

This pragmatic variation between the two dialects has important consequences for teaching Aboriginal students. Different listening behaviours frequently cause cross-cultural misunderstanding. The freedom not to listen is often interpreted as not paying attention in class, refusing to answer questions or not acknowledging the teacher. Students might benefit from understanding that when speaking different dialects there are different listening behaviours that are part of those dialects and which contribute just as much to the communicative process as do the sounds, words and meanings.

6.3.3 Implications of discourse analysis

Oral traditions

Aboriginal society has an oral rather than a literary tradition. Aboriginal English discourse includes a range of oral *genres* in just the same way as Standard English has various literary genres[1]. Aboriginal children are raised in an environment of continual talk and this provides them with the opportunity to become articulate communicators. It is therefore frequently possible that the Aboriginal students in a class will be more experienced story-tellers than the non-Aboriginal children whose socio-cultural background does not necessarily provide a forum for their oral expression.

Much oral discourse at school is, however, ritualised. News sessions, for example, have expected formats with formalised introductory and concluding statements. Being astute imitators of oral styles Aboriginal children adopt these rituals very quickly and for some this might be interpreted as evidence that such students enjoy the same levels of literacy as non-Aboriginal students. Structurally the format of news sessions, with explicit beginnings

---

[1] We also acknowledge that Standard English has its own oral genres such as formal speeches, casual conversations, gossiping, joking and story telling, *etc.*

and endings, is similar to story-telling in Aboriginal society and numerous other oral societies (for example, the formulaic endings in Haitian (Dillard, 1962), Languedoc (Massignon, 1968), in African narratives (Haley, 1972) and in Mauritian folk-tales (Rochecouste, 1996). Aboriginal English speaking students use similar formulaic endings. For example, the formal concluding signal of 'Any questions?' generally used in classroom news-telling is for many Aboriginal English speakers replaced with 'an that's/thas/das all', eg.:

.. I'll buy myself a car.. one for me and one for my husband.. and for my husband.. and for... the work.. and.. that's a.. t I- thas all I can say

Stevie's stayin at our house for one night.. for one night.. if she allowed'a.. if she allowed'a.. an das all

S1:   *cau(se) I caught one about.. about ere to here.. an thas 't 'ow big t' claws was. (th)a(t) big (sniff)... .. an. this nip me righ dere... n.. i' jus made a big mark right around-*

S2:   *- an that will hurt... I wa lissa go now*

S1:   *das all*

Of particular interest, however, is the content of the news. Aboriginal students' news frequently focuses on family events (births, deaths and funerals) and the sharing of resources:

Um.. when.. I went to my cousin Irene's house and when Adam gotta.. he's.. not my.. e's my.. uncle.. when he died I got sick and.. I kinda went toilet.. and .. so I went home.. and.. den I had a big bomich.. das all

.. I'm gonna see if I can sleep over my.. aunty's ouse t'like um.. my mum said I can.. and.. where they sleep.. (??) sleep on.. my nana's.. bed (??) all night (???) like her nana makes.. might be.. (??) then .. he aksed her noo she asn't got any news

I was s-staying wiv my sister now .. and um.. my sister had a baby.. his name N...J.. (laughing) and.. when e talks.. e go 'Aaa' for the.. e boss for feed.. an thas all

The focus of family responsibilities was particularly evident when contrasting the responses of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students which exhibit a greater degree of materialism. In the following examples students were discussing what they would do if they won the lottery:

Hi... my name is xxx.. when I grow up.. when I win lollery.. lottery.. when I grow up.. I'm gonna um.. live in a um.. when I get a liddle girl (laughing).. I'm gonna.. um.. when I win money I'm gonna go.. live in a house. [Aboriginal student]

Ah my name is xxx an.. when I grow up an I win lottery.. I would like to go round the world.. for a trip.. as long as I want.. and when I have my baby.. I'll buy um.. bunk beds for my two kids.. I wish I had.. um two twins and .. I'll buy myself a bunk bed wiv me an my husband.. and.. .. I'll buy myself a car.. one for me and one for my husband.. and for my husband.. and for... the work.. and.. that's a.. t I- thas all I can say. [Aboriginal student]

Hi.. my name is xxx .. what.. what I'd do of I win lotto is I'd buy a huge limosine which has a softdrink machine, a video player and a luxurious lounge chair right in the cena. [non-Aboriginal student]

Hi.. my name is xxx.. when I win lottery.. I'd like to go for a trip around the world to see all the exciting places.. [non-Aboriginal student]

6.3.4 Implications of linguistic analysis

We mention last what, in the past, has usually been the first and often the only consideration with respect to bidialectal education: the differences in the systems of language and speech use which separate Aboriginal English from standard English. Although we have put less recognized considerations before it, this is still a very significant area which requires major attention if education is to be inclusive for Aboriginal English speakers.

The linguistic production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is likely to be considerably more variable than that of speakers who are not operating with two dialects. Some of the forms they use will be Aboriginal English forms, some standard English forms and some "interdialectal" forms which suggest that there is some interference between the two varieties. In addition to this, sometimes such children, like any children, will use forms which belong to early developmental stages in the use of English and forms which are incorrect.

Bidialectal education needs to be based on sound descriptions of Aboriginal English varieties relevant to the areas in which it is conducted, so that teachers can understand the status of the forms used by their students and help the students in the proper differentiation of their two varieties. Teacher comprehension of the dialect of the children and teacher awareness of dialect features are crucial in bidialectal education, as McGroarty (1996:18-19) has pointed out. Teacher development is therefore also a prerequiste for the introduction and maintenance of bidialectal programmes.

Research by Schmidt, reported by Skehan (1998:4, 49-59) emphasizes the importance to the second language learner of *noticing* the differences which distinguish his or her output from that of target language speakers. Teachers can play an important part, implicitly or explicitly, in helping such noticing to occur. In the case of the bidialectal student, the acquisition of a second dialect will be assisted if the student is helped, when trying to use it, to notice where he or she is not producing the target forms. This is a sensitive area. In contexts where Aboriginal English is the appropriate variety and where the student is not aiming at speaking standard English, the teacher should not interfere (although an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker might appropriately correct *interdialectal* forms). However, where the agreed target variety is standard English, the teacher should help the student to notice where (either in speech or in writing) the target is not being reached. This should be done in the context of raised linguistic awareness, where the teacher has helped the students to become aware of the existence and legitimacy of a repertoire of linguistic varieties in the class.

What is not in question is the fact that two-way bidialectal education is seeking to promote the best possible use of *both* Aboriginal English and standard English, and it sees the subordination of one to the other as inimical to this process. As John Rickford has said with respect to African American Vernacular English (AAVE):

> *Most teachers, parents, and linguists agree, regardless of their attitudes toward AAVE that children should be taught to read and write fluently as a basis for success in the entire curriculum. Many also believe that students should be assisted in developing bidialectal competence in AAVE and standard English. Linguists have consistently suggested that the goal of being competent in AAVE and standard English would be better achieved if the structural, rhetorical, and expressive characteristics of African-American vernacular language were taken into account.*

Rickford (1996:181)

The goal of bidialectal competence involves extending the learner's capacity for coding experience to communication in new settings. As Trueba (1991:50) has said of other children of non-Anglo Celtic background, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander faced with using standard English has the task of recoding old experiences and/or coding new experiences in an unfamiliar linguistic system. There is also the concurrent task of learning

how to choose between systems according the social and functional appropriateness. John Baugh (1983:12) has pointed out how speakers of African American Vernacular English, having drawn their English from multiple sources, have developed *flexible styles*, which need to be managed with respect to varying social situations. The goal we are setting in bidialectal education is higher than that we are seeking to achieve in monodialectal education and it is not surprising that it may take longer to achieve. This should be borne in mind in interpreting assessments of achievement in bidialectal programmes.

CHAPTER 7

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

7.1 Aims of the research

The aims of the User-Friendly Project were listed in chapter 1 and it was stated there that substantial progress was made towards their achievement. We can now elaborate on this further.

Aim 1:

To improve understanding of Aboriginal ways of approaching experience and knowledge through a contrastive analysis of Aboriginal English as spoken by Western Australian children and non-Aboriginal English.

The project extended the research data base on Aboriginal English by gathering a significant body of linguistic data, mainly in the form of small group conversations and interviews, from some 200 Aboriginal speakers from widely separated parts of Western Australia. The data on audio tape were supplemented by more limited data on video tape and written data, including work samples and responses to semantic exercises involving about another 50 Aboriginal people. Approximately 50 non-Aboriginal informants were included incidentally in data collection, providing some comparisons. The total body of tape recorded data gathered was more than could be transcribed and analysed with the resources available, and will continue to provide a basis for future analysis in projects following on from this one.

The material gathered for the project included 67 audio tapes, 3 video tapes, 12 sets of writing samples and 13 sets of semantic exercises (see Table 3.1). The material on audio tape went through a three-stage transcription process before it was considered for analysis.

Stage 1	Initial transcription by a research assistant
Stage 2	Checking by Aboriginal research assistants or field team members
Stage 3	Revised transcription by research assistant

After the revised transcription was produced it was analysed by one of the linguists on the team in association with the Aboriginal research assistants. Analyses were further checked with the AIEWs at the Workshops with special consideration (where relevant) to local cultural knowledge bearing on the interpretation. This procedure was heavily labour-intensive and time-consuming, yet it was considered more important to have reliable data from a limited number of the tapes than to use less reliable data from a greater number. Thus, of the 67 language tapes significant parts of 28 were transcribed fully, 9 were transcribed partially and 22 went through the checking and revision process which enabled them to be used in the analysis.

The data base analysed was still considerable and provided a sample of contemporary Aboriginal English in Western Australia which could be contrasted with non-Aboriginal English as stated in the project proposal with a view to clarifying formal and functional differences between the dialects.

Aim 2:

To clarify, with respect to Aboriginal English, as opposed to standard Australian English, (i) semantic fields (ii) functions of language use in relation to language form (iii) genres (iv) particular registers (v) codes.

Priority was given to the analysis of semantic fields, since this was considered to be an area neglected in previous work on Aboriginal English in Western Australia and yet highly relevant to the attempt to develop two-way and user-friendly education for Aboriginal students. In order to analyse the semantic and conceptual aspects of Aboriginal English it was necessary to move into the literature of cognitive and cultural linguistics and apply it for the first time to Aboriginal English. This is, in some ways, one of the most important achievements of the project, however it was not possible to do this properly and to attend in equal detail to all other areas mentioned under Aim 2.

Point (ii) was addressed especially in the work done with Aboriginal & Islander Education Workers in the workshops. Although the AIEWs were encouraged to observe and note features of pragmatic behaviour among the students they recorded, not a great deal of relevant data was obtained. On the basis of the input generated from the workshops, a pragmatic data base was set up on computer. This will continue to be built up in the follow-on projects and will be fed into the curriculum process.

Point (iii) was partly pursued in relation to point (i), in that genres, at the conceptual level, may be related to schemas. A number of schemas were analysed and have been referred to in this report (chapter 4). There is, however, a need for further study focusing specifically on genres and based on specific traditional cultural groups. A project begun in 19999 is gathering and analysing samples of genres among Yamatji people.

No progress was made towards achieving points (iv) and (v). The data gathered did not give evidence of registers and codes among the students, and it was considered that the other areas deserved the priority attention of the team. It may be that future research will reveal the relevance of registers and codes in Aboriginal English. If so, their relevance to two-way education would need to be explored. In the meantime, it seems that the two major varieties between which most of the students recorded code-switch are Aboriginal English and informal standard English.

Aim 3:

To relate Aboriginal ways of approaching experience and knowledge to (i) curriculum (ii) student outcome statements (iii) pedagogical strategies to support both-ways learning.

This aim is an ongoing and long-term one, but significant progress was made towards its achievement and the ground was laid for follow-on projects, funded by the Education Department of Western Australia, which will enable the work to continue. As mentioned in the Introduction (chapter 1), changes took place in the local educational scene which affected the way in which curriculum is approached and which therefore meant that the contribution of this project to curriculum development would be less focused upon student outcome statements and more upon giving input to the planning of the curriculum framework and providing support materials for implementation at the local level. The project has (in the companion volume to this) provided an important curriculum resource for two-way education and other resources are in preparation as a follow up to this project and involving members of the project team.

Aim 4:

To develop training procedures to enable teachers, Aboriginal Education Workers, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, ESL Visiting teachers, district officers, psychologists and other

involved with Aboriginal education to appreciate the significance of Aboriginal English and how it bears on communication and education.

A great deal of the time of the project team members attached to the Education Department of Western Australia was devoted to the pursuance of this aim and a large number of professional development sessions involving all of the groups mentioned here were successfully conducted. The Education Department has provided support to enable the Aboriginal research assistant who was attached to the project to continue to be employed as a support person for further professional development activity, which is being contracted out to Edith Cowan University. Since the completion of the project many visits have been made to different parts of Western Australia to continue this professional development activity and it is proposed that this activity will continue at least into the year 2000. Evaluations of the professional development activities have shown that they have fulfilled the aim of producing significant attitude shift with respect to Aboriginal English across the system. This attitude shift was evident in comments by participants, such as the following:

> *When you came to our school to work with us last year, I hated you. But now I want to thank you because after you left, I realised that what you said was being repeated by a number of people all over the place. I heard it on the radio, I heard it in the staffroom, and I heard it everywhere. And I suddenly realised that I'd never heard this before, because my mind was closed to it. I'd like to thank you because you've opened a whole new world to me.*

(teacher's comment to Patricia Königsberg, paraphrased)

> *I've been working for forty years and it's too late for me now, but I wish someone had told me all this before so I could have made a change.*

(principal's comment to Glenys Collard, paraphrased)

7.2   A Summary of major findings of the Project

1. Aboriginal English as used by the children and adults studied differs systematically from standard English with respect to its phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse and pragmatic functions.

2. The differences in semantics suggest significant underlying cognitive differences, as exhibited in different prototypes, schemas, taxonomies and patterns of polysemy and metaphor.

3. The distinctiveness of Aboriginal English is already at the level of awareness of many of the adults and children studied and strategic use is made by them of a bidialectal repertoire.

4. Bidialectal research, curriculum development and pedagogical innovation are achievable on the basis of cooperative involvement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel on an equal basis.

5. The principle of open investigation of dialectal difference across cultural groups has significant application to academic research, to two-way pedagogy and to professional development.

7.3   Project after-life

The after-life of research is a matter of concern which should be addressed by both the researchers and those researched. Too often are the findings of research projects only available in academic language in restricted scholarly publications limiting them to those with specific research interests in the area. Such restricted access frequently means that

those who were to be empowered by the research never actually have access to it. Furthermore, with such restricted dissemination, before long, more research is funded which only 'reinvents the wheel'. Of particular concern to the User-Friendly research team was that the findings would only be available in a 'White man's document' and thereby inaccessible to the very people who were to benefit from the research.

Cameron *et al.* (1992) define three types of products which constitute the 'after-life' of academic research: academic, local and public. Academic products include the reports, published papers and conference presentations which are generated to present the research findings to other experts in the field. Local products are those which are available to the researched community and public products are those which shape subsequent attitudes and policy in the wider community. "Here the researcher can follow the researched into relative powerlessness – losing control of where and how ideas are disseminated" (p136). It has been of constant concern that the User-Friendly Project generate products that correctly inform all three audiences and to this end a range of documents will have been prepared as well as other processes put in place.

7.3.1 *Academic products of the Project*

This report constitutes just one of the academic products generated from the research. Numerous other papers have been prepared and presented at conferences and seminars within Australia and overseas, including the following:

Collard, G., & Rochecouste, J. (1998). Aboriginal world view and Aboriginal English: Implications for education . Unpublished paper: Centre for Applied Language Research, Edith Cowan University.

Haig, Y. (1998). Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English Project: WATESOL/MLTA Conference Presentation Report. *TESOL LINKS* (39, November).

Haig, Y. (1998). The User-Friendly Project: A personal journey. *TESOL LINKS* (36, August), .

Königsberg, P. (1998). Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English Project"- A personal journey. *TESOL LINKS* (36, August).

Malcolm, I. G. (1996). *Exploring the bidialectal world/s of discourse.* Paper presented at the 21st Annual Conference of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, "Worlds of Discourse", University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 3-6 October.

Malcolm, I. G. (1997). The pragmatics of bidialectal education. In L. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning* (pp. 55-78). Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois.

Malcolm, I. G. (1998). *Aboriginal English: Some Perspectives from Cognitive Linguistics.* Paper presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, Brisbane.

Malcolm, I. G. (1998). *Cultural imagery and dialect maintenance: Some observations with respect to Aboriginal English.* Paper presented at the School of English Language and Applied Linguistics, Nanyang University, 6 May.

Malcolm, I. G. (1998). *Cultural linguistics as a guide to bidialectal research and pedagogy.* Paper presented at the Third Annual Round Table of the Centre for Applied Language Research, Edith Cowan University, Perth, 25-26 June.

Malcolm, I. G. (1998). *English and inclusivity in education for indigenous students.* Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, Brisbane, Queensland, 30 June - 3 July.

Malcolm, I. G. (1998). 'You gotta talk the proper way': Language and education. In G. Partington (Ed.), *Perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education* (pp. 117-146). Katoomba: Social Science Press.

Malcolm, I. G. (1999). Writing as an intercultural process. In C. Candlin & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Writing: Texts, Processes and Practices.* London: Longman.

Malcolm, I. G. (forthcoming). Aboriginal English: Adopted code of a surviving culture. In D. Blair & P. Collins (Eds.), *Focus on Australia*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press.

In keeping with the 'two-way' principle, any publications generated by the Project either involve Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors in collaboration or are reviewed by team members from both groups.

Ian Malcolm was able to make a number of presentations and contacts overseas during his 1997 Sabbatical leave and found that there is a ready audience of academics and educators in many parts of the world for information relating to Aboriginal English and its implications for education. The principle of two-way bidialectal education is generally accepted as the right basis for the education of speakers of non-standard dialects, but there appear to be few examples where this principle has been systematically developed. It is possible that the work being carried out in the *User-Friendly Project* and its successors will answer a need not only locally but in many parts of the world where similar needs exist. Appendix 3 contains more detail on presentations and contacts within Australia and overseas.

7.3.2 *Public products*

Public products include those which take the findings of the research into the education sector. To address this need the Curriculum writer, Rosemary Cahill, has prepared a document, *Solid English*, which specifically translates the findings into strategies for improved classroom practice. In addition, a special report, *Two-Way English*, has been written describing the project, its participants and findings, using 'user-friendly' language and formatting.

As reported in Chapter 5, the Education Department of WA has provided funding for a Professional Development Program entitled *The ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning* to promote bidialectal two-way education practice throughout Western Australian schools. This process has been complemented with Commonwealth funding of the *Deadly Ways to Learn* project (described in Chapter 6) which will trial appropriate bidialectal teaching strategies and materials with selected populations in a range of schools across the three education systems. Both projects foster strong links with each other and have academic support from linguists at the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research and the WA Child Literacy Node of Language Australia. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 7.1.

The Education Department of WA has allocated $140,000 for 1998 and 1999 to fund ongoing research and development work at the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research in order to continue to support the *ABC Project*.

In addition to these formal products and outcomes of the Project, more ephemeral outputs also occurred in the form of Project publicity. The *User-Friendly Project* received coverage a number of times in interviews and news on ABC radio, articles in *The West Australian*, *Campus Review*, institutional gazettes and local newspapers and a segment on the *Milbindi* program produced by GWN regional television. The Milbindi segment was filmed at Girrawheen Senior High School and included a portion in which Indigenous students demonstrated some Aboriginal English words and meanings. It has proved a particularly useful video resource which continues to be used in professional development sessions, with kind permission from GWN. Further information and networking was provided through the *User-Friendly Project* website, which will be followed up with an *Aboriginal English* website in the near future, courtesy of funding of $5000 from the Higher Education Equity Programme, through Edith Cowan University.
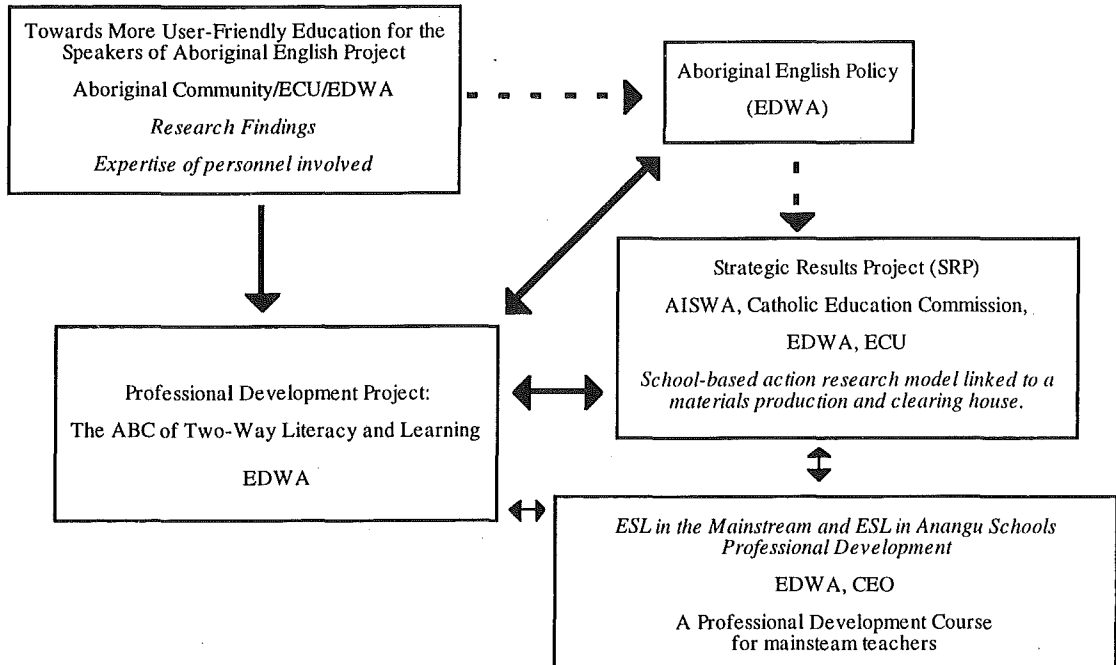
Figure 7.1   Relationships between research and professional development projects

7.3.3 *Local products*

Local products include materials written for AIEWs, teachers and interested parents. To meet the needs of this audience special information packages have been developed in the course of the project to assist AIEWs in disseminating an understanding about Aboriginal English. In addition, Glenys Collard conducted an evaluation of the Project from the point of view of Aboriginal team members - an effort which not only fed back into the Project itself but will, it is hoped, benefit future attempts to implement a two-way research process (See Appendix 1).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Aboriginal participation report

Thas the way

we

talk una

thas our way

An investigation of Aboriginal participation

in non-Aboriginal academic research paradigm:

tensions and dilemmas

GLENYS COLLARD

1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research investigates the involvement of Aboriginal people in a collaborative research project aimed at studying the language use of Aboriginal students at school and at home. The collaborators are Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia and the project is entitled *Towards more User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English*. Aboriginal people involved in this project have been Aboriginal Islander Education Workers from six different locations in Western Australia and two research assistants based at Edith Cowan University.

One aim of the *Towards more User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* is to demonstrate that Aboriginal students speak a form of Aboriginal English at home, also referred to as "home talk", and that the recognition of this dialect at school can enhance the educational opportunities of this specific cultural group. Another aim is to develop appropriate curriculum materials to support 'Two-way" teaching methodologies which value Aboriginal English as a first dialect and present Standard Australian English as an alternative dialect available to the students to enhance their opportunities in the broader Australian society.

Of particular interest for this piece of research has been the amount of training and support given to Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in order that they may successfully carry out their roles to collect samples of speech from students and the communities and to present Professional Development to members of their school staff about Aboriginal English.

Aboriginal Islander Education Workers were interviewed as to how they were feeling about the support that was provided and the expectations on them to collect and spread information about Aboriginal English.

Findings showed that there was a general lack of confidence in terms of their current understanding of the research, of Aboriginal English (its role in their communities, in schools and across Australia), and their ability to present information to teaching staff and interested community members at their schools.

A number of recommendations have been made to address these issues and one of these, the development of materials to specifically assist the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in their roles, has been implemented.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of research

The purpose of this research has been to investigate the issues that arise from collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within an academic research paradigm. In particular, I investigate the involvement of Aboriginal people in a recent collaborative project between Western Australian Education Department (EDWA) and Edith Cowan University (ECU) entitled *Towards more User-friendly Education for speakers of Aboriginal English.*

Rationale of research

The rationale underlying this study has been to investigate the role of Aboriginal Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) in the research process. These Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are currently collecting samples of Aboriginal student and community 'home talk', the language used mostly by the students at home. They collect this data in their schools and homework centres, at Aboriginal Student Support Parent Awareness groups, and within local communities. The Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are also required to become sufficiently knowledgeable on Aboriginal English to inform their school staff and the wider community about the research and subsequent changes in curricula. In a sense, therefore, the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are to become owners of the program.

My project investigates the degree to which this change of ownership will be possible. While the Aboriginal Islander Educations Workers want to "own" the project, there are barriers in terms of the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to achieve this. From my own observations I am aware of the above tensions within the research team.

Aboriginal Islander Education Workers have themselves expressed concerns about their involvement and the expectations placed of them. Similar concerns about involvement in the project have arisen for some stakeholders. A major difficulty is the provision of adequate and quality training for the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers.

The *Towards More User-friendly Education For Speakers Of Aboriginal English* project seeks recognition of Aboriginal English and change within schools and by teachers rather than on the part of the children. Because the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are the first contact for students, it is important that they have a good grounding in the topic of Aboriginal English. Recognising Aboriginal English is essential when we consider that the majority of Aboriginal people speak a form of Aboriginal English in the home and it is their first language or mother tongue.

My own role in the research context is twofold. Firstly, I am employed as an Aboriginal researcher by the Education Department of Western Australia

and Edith Cowan University for the *Towards More User-friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* project. Secondly I am an Aboriginal woman, mother and grandmother. I have been involved in Aboriginal Education for the last twelve years and have also been involved in the revival of Nyungar Language and culture. I have a personal interest in Aboriginal English and also believe that it is an important part of our identity and, if understood and developed appropriately, it can be an asset to Aboriginal children and adults instead of a hindrance when communicating in the broader Australian context.

Benefits of the research for the Critical Reference Group

The Critical Reference Group in this research includes the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers, Aboriginal school children and the Aboriginal communities in general.

The findings of this research should benefit the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and other Aboriginal people involved in the research. The research will point out that collaboration is not simply a matter of inviting people to participate but requires extensive training and ongoing support in the field. The research will also demonstrate that the collection of data and the ownership of knowledge relating to such data is subject to different considerations from those of western academic research paradigms.

BACKGROUND

Indigenous students' experience in education has historically been variously represented by Government policy as "disadvantage', "inequity" or "discrimination", but generally the former. Numerous reviews have highlighted the position of severe disadvantage occupied by indigenous people with respect to other groups in Australian society.

With respect to actual achievement at primary school, quantitative measures reported in the National Review indicate that only "about one in five Aboriginal and Torres Islander primary students achieve at levels above average for students as a whole.

(Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, quoted in Malcolm, 1996, p.3)

This situation is demonstrated by the fact that in 1984, 1,061 Aboriginal students entered Year 1 in Western Australian government schools. By 1995, only 141 of these students were in Year 12 with 48.2% of this group graduating and 5.7% receiving their TEE.

The driving force behind the *Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* project has been recognition of the fact that the first learned and most familiar form of English spoken by the majority of Aboriginal Australians is a variety of Aboriginal English. This dialect incorporates linguistic (phonological, grammatical and semantic) and pragmatic (behavioural) features which differentiate it from the standard English of the education system.

National education policy (eg. DEET, 1989, 1995) recognises the need for special education provision for speakers of Aboriginal English, but the implementation of this policy depends on the extension of research into both the linguistic and pragmatic features of the dialect and into modifying school curricula.

The Education Department of Western Australia is committed to the evaluation of bilingual/bicultural education, with the help of educational experts and Aboriginal community members (EDWA, 1994, Recommendation 116, p.15).

This includes attention to both curriculum and the training and participation of Aboriginal staff - along with involvement of the wider Aboriginal community.

The *Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* project is therefore based on collaboration between Aboriginal people, linguists at Edith Cowan University and educators from the Education Department of Western Australia. It aims to:

- investigate the language use of our students at home and at school;

- develop materials which value and recognise the home language;

- develop materials which value and recognise the knowledge that accompanies this language;

- encourage students to become proficient in two dialects, Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English, ie, to promote bidialectalism;

- to pass ownership of the project on to Aboriginal people, in this case Aboriginal Islander Education Workers, who could then pass it on to schools and communities.

The research project has attracted much interest throughout the state of Western Australia. Six Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in conjunction with their schools were selected to participate in and be a major part of the project. The following schools are involved: Cable Beach Primary School, Broome, Roebourne Primary School, Geraldton Secondary College, South Kalgoorlie Primary School, Kellerberrin District High School and Girrawheen Senior High School. Teachers and principals have provided support for the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in collecting speech from students, parents and any interested family members.

The main research activity has been to collect samples of Aboriginal English or the 'home language' as spoken by Aboriginal school children and community members in order to establish a greater understanding of the linguistic knowledge and skills that these students bring to the education system.

The process of the research involves collecting oral and written material which is then transcribed, checked and analysed by a base team which includes Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers. The analytical process is fourfold and can be described in the following model:

Data Analysis

How the language sounds (Phonological level) (Phonics and pronunciation)
How the language fits together (Syntactic level) (Grammar)
Meaning of the words used (Semantic level) (Vocabulary and meanings)
How the language is used (Pragmatic levels) (Situations, circumstances and language used in certain contexts)

Defining Aboriginal English

In order to fully understand the aims of the *Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* project and my own particular research, first one must recognise the existence of Aboriginal English. Aboriginal English has been defined by various linguists as follows:

- English words with Aboriginal meanings.

- The home language of most Aboriginal students in our education system.

- The language which Aboriginal people use to identify with each other and to express an Aboriginal World View.

- The language which Aboriginal people use in place of their traditional languages:

> *Even where Aboriginal groups have no fluency in traditional Aboriginal languages, the way these people use and vary standard Australian English in different social contexts evidences their Aboriginal traditions in many ways (Eades 1981:12)*

- Another dialect of English which has different sounds, words, meanings and different ways of being used.

- A recognised system of communication between Aboriginal people throughout Australia

> *'That's our way of 'talking' according to the Aboriginal people of south-east Queensland, including Brisbane. (Eades op cit)*

Aboriginal English is defined by Malcolm (1995) as

> *A range of varieties of English spoken by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and some others in close contact with them which differ in systematic ways from Standard Australian English at all levels of linguistic structure and which are used for distinctive speech acts, speech events and genres .(p19)*

Taylor (1996) notes that Aboriginal English, while being used throughout Australia, differs:

> *Some people speak it as a second language, for others it is their only form of language. Some speakers might vary the kind of English they speak, according to the social context. They might speak Aboriginal English in their home community or with other Aboriginal people, and use the majority form of Australian English at work or in conversation with non-Aboriginal people. In this they have much in common with speakers of other minority dialects of English, such as Scots and*

> *Irish... It is only recently that Aboriginal English has been recognised as a form of Australian English. (p3)*

I believe that Aboriginal English is a valid form of communication for my own people and for the majority of contemporary Aboriginal people. A collaborative definition of Aboriginal English by the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and myself at the May 1997 Camp is:

> Aboriginal English consists of English words that are used by Aboriginal people and which have specific Aboriginal meanings. Aboriginal English is used in an Aboriginal context. It belongs to Aboriginal people.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research methodology used in my project satisfies the criteria of triangulation:

> *"Triangulation is the verification of data collected using one set of techniques, by comparing them with data measuring the same phenomena collected either from different sources, or else by different methods" (Guthrie 1987:68).*

Data Collection

Data has been collected from a number of sources:

* Questionnaires;
* Non-participant observation (as a base team member);
* Participant observation (as an Aboriginal person);
* Informal interviews.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to provide background information about interviewees and to collect information on their personal feelings and thoughts about the project and its future in the schools. This questionnaire was trialed and minor adjustments were made to the wording to capture more specific information. Aboriginal Islander Education Workers were interviewed when visiting Perth in May 1997 for a one week workshop as part of their involvement in the *Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English* project.

Observations

Participant Observation

Although I am employed as part of the base research team at Edith Cowan University, I am an Aboriginal person and therefore am able to identify with the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and their experiences within the project. As such I felt that I am a participant observer.

Non-participant observation

As part of the base team I can also observe the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in terms of their role in the data collection process, and their understanding of the project and of the concept of Aboriginal English as the language of many contemporary Aboriginal people.

Informal interviews

Finally, when Aboriginal Islander Education Workers come to Perth for workshops with the base team I am able to spend time talking informally with them. This provides a further means of data collection.

Participants

Participants were the six Aboriginal Islander Education Workers who are involved in the *Towards More User-friendly Education For Speakers of Aboriginal English project* who have come from all over Western Australia.

Broome

Georgina works at Cable Beach Primary School as an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker. She has been working in schools for more than fifteen years. Some of this time has been spent in the Catholic Education system. Languages spoken in Georgina's school by Aboriginal children are Kriol, Malay, Yarru, Bardi, Nyunyul and Aboriginal English.

Roebourne

Allery works at Roebourne Primary School as the Aboriginal Islander Education Worker and also works with the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) programme. The main languages spoken at Allery's school are Yindjibarndi, Yawuru, English, Pidgin and Aboriginal English. Allery has been an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker for ten years and also works in the Language Centre.

Geraldton

Fred is the Aboriginal Islander Education Worker at the Geraldton Secondary College. There are many languages spoken at his school. Some that Fred could identify are Yamadji, Nyungar, English, Aboriginal English. Fred has worked as an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker for three years.

Kalgoorlie

Tanya works at the South Kalgoorlie Primary School. She has been an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker for three years and really enjoys her work. The languages spoken at Tanya's school are Wongatha, Gabarrin, Nyungar, and Aboriginal English.

Girrawheen

Kevin works at the Girrawheen Senior High School as the Aboriginal Islander Education Worker. Kevin enjoys working with the students and learning about Aboriginal English. He has been an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker for three years. Many Aboriginal languages are spoken at this school and also several other languages other than English.

Metropolitan Perth

Louella is an Aboriginal Islander Education Worker who works from Edith Cowan University. Louella travels around to schools in the metropolitan area and records language in the classroom and at home work centres.

It is assumed that Standard Australian English is spoken by teachers and some students at all the above schools even though the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers did not say so.

Equipment

Tape Recorder

Panasonic Voice Activated RQ-L340 tape recorder.

Transcriber

The transcriber is a Sanyo TRC- 8080, Standard Cassette Transcribing System.

ANALYSIS

The role of the Aboriginal Islander Education Worker includes:

- being able to clearly explain what Aboriginal English is, firstly to their students, and also to a range of members in their communities;

- being able to actively participate in the development and design of Aboriginal English packages for Professional Development within schools;

- being able to deliver Professional Development about Aboriginal English and the implications for education from the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers' perspectives. There would be a range of audiences to which this type of information would be delivered. The most common would be staff meetings and workshops within their schools, to other Aboriginal Islander Education Workers, teachers, Aboriginal parents and Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) groups in the local region.

The Aboriginal Islander Education Worker population of my study demonstrated a range of feelings with regard to their roles in the project.

Lack of confidence

There were feelings of 'lack of confidence' in their own skills and their ability to carry out the long term goals of spreading information about Aboriginal English in schools and in communities. AIEWs said they felt good about what they were learning when they were all together, that is, they could see where and how Aboriginal English fits into their lives as Aboriginal people. However, when back at their own schools and communities, they felt they lost a lot of the confidence they had gained at the workshops and even felt shame at having to talk about Aboriginal English to other members of staff:

> ... yeah its been worthwhile for me I can see where its comin from........but its still hard for me to explain myself....you can do that but............ I think cause when you explain it to us ..... its real like.......like my first workshop I didn't know nothin.. I nearly never come back...........but I'm glad I did now.

> I'm not game enough yet to talk to em about it

> I wouldn't mind doin you know like we talkin about workshops an everything but I gotta be really confident before I do anythink

> ... sometimes I feel funny answering questions because I dunno what I'm only sayin what I think but there's other thing.. other people round an I can be wrong, you know

Although quite confident of their understanding of the Project's aims when in Perth, some AIEWs claimed that once home or 'in the field' again they found it difficult to remember everything and this resulted in feeling isolated:

> *Well naturally when we go home, it might be fresh now, but later on like a couple of months time you aks what's we were thinkin about.*

> *Well we only came down for the first five days ana and then we came down once for three days eh and that's it, and then here an you see the length.. if you look at the length of when we came, beginning of the year, end of the year, beginning of the year, you sorta lose it like you know.*

> *Sometimes I feel isolated but that's partially my fault because I don't connect with people as much um uh I guess at times I feel lonely nyorn but when we get together I feel really good I think it's then that we're actually ah getting down and doing things I can see where we're at.*

This lack of confidence also deterred Aboriginal Islander Education Workers from developing their own materials for explaining Aboriginal English:

> *I would like to but I think I would need help not avin linguistic kind of umm backgroun an things like that, this is all new to me at the moment but the more I get to know about it definitely you know*

Need for more information

The Aboriginal Islander Education Workers also requested more information to help them with their role:

> *I need.. need more information on worksheets an that, like, how can I say it, because I never done this before I wouldn't know what to do ....I wouldn't know what to expect, so they sorta..yous sorta give us an idea then we can go from that*

> *I feel really good about it, I hope that I jus get some more information so that I can pass out more..*

> *Well they're prompts, cos you got the answers but you go, where you go blank sometimes when people aks you sorta start goin..*

Acquiring knowledge about Aboriginal English

The interviews reflected the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers' understandings of Aboriginal English and its relationship to Aboriginal Languages on one hand and Standard Australian English on the other. Their responses reflected various positions on this learning curve. Some acknowledged increased general awareness of Aboriginal English for themselves and their immediate groups:

It's raised a lot of awareness you know an an I you know I've only been working here for what two months two months and already people around me because... are are talking about Aboriginal English you know they an then they wanna know more about it unna. They say you know like what 'cos me working in the team an I'm getting first hand information from you guys an I work in the homework cenna an I got Aboriginal parents at the homework that are involved and their awareness has been raised an they are aware of it already.

... it's new, there's always something new that you come across and the awarness that it's given me of Aboriginal English is is you know nothin....nothin could be better than that.

For some this awareness has caused concern about their previous behaviour of correcting Aboriginal English in favour of Standard Australian English:

I tell you it really makes you feel like goin and screamin 'what have I done too' you know markin their their work with negatives ....which is absolutely wonderful what they've done and to have teachers and especially really bad Aboriginal teachers an Aboriginal Islander Education Workers you know tellin them it's wrong an I think thas what hurt the most.

The Aboriginal Islander Education Workers acknowledged that they now have increased perceptual skills in relation to other variations of English:

... first I want to say it's been a learning process for me umm.. I guess it's highlighted to me the fact that there is language being spoken by Aboriginal people that I wasn't even conscious of or aware of umm so thas been a learning curve for me. Secondly it's ...as I've learnt about this Aboriginal English it's helped me listen a lot more to the types of English languages that are being spoken. umm when I say that you know obviously the Standard Australian English, the Aboriginal English but also how ahh people who have migrated to Australia an who have been here for many years an English is their second language umm it's caused me to to listen ah more carefully to how they are saying it than what they are actually saying as well.

There was evidence of an understanding of the specific issues in language variation such as code-switching:

And um instead of downing them they'd more or less praise them and then if they can switch from one to the other you know, cos um a lot a kids you ..when they see you down the street they'll say oh 'Hullo Miss.. Miss [First name] or.. an when they'll speak to me 'ullo Miss' but if they see one of their white teachers or principal they know how to say Good morning or Good afternoon Mr.. you know

Yeah Yeah well this is how I put it, I just put User-Friendly is um to see how much of our Aboriginal English is being spoken in the school and if our children can switch from that into Standard English.

Some AIEWs now recognise regional differences:

I mean there's our Aboriginal culture are in some ways are the same but in other ways it's different you know and um I you get our different views it will help you people in Perth better you know about things like in .. even in language there might be.. you people might say a word here an it might be a friendly word like up North it might be a very bad word to use you know.

.. yeah a lot of em put umm language and that speak English as well... but a lot of language, and that speak English as well but a lot of language, their English would be probably different to mine 'cos they've got more words than I have..

I only just doing [school name] an all the kids are.. all the kids at [school name] most of them don't speak the language right through they only know little words, but if you got the kids from Balgo Primary School with the language so their English would be more different.

And like with the ones that speak a lot of language my ear's not really tuned into it, so when they speak Aboriginal English they're stronger, you know what I mean, the Aboriginal English. What's working with them, they'll know exactly what they're sayin but like with me I'd be trying to think of what they are sayin, I'd know but not as good and what they would know.

The interviews also displayed knowledge of bidialectal education:

... and I've always tried to tell the teachers not to tell the children that it's the wrong way to speak. Let them speak that way and then aks them to translate it into Standard English after you know?

The AIEWs saw that recognition of Aboriginal English would improve Aboriginal student outcomes:

Well they'll learn more, they'll learn more quicker I reckon because if they're writin things that they want to write it, ... they move along much quicker, but if they, like how they're doin it now they can't go a step further because they're stuck at that level sort of thing you know what I mean.

and eliminate the notion that Aboriginal students are language deficient:

Well then the people wouldn't um......the children mainly wouldn't be too shame[d] and I think they'd get on better in their.. with their learning if the teacher understood them and they could understand the teacher you know?

Some saw the project as beneficial for maintaining Aboriginal culture:

> *It is important to them um that they retain, not only retain it but um it is something that they that belongs to them um see that they can um sort of cross over barriers if you like um um in an effort to attain goals or to aim for goals and attain those goals an they can help non-Aboriginal people to understand where they are coming from an what they are really saying without entering into conflict an......*

and as raising the understanding of Aboriginal people in the wider Australian context:

> *...language that is being spoken by Aboriginal people um an the outcome is that um once the awareness is raised of Aboriginal English being a ah separate language then greater understanding will come with that awareness and that understanding will should be able to ripple out or should ripple out to um people from um various areas of life and the community whether they are um the Council workers or whether they are the politicians I mean*

> *... that's the value I believe of um raising the awareness of Aboriginal English to gaining knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal English because a lot of our politicians I believe do not really hear or understand what a lot of our Aboriginal people are saying you know and effectively you know Aboriginal people are not considered whatever they say is not being considered seriously enough because the perception is that the white people think they know what the Aboriginal person says but they don't.*

These excerpts demonstrate the great hurdle required of the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers who are not linguists or even familiar with the idea that Aboriginal English is a language capable of reflecting Aboriginal life and culture in the same way as traditional languages.

Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are required, in the course of two years, to not only become familiar with the concept for themselves but also to become confident enough to talk to qualified teachers about it.

Need for more Aboriginal participation

The Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and the Base Team members involved in the Aboriginal English project all believe that participation is one really important aspect to consider before the work can be validated and accepted in schools.

A concern that came through from the interviews and workshops involving Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and Base Team members was the need for more language examples to be collected from schools and from the home setting. This would involve getting community members to help with the extra data collection. Concern and support for each other through the project is reflected in statements such as this one:

I'm jus conscious of the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers that we've had involved in the data gathering of the research work umm I mean they are strugglin in many ways to understand it themselves an an that umm.... so I guess if we work with them we take it to the community....... an all that sorta stuff......I mean umm there's nothing wrong with where we're at at the moment.

The field team members recognised the need for a more intensive and exhaustive study to capture the range of variation that occurs within Aboriginal English. They were particularly aware of the limitations of their own input:

An I feel funny about jus tryin to give my input jus from one school.... Well the [regional name], and the [region] is all different areas you can't jus take it from one little place in [AIEW's town]... Like we can put our input in but I feel funny... I love doing the project but I jus want some more info from other people round the community or jus around outside town

They saw a need for further Aboriginal involvement in order to be able to capture the regional differences in Aboriginal English that they recognised:

I think we should have .. um some.. some more Aboriginal advisers like you know, to get someone else working with these people a few more Aboriginal people you know in with it because um then they'd get more um...

... but like I said you jus need more info from more people, but you can't really do it like with six of us I don't think because there's a large range in WA I mean you jus go to the next town it's different again, you know what I mean ......I ...... like I grew up in a little town there was Aboriginal kids there but no language speakers then I moved to [town name] so my language is different to that one jus go to the bush all the time an travel around a lot you know what I mean

...have some more people doing more taping around different parts..

.. Like you if you had someone up north where in [town] or [town] or [mission] or see there's ....too that's sort of like that's a good ol community and they're a lo there're language speakers an they have like English as well and like [community] that's another one with all the language and English but it's different it's really really different. Only way you could do it is get these mob come down and go to different places around [AIEW's town] and they'll see how the language is changin. Maybe they should do a tour bring the team out an check out people down there, well I can't get there like if they come to school, most of the kids there, they go to [other school] and that's completely different and that's from the same school.. that's from the same town

At [other school] the kids are more language spoken and they're more, how can you say, they'd probably be more Aboriginal English there do

> *you know what I mean. But I reckon they should have some like down the.. like [community] like someone out there doin taping or [town], [town] or [mission] or out further cos I can't cover everything.*

The role of the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers is made even more difficult by their having to learn to use tape-recorders, set up data collection sessions and gain the respect of the community for this work.

Concern about speaking for other people

Aboriginal Islander Education Workers are also very aware of the fact that they don't speak for all of their regions and that there are others who could be involved in the process at a much more local level. This would include local Elders, Language Centres, and interested Aboriginal people in the region.

Some Aboriginal Islander Education Workers said they had difficulty being put in a position where they had to speak for their whole region which means other Aboriginal groups,

> *but you can't...........you can't speak for everyone an thas whats so funny......... an thas whas so hard about it.........you need more information to put the project together, you can't expect it from the six of us*

another stated,

> *It's jus that I , I like ....speakin for the whole [AIEW's town] people, everything's different like , I don't wanna be ...you know I don't want to be sayin somethink that someone else mighten..*

and,

> *... yeah.......what I speak here an there probly cover my family but other families are different an they got they own ways an there own talk ....you know everyone's different it's...jus... hard thas why......thas why I'm talkin 'bout....... we should tape from other places*

> *Yeah I reckon um by tapin.. usin other people around the community an out of town around like [region] is a big area, you can't just take one thing from one school and a lot of them kids are well-spoken kids, do you know what I mean? They don't use a lot of English, a lot of Aboriginal language but they're ah I can't explain it, like [other school] but some of the other mobs*

> *It's jus that I- like speakin for the whole [AIEW's town] people everything's different like I don't want be .. you know I don't want to be sayin somethink that someone else might..*

But you can't.. you can't speak for everyone an that's what's so funny.. an that's what's so hard about it you need more info to put the project together, you can't expect from the six of us.

Such problems reflect constraints within Aboriginal culture where knowledge is freely shared within groups and or families but not always between them. The same constraints do not occur in non-Aboriginal academic circles. In academia an extensive system of quoting and referencing enables any persons to relate the experiences and knowledge of others. This system does not exist in this context within Aboriginal culture.

Making the project work

All the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers had positive feelings about the Project, its impact now and in the future for school children and for communities in general. They saw it as having a favourable impact in schools throughout WA and Australia.

Absolutely absolutely well it is. Why like I said through it Aboriginal kids improvement in their education and to raise awareness 'cos a lot of our kids are you know are goin to school and they are suffering because they are still feeling left out of something and they don't know what it is and working as AIEW in the school and learning after a while coming out and learning about Aboriginal English.

Oh well I think the project has benefit for every school, you know e- every right across right across the nation this project I think is just one of the many you know really great things that I - I dunno ...I'm so pleased to be involved with it I tell you yeah really I think it's great.

The project was seen as benefiting teacher/parent communication:

I guess that's one of the greatest barriers is is um for instance when we have our parents come up to the school and the their kids are in trouble for some reason, sometimes the parents um um are tryin to get a message across to the teaching staff an the teaching staff is not hearing the message that the parents are giving an so with the awareness of Aboriginal English parents, parents have to have an awareness of it, they can then work out strategies to be able to help Standard Australian speakers to be able to yeah just understand it more yeah an with the outcome that their students are going to be far more successful

The project was also seen to make staff more aware of what their students are saying:

Our staff at [school name] as they become.. as they talk to us about it or as we talk to them about it, their eyes jus sort of light up because they can immediately think of situations that have taken place in their classrooms where there has been misunderstandings.

I said it's helped teachers understand my way of putting it ...., how teachers understand kids at school and they can.. so they can learn better and do things better, the teachers do not ...... understand, when they aks me why I jus tell em like those simple words we were saying with different meanings and then they start laughin, they say 'Yeah that's true'

Well it'll benefit the school it'd make the teachers more aware of what the.. what language our kids are speaking.

Difficulty in defining Aboriginal English

All the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers identified more than two languages spoken in their region besides Aboriginal English. One issue that the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers talked about at workshops as well as in the interviews was the traditional languages within their regions and the absence of these languages in the education system. It seems then that, even though they know the project is about Aboriginal English, there is also confusion with traditional languages:

With Aboriginal kids? Like they don't really speak a language right through, but just the language that they have or..

The ones that are full-blood, like the language speakers and they tryin.. they speakin it less, I reckon a lot of it needs to be by them or I can understand it. I can understand it, a lot of other people but the ones that speak language they wouldn't understand what they're doing do you know what I mean.

The question of 'What is Aboriginal English?' continues to cause difficulty for AIEWs. The following quotes demonstrate the process of their coming to terms with this knowledge. The status of Aboriginal English was seen as a difficult concept:

Well what is it? Is it a dialect or a language or just slang? What is it?

Regional variations were beginning to be understood:

It's like Aboriginal English has its own dialects, it's a language that's having babies

However, the enormity of the issue of defining and disseminating information about Aboriginal English is being taken very seriously by the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers, as one concludes:

It's like a big block of cheese and we are just nibbling at the corner of it.

FINDINGS

Four major issues arise from the data analysis:

Training needs

The study found that Aboriginal Islander Education Workers want and need more training before they can begin to feel confident enough to present Professional Development in schools and workshops.

Defining languages

The data reflected some confusion in differentiating between traditional languages and Aboriginal English. This was also highlighted when trying to express some of the differences between English and Aboriginal English. This situation is complicated further for Aboriginal Islander Education Workers from the north of Western Australia where Kriol is spoken and the names 'Pidgin' and 'Aboriginal English' are used as well.

Expectations and demands

Expectations and demands placed on Aboriginal Islander Education Workers may be too great given that they need to understand complex language issues without linguistic qualifications and time. At the same time, however, they are the ideal people to spread this knowledge as they can liaise between schools and homes. They are the ones who have the most contact with school children. This creates something of a dilemma for both the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and the research team at ECU and EDWA.

Aboriginal involvement

The study also revealed a feeling that more Aboriginal involvement was needed, such as parents, other Aboriginal Education Workers, Aboriginal Liaison Officers getting involved and understanding where our children are in relation to the State School system.

The involvement of more Aboriginal people would overcome two problems arising from the data analysis. Firstly, although AIEWs collected data and spoke confidently of the language use in their own schools, they were also obliged to remind base team members that this was only a small sample. The involvement of more Aboriginal people would enable a wider representation of the types of Aboriginal English spoken in Western Australia.

Secondly, AIEWs were often reluctant to represent and speak for the other groups within their regions even though they recognised the importance of involving as many Aboriginal people so that their work in credible and appropriate. Aboriginal Islander Education Workers often viewed themselves as not being the 'right' people to speak on behalf of other groups

in the region. In a western academic paradigm it is quite acceptable to speak for others and there is a system for the referencing specific sources which validates the process. This academically recognised system does not always take into consideration Aboriginal Terms of Reference.

For example, Aboriginal culture includes oral 'stories' or history, ownership of stories relating to specific areas of land, sea or rocks, and a very complex system of relationships, gender relations and obligations. All of these have rules that are taught but not written. This makes it very difficult for gaining credibility within the world of European academia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has brought to light an number of possible recommendations that need to be implemented in the future:

Recommendation 1: Training packages. Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia should be prepared to provide Professional Development and training for the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers in the following areas:

- basic linguistics;

- in what is Aboriginal English?

- research methodology (in particular the collection of linguistic data);

- preparation of materials;

- public speaking for dissemination of research results.

Recommendation 2: Basic linguistics. Linguists, educationists and researchers in collaboration with the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers need to develop a concise and readable information package to assist all Aboriginal Islander Education Workers.

Recommendation 3: Larger sample population. Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia need to ensure that a greater number of Aboriginal people are involved as this would enable:

- more representative sampling of Aboriginal English throughout Western Australia;

- overcoming cultural difficulties associated with having to talk for other Aboriginal English speakers;

- legitimising the notion of Aboriginal English as a home language.

Recommendation 4: Relief support for AIEWs The Education Department of Western Australia should provide adequate support for their Aboriginal Islander Education Workers by way of relief teacher schedules allowing Aboriginal Islander Education Workers sufficient time to carry out the data collection.

Recommendation 5: Ongoing support for AIEWs. Recommendations 1 and 2 should be on-going to provide support throughout the course of the project.

CONCLUSION

My personal observations of the Aboriginal Islander Education Workers and my communication with them lead me to conclude that their understanding of Aboriginal English when arriving at the last workshop was limited. I could see that they came to the May 1997 workshop still confused about their roles and their understanding of Aboriginal English. A large part of the time spent with them was spent in discussing the way we talk so by the end of the workshop they had a better understanding of Aboriginal English and its place in Aboriginal society. They were much clearer about their own language, the place of traditional languages and Aboriginal English.

However, at the November workshop and after the implementation of the information package and subsequent instruction and materials, Aboriginal Islander Education Workers showed considerable confidence in explaining the value of recognising Aboriginal English and its local importance and structure in their own presentations to the team members.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION 2

To address the needs of recommendation 2 (above), a package has been especially developed to help Aboriginal Islander Education Workers talk about the research and Aboriginal English to other staff and community members. The package include information and diagrams illustrating:

- statistics about Aboriginal student retention rates in the WA State school system; statistics about Aboriginal student literacy and numeracy skills in the WA State school system;

- Information on the User-Friendly Project, participating schools and research staff

- Information on Aboriginal English such as definitions and quotes from linguistic research;

- Examples of grammatical structures in Aboriginal English;

- Examples of word/sentence meanings in Aboriginal English;

- Information on the possible consequences of not recognising and valuing children's home talk.

The package has been circulated to Aboriginal Islander Education Workers.

During the November '97 Camp further materials for adding to this package were demonstrated. These will enable Aboriginal Islander Education Workers to talk about the development of Aboriginal English, and to demonstrate specific features of Aboriginal English within their own regions and provide materials to assist teachers understand how Aboriginal English has similar features to many other languages in the world. In the course of discussing additional materials, the following issues were highlighted:

- Local examples of speech for each region;

- Examples of diversity of speech;

- Examples of commonalities of speech patterns;

- History of Pidgin, Kriol, traditional languages and Aboriginal English;

- Notes for assisting in answering teachers' questions.

The November workshop was successful in the fact that Aboriginal Islander Education Workers developed materials for their own particular situations. Because they developed their own materials they felt confident in presenting the information at the workshop and on returning to their schools.

Appendix 2a: May 1996 Team Camp Program

Time	Day 1: MONDAY	Day 2: TUESDAY	Day 3: WEDNESDAY	Day 4: THURSDAY	Day 5: FRIDAY
7.30-8.00am	(8.30 arrive)	7.30 Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9.00	Welcome *(IM/YH/PK)* Introduction a) Why AE in edn *(PK)* b) Project intro *(IM)* c) What do we mean by AE? *(IM)*	8.30 Basic Linguistic Training *(TM)* Sounds, words, sentences (Including some info on Aboriginal languages)	Data collection visit to Culunga Independent Aboriginal School, West Swan (8.30-12.00)	Using data from the school a) Transcribing *(IM & others)*	Talk by Rev. Cedric Jacobs on role of Aboriginal Education and Training Council Summary overview of linguistic information about AE *(PK)*
10.30-11.00	MORNING TEA	10.00 - 11.30	(Take Morning Tea)	MORNING TEA	MORNING TEA
11.00-12.30	Presentation & Activity: Contemporary AE discourse: sharing/yarn telling activity *(CG)*	Attendance at Kurongkurl Katitjin award presentations 12.15-1.00pm Speech Use & Discourse (pt 1) *(IM)*	 Back by lunchtime	b) Analysis & Interpretation *(IM & others)* .	Generation of suggestions about data collection activities in schools, task setting, *(PK/YH)*
12.30-1.30	LUNCH	1.00-2.00 LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1.30-3.30pm	Nyungar cultural presentation by Trevor Walley (CALM) with slides, song and tour Nyungar Land (Reabold Hill)	2.00 Sp Use (pt 2) *(IM)* 2.45-3.30 Exercises: Gathering Data a) non-linguistic b) linguistic - samples	Debriefing	Use own data?	• Filling in evaluation forms • Selection of base team partners by field team • Semantics investigation activity & conclusion *(PL)*
3.30-on	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA
4.00-6.00pm	What do we mean by Aboriginal English (continued) *(IM)*	Exercises: Analysing Data, Concerns Board activity *(YH/PK)*	*Underwater World*	Introduction to research ethics and procedures, signing of AEW agreement forms *(PL)*	End of camp. Cleaning up, catching planes etc.
6.00-7.00pm	DINNER	DINNER	• A la carte meal at	DINNER	
7.30-9.00pm	Informal evening	Games evening hosted by Carmen Black from Ed Dept	"The Jetties" restaurant • Visits to families	• Late Night Shopping • Visits to families	
9.00-9.30	SUPPER	SUPPER	SUPPER	SUPPER	

IM - Ian Malcolm, YH - Yvonne Haig, PK - Patricia Königsberg, TM - Toby Metcalfe, CG - Carol Garlett, PL - Penny Lee

Appendix 2b: November 1996 Team Workshop Program

Day 1 - Wednesday 13 November

8.30 - 10.30	Welcome and Introduction (Kevin May) Nature of Project, Goals & objectives: (Patricia Königsberg & Yvonne Haig) "What do you think would need to be done to make education more user-friendly for speakers of Aboriginal English?" The Nature of Aboriginal English (Overview / summary) (Ian Malcolm)
10.30-11.00	MORNING TEA
11.00-12.30	Talking time together (PK) a) Teams talking together separately about what's been happening in each school - prepare reports on what's been done. (5 mins) b) Field Team reports - what's been happening in our schools (~ 10 mins each) c) Base team members let everyone know what they've been up to (~ 5 mins)
12.30-1.30	LUNCH
1.30-3.30	Aboriginal English from a speaker's point of view (Glenys Collard)
3.30-4.00	BREAK
4.00-5.00	FREE TIME (ERG and Base Team: External Reference Group Meeting)
5.00 on	Drinks, followed by Dinner (All workshop participants and ERG members)

DAY 2 - Thursday 14 November

8.30-10.30	What is Aboriginal English? (PK, GC & IM) Looking at Aboriginal English texts in two ways, coming up with our own ways of talking about Aboriginal English. (Small groups and then sharing together).
10.30-11.00	MORNING TEA
11.00-12.00	The Big Picture: Inclusivity from a whole-school perspective (YH)
12.30-1.30	LUNCH
1.30-6.30	FREE TIME: Shop in Subi, visit family, or prep for the evening if you want to ...
6.45 on	BBQ / Roast and Yarn Time - Kings Park Over to the Field Team! A night for yarns and a good feed ..(Yep, we'll bring the tape recorders - nobody said we can't work and enjoy ourselves at the same time!)

DAY 3 - Friday 15 November

8.30-10.30	Curriculum: WA, the Education Department and the User-Friendly Project Overview of State Developments (Michelle Gore, Dept of Curric Council) Implications for the User-Friendly Project (YH)
10.30-11.00	MORNING TEA
11.00-12.30	Curriculum Applications (YH & PK) How to apply Project findings in practical ways in schools
12.30-1.30	LUNCH
1.30-3.00	Data Gathering and Analysis: Examples & Discussion
3.00-3.30	Wrap up and say goodbye for now

Appendix 2d: User-Friendly Project November 1997 Team Workshop Program

TIME	Monday 3/11/97	Tuesday 4/11/97	Wednesday 5/11/97	Thursday 6/11/97	Friday 7/11/97
9:00-10:30 am	**Introduction to camp program** **School Updates** Louella Eggington Allery Sandy Georgina Dodson Fred Taylor Tanya Tucker [tape #101]	Introduction to talking about data from your school (JR) Field Team work with Base Team on school data examples [not recorded]	Hard questions asked by teachers etc. Brainstorm. [recorded on paper only]	Finish answers to hard questions [not recorded]	Checking through OHPs and outstanding issues (YH and JR) Semantic chains, associations (PK) [#108]
10:30-11:00	Morning Break				
11:00-12:00	Model Worldview Presentation (GC) [#102]	Work with partners on linguistic data [not recorded]	Curriculum package introduction (RC) [not recorded]	Practice Presentations [not recorded]	Associations feedback [#104]
12:05-1:00	Lunch				
1:00-3:30	Professional Development Package Brainstorm (YH & PK) [#102+#103]	Semantic exercises: Prototypes Word Association. [#104]	Answering hard questions [#105]	Texts comparison (PK) [#103]	Wrap-up session [#109]
3:30					

TRAINING AND PRESENTATIONS

A. *Professional development related to or informed by the User Friendly Project : Detailed outline of sessions*

(The main presenters were Patricia Konigsberg, Glenys Collard and Yvonne Haig, with some presentations by Judith Rochecouste and Ian Malcolm).

Date	Description	No. of Hours	No. of Participants
27-31.5.1996	First UFP Camp, Kum-Ba-Ya Conference and accommodation Center, Marmion, Perth	40	14
18-16.7.1996	Aboriginal Education Specialist Teachers and Critical Steps School Development Officers and Visiting Teachers, Metro Inn Hotel, Perth	20	35
30.7.1996	Early Literacy Project members, Advanced Technology Building, East Perth	2	15
1.8.1996	Pilbara and Kimberley Remote Community Schools, Health Department, Perth	4	12
10.8.1996	Bilingual Children Australia's Resource for the Future Conference, University of West Sydney, Macarthur	2	22
23.8.1996	Katanning Senior High School	4	22
8.1998	State Psychology Conference, York	1	31
27 8.1996	First Steps Consultancy Unit, Perth	3	9
30.8.1996	John Forrest Senior High School	1	4
2.9.1996	Karratha District Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers, Tambrey Center, Karratha	6	16
21.9.1996	NLLIA (National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia), Claremont Campus, Edith Cowan University	7	21
23-24 9.1996	Geraldton District Education Office	2	9
9.10.96	WA School Welfare Officers' State Conference, El Cabalo Blanco	2	17
15.10.1996	Graduate Students of Early Childhood education, Curtin University	2	26
22-24.10.1996	Critical Steps Visiting Teachers, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	6	2
13-15.10.1996	Second UFP Camp (with School Partners), Kingswood College, Crawley, Perth	20	18
29.11.1996	English as a Second Language Visiting teachers, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	2	9

6 12.1996	Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginal Students camp organised by the Karawara Community Project Inc., Paxwold Camp, Lesmurdie	2	13
19-23.1.1997	Exploring Language, Multiculturalism and Equity, 1997 (Australian Council of TESOL Associations) –ATESOL (Associations of Teachers of English to Students of Other Languages) National Conference and 10th Summer School, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sydney	3	26
28-31.1.1997	Kimberley Critical Steps Induction, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	26	5
11-13.2.1997	Goldfields Critical Steps Induction, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	20	2
20-22.3.1997	Ngaanyatjarra Lands 2nd Teacher Induction, Yulara	6	38
27.3.1997	Second and Third year students, Murdoch University	2	70
2.4.1997	Koongamia Primary School	3	15
3.4.1997	EDWA Central Office staff PD on UFP Project, Health Department, Perth	2	15
7-11.4.1997	Critical Steps Second Induction, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	32	8
7-9.5.1997	AIEW Conference, Mecure Inn, Broome	3	32
17.5.1997	Illuminating Literacy, WA State Literacy Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Perth, Perth	3	21
19-23.5.1997	ECU User Friendly Camp, Landsdale Farm School, Landsdale	25	12
29.5.1997	ESL Teachers, Metro area Perth	2	40
4.6.1997	Mainstream teachers of ESL students	2	30
11.6.1997	Bunbury District Education Office	6	28
16.6.1997	School psychologists, speech therapists and hospital teachers Conference, Perth	1	45
18-20.6.1997	AIEW Conference Hedland District, South Hedland	3	39
26-27.6.1997	Narrogin District K-3 Project, Narrogin	6	20
1.7.1997	Onslow District High School, Wentworth Hotel, Perth	2	15
7-11.7.1997	Language, Learning and Culture: Unsettling Certainties, First National Conference of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA), and the Australian Library Association (ASLA), Darwin	4	23
7.1997	Third and Fourth year student teachers – Curtin University	2	46
21.7.1997	Kwinana Senior High School	2	20

25.7.1997	Language and Change: Options and Control – Centre for Applied Language Research – Round Table Conference 1997	1	15
5.8.1997	Koongamia Primary School	2	12
.8.1997	Third and Fourth year student teachers – Curtin University	2	60
21.8.1997	Dudley Park PS including people from Pinjarra PS, Peel DEO, Greenfields PS, Rockingham Beach PS, Mandurah PS and Murdoch University, Mandurah	3	19
27.8.1997	Beechboro District Education Office	5	19
1.9.1997	Koongamia Primary School	2	12
13-17.10.1997	Critical Steps Professional Development, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	32	8
16.10.1997	Third year student teachers, Edith Cowan University Churchlands Campus	2	20
21.10.1997	Third year student teachers, Edith Cowan University Churchlands Campus	2	75
22.10.1997	Third year student teachers, Edith Cowan University Churchlands Campus	2	122
28.10.1997	Geraldton Secondary College, Geraldton	2	18
3-7.11.1997	ECU User-Friendly Camp, Landsdale Farm School	25	12
12.11.1997	Aboriginal third year students, Curtin University	1	17
4.12.1997	State Behaviour Management Conference, Burswood Casino	1.5	15
27.1.1998	Kwinana Senior high School	2	18
1.4.1998	Aboriginal Independent Community Schools' Conference, Club Capricorn, Yanchep	3	25
2-3.4.1998	Curriculum Improvement Managers and tagged ESL/ESD Curriculum Improvement Officers from around the State, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	2	15
7-8.4.1998	Kiwirkurra Remote community School, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	6	4
23.4.1998	The Mathematics Association of Western Australia (MAWA) Primary Convention, All Saints College, Bullcreek	2.5	12
24.4.1998	Shaping The Future, Curriculum Improvement Officers' State Conference, School of Isolated and Distance Education, Leederville	2.5	60
13.5.1998	Expanding Horizons: Speech Pathology Australia National Conference, Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle	3	24
9.6.1998	State Conference of Aboriginal Education Coordinators and Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Mecure Hotel, Perth	3	28

17-19.6.1998	Kimberley District Education Office, Broome (First ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning Train the Trainer Professional Development)	22	14
27.6.1998	Second Language Learning: From Research To Classroom, Modern Language Teachers' Association (MLTA) and West Australian Teachers of English as a Second Language Association (WATESOL) Conference, Notre Dame University, Fremantle	3	20
1-2.7.1998	Kulkarriya Independent Aboriginal Community School, ESL Resource Center, Mt Claremont	12	6
28.7.1998	Primary Curriculum English students, Murdoch University	2	48
TOTAL		**433 Hours**	**1524 Participants**

B. Overseas contacts and activities related to the Project

(These activities were undertaken by Ian Malcolm during his 1997 Sabbatical leave)

10/1/97   Stanford University: consultation with Professor Shirley Brice Heath, author of "Ways With Words", a classic ethnographic study of the influence of language and culture on education.

6/2/97   University of Virginia: participation in panel discussion on Ebonics on the 6th February. The consensus was supportive of the action taken by the Oakland School Board in December 1997 in giving recognition to Ebonics and retraining teachers accordingly.

8-11/3/97   American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference: "Two Way Bidialectal Education" paper. The paper was well received and networks were established with a number of linguists and educators with similar interests.

2/4/97   DeKalb County Bidialectal Program: consultation with Kelli Harris-Wright, coordinator of DeKalb County bidialectal programme. There was considerable interest in the User Friendly project in Decatur and a television crew and newspaper photographer came to see Ian Malcolm. An article was subsequently published in the local press.

10/4/97   Georgetown University, Washington D.C.: panel discussion on 10th April 1997 on the subject of Ebonics and its implications - an excellent opportunity to make the User Friendly project known in a national American context.

12-15/5/97 University of Tilburg, the Netherlands: Visiting Scholar in the Department of Language and Minorities at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands. Discussions with a number of scholars interested in educational provisions for minority language and dialect speakers. Presentation at Workshop on "Code Switching and Language Change: Models of Grammar/Language and Minorities".

21/5/97   University of Leipzig, Germany: public lecture to staff and students on the topic "Two Way Bidialectal Education in Australia: Some Semantic and

Pragmatic Considerations." German academics are particularly interested in Australian Aboriginal culture and languages.

27/5/97   Free University of Berlin: public lecture on the topic "Ethnic Minorities and Questions of the Politics of Development." Consultations with Professor Gerhard Leitner, who has previously visited Perth to conduct research into Aboriginal English.

6-7/97   Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim: Lectures on Aboriginal students and academic writing. Interviewed for an article in a Norwegian teachers' journal.

7/7/97   University of Tromsø, Norway: discussions with Professor Tove Bull. This university is close to the region of the Sami (formerly called Lapps), who speak a low-prestige non-standard variety of Norwegian which has educational implications similar to those experienced by Australian speakers of Aboriginal English.

29/9/97   University of Reading, England: at the invitation of Professor Viv Edwards (an expert on non-standard dialects and education in the U.K.), address to staff and graduate students, reviewing the progress of research into Aboriginal English in Western Australia and the application of that research.

15/10/97   Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London: lecture on "Aboriginality and English" in the Research Seminar Series of the Centre for Language Studies - an opportunity to compare Aboriginal English data with data from U.K. regional and social dialects.