
**A Critical Microethnographic Investigation of the Role
of News-Time in the Acquisition of Literacy in Pre-
Democratic South Africa**

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the form and content of contributions of young children during *news-time*, a recurrent literacy event in pre-primary and junior primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Using the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis and both Traditional and Critical Ethnography, the researcher infers the emic categories (or norms) which guide the participants' conduct at news-time. The study reveals, inter alia, how uniform the teachers' norms for news-time behaviour are, and how assiduously they promote them. It also reveals how incompatible, in most instances, the teachers' norms are with those of their pupils; outlines the ideological strategies teachers use to discourage/silence literacy practices they disapprove of; and draws attention to the hurt feelings, self-doubt and alienation on the part of pupils that these strategies foster.

On the basis of such findings the researcher argues that news-time literacy as reflected in the teachers' core norms, embeds and helps to consolidate asymmetrical teacher-pupil (and expert-other) power relations; the hegemony of expository literacy (for which news-time literacy is a fore-runner); and the hegemony of various Anglo-, Western, middle-class values and interests. Consistent with the call of critical ethnographers for ethnographies that focus on the influence of macro-contextual factors on social conduct, he suggests that central features of the South African education system under apartheid (such as the eschewal of diversity, belief in prescriptive rules of correctness, authoritarianism, exclusivism, et al) are compatible with and perhaps help further to explain the norms which the teachers promote during news-time.

Finally, the researcher explores the implications as well as an application of this research for the teaching/learning of literacy in early education in the "new" - democratic - South Africa. He calls for consciousness-raising on the part of teachers and teacher-trainers regarding the form and function of news-time, in the context of a broad understanding of literacy, ideology and power. He argues that teachers need to acquire richer analytical and interpretative abilities than are evinced in his study, and suggests both content and a method by which they may be developed. He also argues for awareness-raising of

alternative pedagogical options, which he outlines. Lastly, he argues that teachers need to acquire multilingual and multicultural proficiencies. As regards applications, the researcher makes two proposals for an emancipatory micro-literacy policy at the pre-primary and junior primary levels of schooling. At the heart of the first are four considerations, two of which involve “literacy as teaching the ‘cultures of power’ and literacy as practice in acknowledging and fostering diversity” (Pennycook 1996:164). The remaining two relate to compatibility with the spirit of the National Language Policy and parity with the “orientations” that underlie the National Language Policy. The second, and more modest of these two proposals, recognises the likelihood, on the one hand, of resistance on the part of those with vested interests in the status quo, and the influence, on the other, of other potentially significant contextual factors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION TO THIS THESIS	1
1.1	Describing this study: key terms in the title	2
1.1.1	News-time	2
1.1.2	Microethnography	4
1.1.3	Literacy	5
1.1.4	Critical	6
1.2	Where this study was conducted and who participated in it	8
1.3	The socio-political setting of this study	10
1.4	Descriptive labels used in this thesis	15
1.5	The research questions which guide this study	15
1.6	An overview of the rest of this thesis	17
2.	REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	21
2.1	Introduction	21
2.1.1	Overview of literacy research in South Africa	21
2.1.2	Overview of reading which informs this thesis	22
2.2	Literacy studies in four paradigms	23
2.2.1	Evidence of a shift in definitions of literacy	23
2.2.2	The autonomous model of literacy	26
2.2.3	The ethnographic model of literacy	28
2.2.4	The ideological model of literacy	30
2.2.5	The pragmatic model of literacy	31
2.3	Clarification of some key terms	35
2.3.1	New Literacy Studies	35
2.3.2	Literacy events, literacy practices, literacies	36
2.3.3	Synonyms used in this thesis	39
2.3.4	Dominant, vernacular and sub-rosa literacy	39
2.3.5	Expository or schooled literacy	43
2.4	The ecological embeddedness of literacy practices	46
2.4.1	Scenario 1: Literacy at breakfast time in Lancaster, England	49
2.4.2	Scenario 2: The literacy practices of Eli Fisher, Jr	51
2.4.3	Scenario 3: Conflicting literacy practices in a Maine fishing community	54
2.4.4	Scenario 4: The politics of literacy as felt by Hispanic women in Los Angeles	59
2.4.5	Scenario 5: Literacy activism among Panjabis in Southall	63
2.4.6	Scenario 6: Literacy and cultural values in a Harlem school	68
2.5	Power, ideology, hegemony and ideological strategies	73
2.5.1	Scenario 7: Hegemonic practices in courts of law	75
2.5.2	Scenario 8: Hegemonic practices in tertiary education	77
2.5.3	Scenario 9: Hegemonic practices in the teaching of science	80

2.6	Research into “sharing time”, “morning news” and “show and tell”	83
2.6.1	Key figures in ‘news-time’ research	83
2.6.2	Research orientations and major insights from previous ‘news-time’ research	84
2.7	Summary	92
3.	METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	94
3.1	Introduction	94
3.2	Critical ethnography and what such a perspective entails	95
3.3	Negotiating entry into the field setting	102
3.3.1	Field entry at Natal Junior Primary School	105
3.3.1.1	Class One: 1992	105
3.3.1.2	Class Two: 1993	107
3.3.2	Field entry at Natal Pre-Primary School: 1992 and 1993	109
3.4	Data collection methods employed at the two schools	114
3.4.1	General features of the methods employed	115
3.4.2	Traditional ethnographic methods of data collection	118
3.4.2.1	Tape recording class 1 and class 2 news sessions	118
3.4.2.2	Observing class 1 and class 2 news sessions	121
3.4.2.3	Tape recording and observing Eager Beaver news sessions	125
3.4.2.4	Video recording class 1 news sessions	128
3.4.2.5	Interviewing the three teachers	131
3.4.3	Innovative methods of data collection	135
3.4.3.1	The speech bubble elicitation task	136
3.4.3.2	The class 2 pupil questionnaire	139
3.4.3.3	The Eager Beaver interviews and drawing task	142
3.5	Criteria for inferring norms from transcripts of news-time interaction	145
3.5.1	McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron’s criteria for inferring behavioural norms	145
3.5.2	Erickson’s criteria for inferring behavioural norms	147
3.5.3	Some preliminary observations	148
3.6	The methods of Critical Discourse Analysis	148
3.7	Collection of pre-democratic contextual information	150
3.8	Summary	152
4.	TEACHERS’ AND PUPILS’ EMIC DEFINITIONS OF NEWS-TIME	155
4.1	Introduction	155
4.2	Teacher perceptions of the origins, functions and formal characteristics of news	156
4.2.1	Teachers’ views about the origins and value of news-time	156
4.2.2	Teachers’ views of the functions of news-time	158
4.2.3	Teachers’ expectations of the shape, form and content of news contributions	160

4.3	Behavioural evidence of the literacy practices promoted by the teachers at news-time	162
4.3.1	Pupils' news-time contributions should be interesting, reflect pupil commitment and be original	163
4.3.2	Pupils' news-time contributions should be focused, elaborated and employ complex syntactic resources	170
4.3.2.1	News contributions in which pupils meet their teachers' formal expectations	170
4.3.2.2	News contributions in which pupils apparently struggle to meet their teachers' formal expectations.	178
4.3.3	Pupils' news-time presentations should be grammatically correct.	190
4.3.4	Pupils' news-time accounts should be analytical, "restrained", factually correct, and give prominence to what is "nice", "happy" and "moral"	199
4.4	Pupil perceptions of news and its functions	208
4.4.1	Function of news in class 1: evidence from the speech bubble task	209
4.4.2	Attitudes towards and function of news: the evidence from class 2 questionnaire responses	210
4.4.3	The Eager Beavers' assessment of news: evidence from interviews	211
4.5	Evidence of disparities between the pupils' news-time preferences and those of their teachers	213
4.5.1	Implicit pupil-teacher disparities in the questionnaire responses of class 2 pupils	213
4.5.2	Different pupil-teacher responses to the news-giving styles of Siphso, Zena and Wesley	216
4.5.2.1	Pupil-teacher responses to Siphso's news-giving	217
4.5.2.2	Pupil-teacher responses to Zena's news-giving	218
4.5.2.3	Wesley's news-giving style	219
4.6	Summary	222
5.	EXPLAINING WHAT IS AT STAKE AT NEWS-TIME	227
5.1	Overview	227
5.2	Teacher domination at news-time	229
5.2.1	Introduction	229
5.2.2	Teacher control in the unfolding of news-time	230
5.2.3	Teacher-dominance at news-time in other settings	236
5.2.4	Some conclusions	238
5.3	Teacher monitoring at news-time and what it means	239
5.3.1	Reasons for pupils' difficulty in meeting target norms	239
5.3.2	Further reasons for teachers' and pupils' conduct at news-time	240
5.3.3	Ideological strategies used to promote news-time literacy	241
5.3.4	Some conclusions	255
5.4	The value system promoted at news-time	256
5.5	The significance of promoting prescriptive rules of grammatical correctness at news-time	268

5.6	Compatibility between the Utilitarian Discourse System and news-time	277
5.7	News-time in the context of the apartheid education system	281
	5.7.1 An outline of the principal features of the apartheid education system	282
	5.7.2 Evidence of the influence of the apartheid education system on news-time	285
	5.7.3 Conclusion	292
5.8	Summary	293
6.	CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND AN APPLICATION OF THIS RESEARCH	295
6.1	Overview	295
6.2	Teacher culpability and researcher responsibility	296
	6.2.1 Teacher culpability	296
	6.2.2 Researcher responsibility	301
6.3	Implications and an application of this research	303
	6.3.1 Implications for the teaching/learning of literacy in the new South Africa	303
	6.3.1.1 Need for consciousness-raising	304
	6.3.1.2 Need for enhanced analytical/interpretive abilities	308
	6.3.1.3 Need for pedagogical options	310
	6.3.1.4 Need to acquire multilingual and multicultural proficiencies	315
	6.3.2 An application of this research	318
	6.3.2.1 Outlines of a micro-literacy policy	318
	6.3.3 Vested interests and the challenge they pose	322
6.4	Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research	325
6.5	Summary and conclusion	329
	REFERENCES	331
	APPENDICES	345
	Table of contents of appendices	345
	Appendix A	347
	Appendix B	349
	Appendix C	386

1. INTRODUCTION TO THIS THESIS

The research reported on in this thesis has its origins in interests and influences of different kinds which have converged over the past nine years. The starting point was reference to recurrent school events that I was unfamiliar with during the period when I transported my son and other young children to pre-school, not having attended pre-school myself. Of these, news-time was frequently mentioned. What prompted my academic interest in such pre-school events - and in news-time specifically - was reading Michaels's (1981) account of 'sharing time', an event closely related to news-time, in a first grade classroom in California. What struck me was the remarkable neatness of her main findings, namely, that the verbal contributions during sharing time sessions of black and white pupils took two distinct forms and with those only of the *white* children being congruent with the expectations of their (white) teachers and so built on by them. My subsequent reading in the fields of literacy and critical linguistics - both of which highlight the role of ideology in language practices such as are employed at news-time - led me to explore whether that neatness of Michaels's study is matched locally and, whatever the outcome, *why*. The timing of the enquiry, namely, at a major point of transition in South African political history is also significant, since the all-embracing political ideology of apartheid was giving way to one very different. Would that fact - along with its attendant conflicts and uncertainties - have a bearing, I wondered, on the pupils' - and the teachers' - news-time conduct in the way, for example, that changed socio-economic circumstances had on the language behaviour of those previously most firmly entrenched on Martha's Vineyard, as described by Labov (1963)?

In 1.1 of this chapter I clarify what sort of study this has become, and do so by explaining the following key words in the title of the thesis: "news-time", "microethnography", "critical" and "literacy". Thereafter, in 1.2 and 1.3 I locate this study, explaining both where I conducted my research and who participated in it, and briefly sketch the prevailing socio-political climate within and against which regular school activity such as giving (or "telling") news took place. In the light of this, and as a reminder of the dominating influence of apartheid legislation on all spheres of contact in South Africa, I explain (in 1.4) my choice of descriptive labels to readers. In section 1.5 I outline the set of research questions which have come to guide my activities and which give shape to

this thesis. In 1.6 I explain how I have structured this thesis and briefly overview the central concerns in each chapter.

1.1 Describing this study: key terms in the title

One way of assisting readers in ‘locating’ this study, is in terms of the following key words in the title of my thesis, namely, “news-time”, “microethnography”, “critical” and “literacy”. Since the object of investigation is news-time, I start with it.

1.1.1 News-time

News-time is an instructional event held regularly at the two schools - Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School - and in the three classes where I centred my research: the Eager Beavers (at Natal Pre-Primary School), and class 1 and class 2 at Natal Junior Primary School. As I explain more fully elsewhere (2.6, 3.2 and 5.2.3), news-time is a literacy event which bears close correspondences to “morning news” and “news” as described by Christie (1993) and Baker & Perrott (1988) in Australia, to “show and tell” and “sharing time” as Michaels on her own (1981) and in association with others, as well as Gallas (1994) describe in America, and to “daily news”, a literacy event typical in so-called H.O.D. schools (i.e., schools formerly exclusively for Indian children) in South Africa. The descriptions that follow reflect the features of news-time sessions as I witnessed them first at Natal Junior Primary School (with 6 to 8 year-old children) and then at Natal Pre-Primary School (3 to 6 year-old children), where its manifestation is more complex.

In the junior primary setting news-time typically unfolded as follows: given the teacher’s signal, which most appeared to receive with considerable enthusiasm, the class 1 and 2 children would leave the rectangular arrangement of desks at which they had been sitting, walk in an orderly way to the front of the classroom and sit, cross-legged, on the mat in front of the teacher. Once they were quiet, the teacher would nominate the first news-giver, alternating thereafter: boy, girl, boy, etc. The nominated child would come to the front of the group and, standing next to the teacher (who was seated on a chair), address his/her news to the group. News-givers usually did one of two things: *recount an event* which they judged to be significant (a birthday celebration, family outing, visit, etc.), or *discuss an object* of interest which they had brought to school specially for the purpose

(e.g. a sticker, toy, unusual insect, etc.). The teacher allocated and terminated turns, questioned the news-giver, and ensured that children on the mat were quiet. She also encouraged news-givers to speak up and to face and address the *group as a whole*, not her. In classes when not everyone had an opportunity to give their news, those affected often expressed feelings ranging from disappointment to outrage! A fuller, more detailed description of how news sessions unfolded at the Junior Primary is provided in 5.2.2.

Children at Natal Pre-Primary were divided into three groups: a junior group (consisting of three year olds), a middle group (consisting of four year olds) and the senior group (consisting of five year olds), the junior group known, for convenience, as the Green group, the middle group as the Orange group, and the senior group, the Blue group. The senior or Blue group were also referred to as the “school-readiness” group, since these children moved on to Junior Primary School after completing this year and part of their curriculum aimed to prepare them for this move.

The Eager Beavers were a group of seven children whose news-telling I concentrated on. They were four years old at the beginning of the year and so, technically, belonged to the middle group in the school (i.e., the Orange Group). However, largely because they were the oldest (and the brightest) in Orange Group, they were promoted to the top or Blue Group. Their news sessions unfolded as follows.

At the conclusion of play time, the teacher and the children would meet in the staff room, where they all sat cross-legged in a circle on the carpeted floor. The teacher usually had seven largish sheets of coloured drawing paper on her lap, and a fat koki pen. She would establish contact with the group as a whole by asking what the date was, whose birthday it was or was recently, etc., and would then nominate the first news-giver, using one or other of the following formulas: “This is for a little boy (or girl) who” OR “Now we go to someone who”. The formulas encouraged general participation, since the children tried to work out who the teacher had in mind. Once the news-giver’s identity had been established, the teacher would ask him/her “What would you like to tell me?”, preceded or else followed by the news-giver’s name. A dialogue would then follow between the news-giver and the teacher, the teacher, only, asking questions. Unless it was explicitly sought, participation from other members of the group was discouraged. Towards the end of the contributor’s news, the teacher would write the child’s news on a

piece of the drawing paper mentioned earlier, using the koki pen. She always prefaced it with “Mustafa says” (or whoever the news-giver was) and spoke the words as she wrote them. Having finished writing the news, she would read it out once more, in full, before putting that sheet at the bottom of her pile, nominating the next child, and so repeating the cycle. After all the children had given their news, the teacher would hand them their written news, prefacing the handing over of each by identifying the child and re-reading his/her news. She would provide a container of coloured koki pens and ask the children to illustrate their news and, while they did so, asked additional questions and the children would contribute additional information, usually relating to the technicalities of their drawing and, generally, to their news. News-time would end with the teacher putting the kokis away, collecting their drawings (if they were to remain with the teacher rather than go home with the children), saying goodbyes, and having the leader for the day lead the Eager Beavers back to the Blue Group, for “story”.

Information such as the average length of news sessions in each class, the number of contributors per session as well as information on the number of recordings I have at each level are included in 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.2.

1.1.2 Microethnography

Erickson (1996:283) describes microethnography as “both a method and a point of view”: a means by which the analyst “looks very closely and repeatedly at what people do in real time as they interact”. The central concern of ethnographic microanalysis is, according to him, “the immediate ecology and micropolitics” of social relations between the participants. In chapter 3 of this thesis I outline various ‘traditional’ as well as ‘innovative’ means by which I have closely and repeatedly examined the real-time interaction of the teachers and pupils in my corpus of recordings of news-time interaction at Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School. Consistent with ethnographic principles my aim was, as far as possible, to capture the *participants’* (i.e., the teachers’ and pupils’) *perspective* on what takes place at news-time and why. For this reason I employed additional analytical criteria (which I outline in 3.5) to identify the cues and signals which the participants use to organise and co-ordinate their behaviour, and from which one can infer the underlying norms to which they orientate their behaviour. This points to how closely I examined the interactional data. My concern

with “the immediate ecology” of news-time and “the micropolitics of social relations between the participants” is partly reflected in this desire to capture the *participants’* understanding of news-time. It is also reflected in my attempt (cf. chapter 5) to provide a *critical* explanation of the participants’ conduct. I do not want simply to describe news-time “neutrally”, as a set of behaviours confined to the microcosm of three classrooms and therefore independent of the larger socio-political context, because this would misrepresent the ecology and micropolitics of social relations between the participants. Instead, by seeing that conduct as a form of social action and by placing it in the much broader context of pre-election South Africa, I would be exploring/describing that ecology by investigating whose interests it serves.

As regards the scope of the microethnography which this thesis represents, I need to explain that I am principally concerned with the *literacy* generated at news-time, i.e., its form and content - including ideological content. (Though as readers can see (in 5.2.2 and 5.3.3), I do also dwell briefly on the routines each teacher employs in order to get the work of news-time done). So, this is a partial, not a complete ethnography of news-time and news-telling.

1.1.3 Literacy

The view of literacy I subscribe to in this thesis is consistent with that promoted by the so-called New Literacy theorists and is what is reflected in the Ideological model of literacy as described by Street (1984;1993;1995) - cf. 2.2.4. Thus, rather than viewing literacy as: *two-valued* (i.e., one is either literate or else illiterate); *singular* (i.e., ‘literacy’ applies to writing only and to one form in particular); *ideologically neutral* (i.e., literacy is simply a medium, not a carrier of ideology); and *a set of technical skills* (i.e., syntactic, lexical, etc.), it is construed of as multi-valued, plural and variable, imbued with cultural and ideological assumptions, and comprised of skills and practices of various kinds. In Stein’s (1998:518) terms, literacy is “an ideological, site-specific social practice implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices”. All of these dimensions of difference are explained and illustrated in 2.2 and 2.3.

A very fundamental advantage for this thesis of the new view of literacy, is that it frees one from the constraints of what Street refers to as “great divide” thinking. Whereas previously orality and literacy - speech and writing - were held to be unrelated and

fundamentally different, the current focus on literacy *practices*, regardless of mode, permits one to entertain the possibility, firstly, that there can be many literacies - as I demonstrate there to be at news-time - and, secondly, that what is essentially an oral event can be the precursor to something which, in a later form, is usually written - as news-time, I suggest, is a precursor to expository literacy.

A major pre-occupation of mine in this thesis is to identify the literacy practices that the teachers and pupils employ during news-time and establish how much congruence there is between the assumptions underlying each set, concentrating, as I pointed out earlier, specifically on the content and structure of a representative range of news episodes.

1.1.4 Critical

The descriptor “critical” applies to this study because, when analysing and explaining my news-time data (in chapters 4 and 5), I draw on *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) and *critical ethnography* (CE). After first explaining what they share, I will explain how they complement one another, hence why this study is “critical” in a double sense.

According to Fairclough (1989:5) CDA is critical because it draws attention to “connections which may be hidden from people” - specifically, in his work, connections between language, power and ideology. Critical ethnography is similarly preoccupied with ideology and power. According to May (1997:197), CE “highlights the role of ideology in sustaining and perpetuating inequality within particular settings”. Both Fairclough and May are, as a result, distrustful of approaches (such as sociolinguistics in the case of Fairclough, and traditional microethnography in the case of May) which take social conventions and practices (such as constitute news-time) at face value and simply describe the behaviour associated with them. Doing so, according to Fairclough (1992:7), “obscures their political and ideological investment”, while according to May (1997:199), “the interpretive concern with ‘describing’ a social setting ‘as it really is’ assumes an objective, ‘common sense’ reality where none exists. Rather, this ‘reality’ (e.g. what transpires at news-time) should be seen for what it is - a social and cultural *construction*, linked to wider power relations, which privileges some, and disadvantages other, participants”. The same, May points out elsewhere (1994:51), applies to common sense knowledge in a school setting (for example, what teachers say the function of news-time is). It (i.e., common sense knowledge), too, should be seen as a social and

cultural construction. According to McLaren (1992:332) “the literacy researcher needs to disrupt unconscious routines rather than simply report them and bring into relief the politics which inhere in the dialectics of daily life and struggle”.

What further unites CLA and CE is that their ultimate aim is an applied one, and that is to ‘change things for the better’. This is because, as Thomas (1993:47) puts it, critical ethnography “directs attention to things that are not quite right in our culture”. Thus, according to May (1994:53) “the overriding goal of critical ethnography is to free individuals from sources of domination and oppression”, while according to Fairclough (1992:9-10) “CLS sees itself as a resource for developing the consciousness of particularly those people who are dominated in a linguistic way ... (C)onsciousness (being) ... a precondition for the development of new practices and conventions which can contribute to social emancipation”.

Where CDA and CE complement one another, apart from reinforcing the shared set of assumptions just outlined, is in terms of their methodological emphases. As I explain in 3.6, my analysis of news-time literacy relies very much on Fairclough’s multi-dimensional conception of discourse (I use the term “literacy” in this thesis) and, associated with it, the sorts of analysis he suggests each dimension of the discourse (or literacy) requires. Hence, when I view it as *text*, I *describe* what is produced at news-time; when I view it as *interaction*, I *interpret* it, and when I approach it as *a form of social action*, my goal is to *explain* it.

The conceptualisation of discourse which underlies CDA acknowledges the role of contextual factors (such as socio-historical conditions) on the production and interpretation of discourse. Furthermore, through conceiving of literacy in one of its dimensions as social action, and therefore not merely as text, it recognises that literacy contextualises behaviour, i.e., it and the context mutually constitute one another. The principal focus in CDA nevertheless still falls on the analysis of the *discourse*. Where CE is valuable is, firstly, that it foregrounds the influence of the *context* on the form that social behaviour takes. In this respect CE represents a departure from micro-ethnographic accounts since, in describing social settings as they ‘really are’ and assuming them to be ‘objective common sense realities’ (cf. earlier) they ignore what May (1994:50) refers to as the “wider power relations in society that shape both the

setting itself and the ‘common sense’ interpretation that participants (and we as researchers) have of it”. It is for this reason that an understanding of the social context which prevailed at the time of my involvement in my two research sites is so crucial, and also why an understanding of the nature of the education system and of the form teacher training took under apartheid is also crucial. The value of CE, secondly, is that it suggests methods by which relevant contextual evidence may be collected. As such, CE encourages one to produce “thick description” of the contexts - especially institutional ones - that one explores and, in combination with CDA, leads to “thick explanations” of the social behaviour. I explore the details of these matters further in 3.6 and 3.7.

Consistent with the applied agendas of critical scholarship, I outline implications and an application of my research (in chapter 6), seeking in this way to contribute to a ‘better’ literacy dispensation for children of the ages I investigated than prevailed in pre-democratic South Africa. In this regard, however, I will be arguing that the issues are somewhat more complex than McLaren (1992:332), for example, suggests when he asserts that:

Literacy researchers must take an oppositional stance toward privileged groups within the dominant culture who have attained a disproportionately large share of resources, who are ceaselessly driven by self-perpetuating ideologies, and who are able to incapacitate opposition by marginalizing and defaming counter-discourses while legitimating their own.

1.2 Where this study was conducted and who participated in it

Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School are roughly 1 kilometre apart in what, in the period when I conducted my fieldwork (i.e., 30 August 1992 to 7 December 1993), was a white middle-class enclave, wedged between a wealthy middle-class Indian area to the north, and a poor but well-established working-class black (African) suburb to the south.

Such was the apartheid geography that a single road separated the Indian from the White homes. Even before the Group Areas Act was repealed in 1991 Indians were purchasing property in areas designated as white, and were seeking to enrol their children in local schools, for which government permission was occasionally obtained. After the repeal of the Group Areas Act, the movement of Indians into the previously white suburb

proceeded apace, as many white families emigrated, ahead of the democratic elections in 1994. One particular access road (to Natal Junior Primary School) led through the middle of the white suburb and along the boundary with the black suburb to the south, with white and black homes in some instances almost adjacent. This black suburb was thus within easy walking distance of the historically-white suburb and its schools. Prior to 1994 some black children were already enrolled in the white schools because they (like Siphon, a child who will figure prominently in the data in chapter 4 and discussion in chapter 5) were the children of black domestic helpers working in the white households on a live-in basis.

After 1994, Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School were, by virtue of their access and proximity to all three racially-based communities, destined to have increased numbers of Indian and black pupils. This led to a concerted effort on the part of parent bodies at the two schools during the latter stages of my involvement with the schools to maintain a racial balance. Four years later, these two schools are predominantly Indian and black, although the teaching staff at both institutions remains largely unchanged.

What follows is a precise indication of the period of my fieldwork at each school, along with the names of the teachers with whom I liaised. Those whose names are asterisked are the teachers with whom I worked most closely.

<u>1992</u>		
30 Aug - 11 Dec	Natal Junior Primary (Class 1)	* Mrs Higgs
27 Oct - 2 Dec	Natal Pre-Primary (4 yr olds)	Mrs Willis
<u>1993</u>		
17 Mar - 7 Dec	Natal Junior Primary (Class 2)	* Mrs French
21 Mar - 30 Nov	Natal Pre-Primary (Eager Beavers)	* Mrs Byrd
	Natal Pre-Primary (School-readiness Group)	Mrs Robins

A profile of the three classes I concentrated on follows:

Mrs Higgs's class 1 group: Natal Junior Primary School 1992:

The class consisted of 24 children, with equal numbers of girls and boys. From a racial point of view, the picture was as follows:

Whites : 13 (6 girls, 7 boys)
 Indians : 7 (2 girls, 5 boys)
 Blacks : 3 (all girls)
 Coloureds: 1 (a girl)

Mrs Higgs was a white person of middle-class background in her late thirties. That year, 1992, significantly, marked her return to teaching after about a ten year absence. This class was the first racially integrated group that she had ever taught.

Mrs French's class 2 group: Natal Junior Primary School 1993:

The class consisted of 27 children, 15 of whom were boys. From a racial point of view, the profile of the class was as follows:

Whites : 14 (6 girls, 8 boys)
 Indians : 8 (4 girls, 4 boys)
 Blacks : 4 (2 girls, 2 boys)
 Coloureds: 1 (a boy)

Like Mrs Higgs, Mrs French was white and from a middle-class background. She was in her early forties.

Mrs Byrd's Eager Beavers group (4 year olds): Natal Pre-Primary School 1993:

There were 7 Eager Beavers:

Whites : 5 (2 girls, 3 boys)
 Indians : 2 (1 girl, 1 boy)

Also white, middle-class and, like Mrs Higgs, in her late thirties, Mrs Byrd was the headmistress of Natal Pre-Primary School.

1.3 The socio-political setting of this study

'Ideological milieu' is a notion coined by Wade (1996:135) which I believe offers an efficient means of characterising the socio-political context during the period of the research reported on in this thesis. According to him, the concept is similar to

Pennycook's 'discursive field'. Pennycook describes it as having "disciplining effects: it defines the criteria by which judgements of what is good, bad, right, wrong and so on can be made" (1994:242). In clarifying this, Wade (1996:135) suggests that a discursive field/ideological milieu can be thought of as a supra-ideology, encompassing and providing a degree of coherence and organisation to all the constituent ideologies of the dominant bloc". He characterises the ideological milieu or, 'principal legitimating ideologies' two years after the democratic elections in South Africa and the installation of the new government in terms of the following list of themes: *democracy, non-racialism, egalitarianism, reconciliation/nation-building and restitution*, noting that such terms "presently enjoy almost 'buzz-word' status, being used frequently in more or less appropriate contexts to confer credibility and legitimacy on programmes and actions". If these themes applied then - and my own experience of life in this country at that time bears this out - they certainly did not do so during the period of my school visits nor in the period between them and the elections. It is true that towards the end of my data-collecting apartheid laws inimical to democracy, non-racialism and egalitarianism had been repealed, but *de facto* realities still strongly endorsed the old order. The first tentative steps were likewise being made towards reconciliation and nation-building - the freeing of Nelson Mandela in 1990 being a case in point - but thoughts of restitution were still far off. On the ground, there was considerable anxiety - particularly on the parts of those with conservative leanings, and especially among whites.

From late 1991 to early 1994 the country as a whole and the province of Natal (now known as KwaZulu-Natal) in which the two schools are located lurched forward and staggered backwards as a result of various political events that fuelled the hopes and anxieties of people. Noteworthy events include the following high points and low points (drawn from Diski 1994):

1991:

- The Government scraps the Population Registration Act, Land and Group Areas Acts.
- National Peace Accord signed between the Government, ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party and thirty other parties on September 14, 1991.
- Violence continues.
- CODESA talks begin: Government and ANC sign declaration of intent towards non-racial, democratic South Africa. Inkatha (largely Natal-based) will not sign. PAC opposes CODESA.

1992:

- Whites vote to abolish apartheid (68% of 85% votes “yes”).
- ANC breaks off CODESA and bilateral talks with the Government after 39 killed by Inkatha at Boipatong, June 17.
- Ciskei soldiers fire on ANC demonstrators on 8 September in Bisho, killing 28.
- ANC offers “sunset” clauses as part of transitional agreement with Government (includes guarantees in civil service jobs and pensions, plus a coalition government).
- Military wing of PAC, Azanian People’s Liberation army, attacks whites, in support of its ‘One settler, one bullet’ slogan.
- South Africa competes in the Barcelona Olympic Games and returns to international rugby.

1993:

- Successor to CODESA (Multiparty negotiating forum) convenes - 26 delegates.
- Chris Hani assassinated - major riots erupt.
- Political violence in Natal and East Rand townships kills 4,000 - highest yearly total.
- Mandela calls for end to remaining sanctions. He and De Klerk awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- ANC and Government agree on final terms for new constitution. Buthelezi (Inkatha Freedom Party) rejects interim constitution, announces that Inkatha will not participate in the 1994 election.

1994:

- February: Zulu king threatens to declare UDI.
- March/April: Last minute decision by the Inkatha Freedom Party to run in the election.

A graphic demonstration of the anxiety of conservative whites, in particular, at the time of the elections, is the widespread manner in which people stock-piled basic provisions such as tinned food, soap, candles and even generators in anticipation of black retribution during voting and the day that the election result was to be announced. This is powerfully captured in two Madam & Eve cartoon strips (see Appendix A-1). Such behaviour now seems incredible. Many people disclaim having behaved in this way, and the matter is accorded the status of an urban myth. The truth, however, is that a considerable number succumbed to it.

Other evidence collected at this time is richly suggestive of the greater milieu in which news-telling took place. Consider Mrs Byrd’s halting description of Natal Pre-Primary

School in the following excerpt from an interview I recorded with her on 16 November, 1993 and her uncertainty at what it would 'be' after the elections:

- R: I was just thinking about the school, would you say that in 1993 um it is a typical, what could we call it, middle-class, um, non-government, what is it?
- T: What is it? Jeez, I don't know. Five years ago I did a, not five years ago, about six years ago, I actually did a...um...a study. *(At this point she describes that study.)* And at that stage I said "in a Western, middle-class, white South African school I found this" - but I, I, I would struggle to describe our school now.
- R: Mm
- T: It's not typical, in that it um, we've got this high percentage of Asian children
- R: Mm
- T: which is almost unique. I mean there are schools in Sherwood with a high percentage of limited English pupils. There are still schools in Westville with high English which are, which is still the middle-class white or upper class white, whatever you want to call it.
- R: Mm
- T: I would say, it's difficult, because a lot of the Asian parents are extremely wealthy and the reason they, they wanted to bring their children into this kind of education because this is what they want for their children.
- R: Mm, Mm. Do you imagine that it will change, to become more African or, is it likely to become more Asian? What is your
- T: I don't [know.
- R: [sense?
- T: Ah, I don't know. I think until next year's April we cannot make any any further...I mean as it stands I would see it as if -if there wasn't anything political in government and new regulations, I would see it staying as it is, which I think is superb.
- R: Which is this what this [country
- T: [this community
- R: mirrors the community?
- T: I think so. I think the children are getting a superb exposure to mixing freely with everybody, and realising that everybody is fine to mix with.
- T: Um, I mean we've had Indian parents express that they haven't brought their children here to attend an Indian school. They want their children to mix with a fair number of everybody, which I think is fair. You know, so they don't, the Indians themselves don't want this to become an Indian school 'cos other - they wouldn't have taken their children out of an Indian school.
- R: Ja?
- T: Um, so, I would say it's an...English...I don't know how you would classify it: an English-speaking, middle-class, Asian, white, population.
- R: And the African kids that are here, do they tend to be the children of domestic workers or are they people whose...?
- T: We've got one, one domestic-sponsored child...and then three of parents of um professional parents,...so they are their own children and only one, one couldn't speak English this year and he's coming on, he's four, he'll be doing school-readiness next year, he'll be five, um...so I don't know how you classify kids, ja, I think it's a fairly normal situation, I think there are, a, we, it is nice that the Asians are comfortable with the English...um, so there isn't a language problem, we've had interesting cultural discussions about these dollies, this dolly doesn't match you so you can't play with it.
- R: Oh, is that what the children say?
- T: Yes, but just on one occasion, otherwise they don't even notice, really, um, initially we had to sort out the difference between what a settee and a couch was and [what
- R: [Oh yes?
- T: a rogue and a baddie was *(laughing)* but you know that was just that sort of thing...

An earlier indicator of the time period in which this research was conducted and of the political cross-currents operating at the time - this time at Natal Junior Primary School, likewise emerged from my interview with Mrs Higgs (on 11 December, 1992). As regards “external pressures” on the school, she informed me of racist assumptions on the part of white parents regarding the lowering of standards because of the presence in the school of “non-whites” - and mentioned the counter-evidence that the school produced to show that these same pupils were amongst the highest achievers through the school. In addition she mentioned the religious pressure which Muslims were perceived as exerting on the “Christian ethic” of the school.

A final indicator of the times is the insistence in the following transcript from a class 1 news session on 4/8/1993 (see Appendix C-2 for the entire transcript) with which W, pursues the matter of the racial identity of children Anton (A) reports having befriended during a holiday to the Comores. W is white, and A coloured (a term used in South Africa to label people of mixed race) the only child belonging to this grouping. W’s attempts to get A to classify his new friends in racial terms is something that A resists and his representation of them as South Africans (a more inclusive label) is built on and legitimated by the teacher (T):

- T: ...Right, when you got there, what did you do?
 A: Um. We made a lot of friends.
 T: Did you make a lot of friends? When did those friends come from? Were they friends from South Africa?
 W: White?
 T: Were they from Durban?
 A: Some from Durban, some from...
 T: You hadn’t known them before?
 A: Yes.
 T: So they were new friends. Then what did you do all day long? (*T pursues this with A for a while.*)
 ...
 T: Who? Who wants to ask something?
 W: Anton, were your friends, um, were they Indian or were they white? Were they white?
 A: ...(*Indistinct.*) They were South African.
 T: They were South African and we are all South Africans. At the Comores they don’t always all speak English there do they? What do they speak?
 Xs: (*Murmur.*)
 A: French.
 W: Like the French rugby players.

Additional contextual evidence - namely of ignorance on the part of teachers of their pupils’ languages, living circumstances and cultural beliefs and practices - are illustrated

in extracts in 5.7.2. Such ignorance attests to the alienness of mixed-race education and would, in turn, have retarded open interaction.

1.4 Descriptive labels used in this thesis

From the foregoing accounts it should be clear that I have opted for apartheid-style ethnic/racial labels - white, black, Indian, Coloured - when describing the participants in this study. I base my decision to do so essentially on my desire to foreground the pre-democratic context in which the participants in this study interacted with one another, believing that the context has a major bearing on the literacy behaviour reflected in my data and on the salience such labels still had for the participants. It is true that the population registration and land and group areas acts were repealed in 1991, but it was only in late 1993 that the new interim constitution was approved, and only in April 1994 that South Africans actually voted for a new government and, with it, a new discourse for referring to groups within the South African nation. In taking this decision I do not wish in any way to signal disregard for the acrimony and suffering caused by racial issues and racial labelling in this country. Like de Klerk (1996:9) I believe such ethnic labels “should not be read as primitives but rather as post-hoc descriptive tags”. Like her, too, I recognise that “no ethnic group is neatly defined, and language boundaries are notoriously fluid, with groups overlapping rather than dividing neatly”. Such tags “are not intended to imply any clear-cut link with race or ethnicity”. At the same time, it is worth noting that the new government has found it useful to use the old apartheid labels for a new purpose, namely, reverse discrimination/affirmative action, and use these labels unapologetically.

For the same basic reason as that outlined above, I have also decided to use the pre-democratic labels “class 1”, “class 2”, “standard 1”, rather than the labelling system used these days, namely, “grade 1”, “grade 2”, “grade 3”, etc.

1.5 The research questions which guide this study

Seven questions in particular have guided my research into news-time and are integral to the organisation and coherence of this thesis. In listing them below, before in 1.7

explaining where each is explicitly addressed, it is important for me to stress the following: in acknowledging the central place of questions I am being consistent, for example, with May's caution (1994:51) that "ethnographic accounts need to recognise and acknowledge their theoretical perspectives" such as are implicit in the questions one asks. May expresses this caution in the light, particularly, of the erroneous belief by some ethnographers that meanings emerge simply from the data. The following quote from Angus (1986), quoted in May (1994:50) is especially pertinent in this regard:

Researchers never *simply* hang around waiting for something to happen. They invariably and inevitably carry so much theoretical (and cultural) baggage inside their heads that what they look at, what they look for, and how they interpret what they 'see' can never be totally impartial.

I, like the researchers referred to, have not simply hung around for something to happen, or, in the terms used in 3.2, been radically inductive. But it would be misleading of me to suggest that my work has been totally "theory-driven" (cf. 3.2, again). Rather, theory - particularly as reflected in the bodies of reading and via the perspectives suggested in chapters 2 and 5 - and data (cf. that analysed in chapter 4) have constantly interacted with and mutually informed one another - the outcome of which has been the crystallising of the seven research questions:

- (a) What sort of literacy (set of literacy practices) do the teachers in my study promote?
- (b) Is there congruence between the teachers' conduct at news-time and what they claim the functions are of news-time?
- (c) What literacy practices do the children in my study employ during news-time?
- (d) Is there diversity in the pupils' literacy behaviour at news-time? If so, what forms does that diversity take?
- (e) Is there contact and conflict between different types of literacy/sets of literacy practices employed during news-time?
- (f) Whose interests are served by the literacy promoted during news-time?
- (g) What is the applied relevance of my research? Specifically, what does it suggest regarding the teaching/learning of literacy in early education in the "new" South Africa?

1.6 An overview of the rest of this thesis

Chapters 2 and 3 anticipate the core of the thesis, namely, the description, interpretation and explanation of my corpus of news-time data provided in chapters 4, 5 and the early part of chapter 6. Thus, in chapter 2 I review selected bodies of literature which have shaped my understanding of literacy and of the ideological exercise of power through literacy and thus of how and why I perceive news sessions and what emanates from them as I do. I briefly describe the current nature of literacy research in South Africa and locate mine in terms of it, after which I contrast and critique four paradigms which have dominated and given shape internationally to literacy research, aligning my own work with the ethnographic and, more specifically, the ideological paradigm. I also provide readers with a series of scenarios. These illuminate features of the ideological and ethnographic paradigms. My account of these also documents insights of various kinds which informed my understanding of the ecological embeddedness of news-time and what is at stake when literacy practices are employed in institutional settings such as law and education. I close chapter 2 by reviewing the research done to date on ‘sharing time’, ‘morning news’ and ‘show and tell’, which, as I indicated in 1.1.1, are literacy events similar in many ways to news-time. That research - both because of what it encompassed, and because of what it ignored - helped, significantly, in shaping the questions I asked in relation to my own study.

Chapter 3 deals essentially with methodological matters. I open the chapter by clarifying what ethnography is, what a general ethnographic perspective entails, and how a critical ethnographic perspective complements a general ethnographic perspective. As part of the above I outline five core underlying principles of any ethnographic research, including my own. I then explain what form my field entry took at each school. In giving an account of the data collection methods I used, I distinguish between ‘traditional’ methods (tape-recording, observation/participant-observation, video-recording and interviews) and the ‘innovative’ methods I designed, (speech bubble elicitation task, pupil questionnaire, and interview and drawing task) to elicit the *pupils’* perceptions of news-time and its function. I also outline criteria based on McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978) and Erickson (1982). These were especially useful for establishing that the teachers’ and pupils’ norms during news-time - which I infer from recordings of news-

telling sessions in each of the three classrooms - are indeed the *participants'* norms and not my own, *analysts'* norms. Finally, I describe the methods, drawn from CDA and from CE which I employed in order to analyse the literacy/discourse generated during news-time sessions and to explain it in the immediate context of pre-election South Africa and against the much larger background of apartheid.

Chapter 4 reports on the first phase of my critical discourse analysis of news-time, namely, *describing* and *interpreting* the textual and interactional features of the news-time exchanges. This analysis provides answers to the first three research questions which relate to the teachers' and pupils' emic definitions of news-time, and the next two about diversity in the pupils' literacy behaviour. Before analysing the interactional behaviour I report on what the *teachers* perceive, on the evidence of interviews and through drawing inferences based on their reactions to tasks I set for the pupils, to be the origins, functions and formal features of news-time, i.e., I report on what they *say* regarding these issues. On the basis of this analysis I detail six core norms which guide the *teachers'* participation (in particular) during news-time. I also report on pupils' perception of news and its functions. On the evidence of the class 1 pupils' responses to the speech bubble task and of class 2 pupils to a questionnaire, as well as that gleaned from interviewing the Eager Beavers, I conclude that the greater proportion of pupils do not readily conform to the teacher's core norms, and that conflict, or the potential for conflict, arises most in news exchanges involving those children who do not conform to their teacher's expectations. Finally, I address the issue of why some pupils are negatively sanctioned for doing what they ostensibly are *meant* to do at news-time, namely, "talk about whatever is interesting to them".

Chapter 5 reports on the second and final phase in my critical discourse analysis of news-time, by seeking to *explain* what takes place during such sessions as a form of *social action*. In the process, it answers the sixth of my research questions, namely, "Whose interests are served by the literacy promoted during news-time?". There are five facets to the explanation that I offer. The first addresses the authoritarian ethos which prevails at news-time. I argue that news-time is not different from other classroom activities, as teachers claim it is, and that there is an ideological justification for the disparity between what teachers claim and what materialises: news-time is a vehicle by which the teachers'

hegemonic position in the classroom is bolstered, and the pupils' powerlessness is entrenched.

The second facet of my explanation centres on the uniformity and very high level of monitoring (or "policing") that teachers subject their pupils' news accounts to and the apparent difficulty which all but a very few children experience in attempting to conform to the teachers' core news-time norms. I argue that the literacy practices of news-time are "policed" because, as precursors to schooled literacy, they are highly valued, and because, thereby, the hegemonic status of expository literacy is protected. To reinforce my claims in this regard, I, drawing on Eagleton (1991), identify the ideological strategies the teachers employ when promoting news accounts of the sort they prefer, and when counteracting those they disapprove of.

An exploration of the values and interests which are embedded in news-time literacy practices and promoted at news-time constitutes the third facet of my explanation of what is at stake during news-time. In this explanation I argue, essentially, that news-time is the vehicle for promoting Anglo-, western, middle-class values and interests, and, thereby, for reinforcing the hegemony of those values at the schools where, and at the time when I conducted my research. As part of this account I argue that the teachers' promotion of prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness helps further to consolidate conservative middle-class values at a time of considerable political uncertainty.

What is apparently also at stake at news-time - the focus of the fourth facet of my explanation - is the propagation of and therefore entrenched hegemony of the Utilitarian Discourse System (UDS). As part of my account of the UDS, I show how closely congruent the discourse strategies, attitudes and beliefs associated with the UDS are with those promoted at news-time, and argue that news-time is both an early precursor to the UDS (as it is to schooled literacy) and a vehicle, again, by which its hegemony is confirmed and entrenched.

The fifth and final facet of my explanation is an attempt to account for the rigidity and conformity on the part of the teachers to the discourse they promote. I do this by relating it to some of the defining characteristics of the education system under apartheid (eschewal of diversity, entrenchment of prescriptive rules of correctness, promotion of forms of authoritarianism, exclusivism, and ignorance) and argue that the teachers were

likely to have been influenced by the system in ways which led them to reproduce aspects of its features during news-time.

Chapter 6 concludes this thesis. I reflect on how culpable the teachers in this study can/should be held to be for propagating the form of news-time literacy that they do and, along with it, the ideological assumptions it embeds. I reflect, too, on my own responsibilities towards the participants and the institutions at which I conducted this research. Most important, I respond to my final research question, namely, “What is the applied relevance of my research? Specifically, what does it suggest regarding the teaching/learning of literacy in early education in the “new” South Africa?” I outline *implications* of my research for the teaching/learning of literacy in the new society, highlighting the need on the part of teacher-trainers and teachers themselves for consciousness-raising, enhanced analytical and interpretive skills, richer pedagogical options in regard to literacy as well as greater multilingual and multicultural proficiencies. I also deal with an *application*, namely, an emancipatory micro-literacy policy at the pre- and junior-primary levels of schooling. At the heart of my proposals is a set of four considerations, two of which, as Pennycook (1996:14) explains, involve “literacy as teaching the “cultures of power” and literacy as practice in acknowledging and fostering diversity”. The remaining two considerations relate to compatibility with the spirit of the National Language Policy and parity with the “orientations” that underly the Language Policy. Recognising the likelihood of resistance on the part of those with vested interests in the status quo, I also propose a more modest alternative to that envisioned by the micro-literacy policy, namely, a looser application of core news-time literacy, arguing that macro-contextual factors in the South African situation will ultimately be crucial. I close the chapter by drawing attention first to limitations of my study and, partly arising from them, profitable lines for future research.

2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

I open this chapter by providing two brief overviews intended to locate my study in relation to previous research into literacy. The first overview does so in relation to local *South African* research, the second to literacy research more broadly. Thus, the overview I provide in 2.1.1 sketches general influences and issues in South African literacy research, and shows how my work contributes to the third of the influences I mention, while the overview in 2.1.2 identifies bodies of research within the field of literacy studies internationally which have shaped: my conception of literacy; my understanding of the ecological and ideological embeddedness of literacy practices; my understanding of what makes news-time a *literacy* event, and my understanding of how news-time might be usefully understood as a form of social action.

2.1.1 Overview of literacy research in South Africa

Literacy-related research in South Africa over the past fifty years is the outcome, it seems to me, of three influences in particular. The first and most enduring is non-governmental (i.e., NGO) and, more recently, governmental initiatives associated with the provision of English second-language literacy through different forms of adult basic education (ABE), cf. the contributions of Lyster and French in Hutton (1992). The second was the attempted provision by universities of academic support shortly after 1976, when race-based admissions to tertiary institutions began to be relaxed and students of colour began enrolling at formerly white institutions. In this regard applied linguists, strongly influenced by the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and by process approaches to reading and writing were prominent cf., for example, the Southern African Applied Linguistics Association Conference Proceedings for 1981, 1984 and 1989, edited, respectively, by Fielding (1981), Chick (1984) and Chick (1989). The third influence is much more recent. Coinciding in some of its manifestations with the declaration in 1990 of International Literacy Year (and the 'Decade of Literacy') and both preceding and following the advent of democracy in South Africa, it includes the influence of Critical Discourse Analysis (Bock & Hewlett

(1993); Chick (1997); Geslin (1995); Janks (1990;1991;1993;1996;1997); Janks & Ivanic (1992) and Luckett & Chick (1998)), and, to a lesser extent, other critical perspectives, e.g. of literacy and of pedagogy (Pierce (1989). It was also stimulated by the presence in the country in 1991 and influence, subsequently, of Brian Street, whose promotion of the ideological model of literacy and so-called New Literacy Studies (cf. 2.2.4 and 2.3.1) lies behind much recent research activity in South Africa, including my own (cf. the contributions in Angelil-Carter (1998) and Prinsloo & Breier (1996), and such articles as Adendorff & Nel (1998), Adendorff & Chick (1998); Adendorff & Parkinson (ms), Parkinson & Adendorff (1996;1997); Stein (1998) and Thesen (1997). What is significant about the above research output is that it marks productive engagement of *academics* within the field of literacy - many of them linguists. As French (1990) points out, this was certainly not the case previously.

2.1.2 Overview of reading which informs this thesis

The research literature that has shaped my thinking regarding news-time falls into four rough areas. These areas may be conceived of as bounded by four concentric circles. The outermost of the four circles comprises reading from which I have gained insights and information about literacy at a general, abstract level. Such reading has revealed changing definitions of literacy and terminology for talking about it, and has described competing models of literacy which have guided research in the field (cf. 2.2 and 2.3). The next circle comprises reading about literacy case studies. These case studies, which I present in 2.4 as scenarios, reveal features unique to particular literacy contexts. They help one see news-time literacy in an interesting comparative light, and they also reveal features which can be generalised across a number of social contexts, thereby alerting one to putative universals. The third circle (cf. 2.5) consists of reading and research findings, which I again present as scenarios, relating to literacy within the institutional contexts of law, tertiary education and the teaching of science. Drawing on my understanding of the relationship between power, ideology, hegemony and ideological strategies, I use the scenarios to foreground the nature and effects of hegemonic literacy practices within powerful institutional contexts. The fourth and innermost circle (cf. 2.6) consists of research relating to the focal literacy event in this thesis, namely, news-time. Such reading deals exclusively with 'news-time' in non-South African settings, my

review of it revealing my debt to those who entered the field before I did, casting comparative light on local news-time practices, and indicating the respects in which this thesis develops and extends what was done previously.

2.2 Literacy studies in four paradigms

A number of scholars indicate that there has been a paradigm shift within literacy studies since the early eighties. They describe this shift as involving, among others, (i) a shift from viewing literacy as an *individual skill* to viewing it as a *social practice* (McKay 1996); (ii) a shift from an essentially *psychological* conception of literacy to a *sociological* one (Barton 1994); and (iii) a shift from an “*autonomous*” model of literacy to an ethnographic and then “*ideological*” one (Street 1984; 1993).

2.2.1 Evidence of a shift in definitions of literacy

That a shift in perceptions has taken place is apparent if we examine selected definitions of literacy, such as the seven which follow, and consider what they presuppose about the nature of literacy. Here are the definitions:

1. Literacy: “ability to read and write”.
(Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 3rd edition, 1974:728)
2. Literacy: “the state or condition of being able to read and/or write”.
(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1978:639)
3. Literacy: “(Formed as an antithesis to illiteracy). Quality or state of being literate”.
Literate: “one who can read or write”.
(The shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 1973:1222)
4. “...a collection of cultural and communicative practices associated with particular uses of both spoken and written forms among specific social groups”.
(Sola & Bennett 1991:36)
5. “Literacy is an activity of social groups, and a necessary feature of some kinds of social organisation. Like every other human activity or product, it embeds social relations within it. And these relations always include conflict as well as co-operation. Like language itself, literacy is an exchange between classes, races, the sexes, and so on”.
(Ohmann 1985:685, quoted in Collins 1991:229)
6. “...literacy must be defined to include, but go beyond, the skills of reading and writing. Literacy must be seen as part of the process of empowering underprivileged people. Literacy, I contend, is thus indelibly linked with people’s

quest for, and attainment of, justice..”
(Ramdas 1990:28)

7. “...synonymous with academic performance”
“...the ability to read and write and compute in the form taught and expected in formal education”
(Ogbu 1990, quoted in Street & Street 1991:145)

The definitions cited above fall into two groups: the earlier ones (pre-1980) which are drawn from dictionaries (i.e., extracts 1-3) and the more recent ones, which are drawn from the research literature on literacy (extracts 4-7). The dictionary definitions (extracts 1-3) are distinctive in the following respects:

- (a) They suggest that literacy is a singular concept, that it is a mass as opposed to a count noun;
- (b) they appear to conceive of literacy as being cognitive in essence. In support of this we see literacy described as “an ability”, “a state or condition”, and “a quality or state”, respectively;
- (c) they imply that literacy is an absolute, i.e., that one is either illiterate or else, presumably, one is fully literate;
- (d) they equate literacy with two modes only, namely, reading and writing;
- (e) they conceptualise literacy as existing independently of the context in which any kind of reading or writing takes place;
- (f) they depict literacy as apparently ideologically/politically neutral.

The more recent, non-dictionary definitions (i.e., extracts 4-7) differ from the three just considered, in each of the six respects indicated in (a) to (f) above:

- (a) They do *not* consider literacy to be a singular concept/mass noun. Rather, they describe literacy as being *multiple* as well as *variable* in its manifestations. In other words, they accept that there are potentially *many* literacies, not just one. As evidence of this, we notice that extract 4 refers to “a collection of cultural and communicative practices”. Extract 5 also does so, but implicitly, by referring first to “social groups” and then by emphasising that literacy is “an exchange” between those different groups.

- (b) They define literacy in social, cultural and political terms, and not cognitively, as the dictionary definitions seem to. In extract 4, for instance, literacy is described as “a collection of cultural and communicative practices” which suggests an *anthropological* orientation to the definition. In extract 5 it is first described as “an activity of social groups” and later as “an exchange between classes, races, the sexes, and so on”, all of which are *sociological* categories. Extract 6 explicitly links literacy to a particular *political* agenda, i.e., empowerment, the author asserting that literacy must “go *beyond* the skills of reading and writing”. Finally in this regard, we notice that in extract 7 literacy is defined in terms of the interactional norms of a specific institution or discourse community, namely, what is “expected in formal education”. As such, it is cast both in *cultural* and *sociological* terms.
- (c) The newer definitions clearly do not consider literacy to be an invariant absolute, as the dictionary definitions appear to. Instead, the newer definitions describe literacy as varying according to contextual circumstances. I have already itemised the ways in which they do so, for example, in (b) above.
- (d) The newer definitions equate literacy with more than simply reading and writing. Extract 7, for example, includes *numeracy* (“the ability...to compute”) as a form of literacy. Extract 4 further enlarges the scope of what counts as literacy by including “*spoken forms*”. It also includes the “cultural and communicative practices” associated with speech and writing of different forms. This means, I believe, that Sola & Bennett also include ‘*rules of use*’ (Widdowson 1978:143) within the scope of their definition of literacy. Finally, extract 6 seems to include ‘*empowerment strategies*’ as part of literacy. What these strategies consist of, however, is not apparent from the extract. Clearly, literacy in these definitions is a far broader concept than in the first three.
- (e) The newer definitions cast literacy, overwhelmingly, as context-dependent, unlike the earlier definitions. In other words, extracts 4 - 7 recognise, as I have already shown, that literacy originates in the practices of social and cultural groups and is driven by the interactional needs and norms of those groups.
- (f) Finally, two of the newer definitions (i.e., extracts 5 and 6) draw deliberate

attention to the non-neutrality of literacy practices or, at least, to the belief that literacy practices are ideologically invested. Thus, extract 5 notes that literacy “embeds social relations within it” which, furthermore, “always include conflict as well as co-operation”. Extract 6, in turn, champions the “empowering (of) underprivileged people” and “people’s quest for, and attainment of, justice”. Such sentiments clearly underscore this author’s belief that literacy practices should be ideologically and politically motivated, not neutral.

McKay’s perception that there has been a shift from viewing literacy as an individual skill to viewing it as a social practice, and Barton’s, that the shift is essentially from a psychological to a sociological conception of literacy, are evident in points (a), (b), (c), (e) and (f) above. Both McKay’s and Barton’s views are in turn easily accommodated within the two-way contrast provided by Street (1984;1993), between what he terms an ‘Autonomous’ model of literacy and an ‘Ideological’ model. In what follows I expand briefly on Street’s two models: the autonomous model because my fieldwork and reading has emphasised how enduring its influence is on teachers’ understanding and the ideological model because it is central to the way in which I will investigate news-time. It, the autonomous model of literacy, is also the model endorsed by the dictionary entries we considered earlier. When contrasting these two models of literacy I briefly outline (a) the assumptions; (b) the research orientations; and (c), the research methods which have guided the activity of those who have subscribed to each model, starting with the autonomous model. I also describe the main features of what I call the “Ethnographic” model of literacy, it being a reaction to the Autonomous model, and predecessor to the Ideological model, and the Pragmatic model of literacy, which is a reaction to the Ideological model.

2.2.2 The autonomous model of literacy

The autonomous model is associated most directly with figures such as Havelock (1963;1982), Goody (1963;1968;1977) and Ong (1982). As its name indicates, it stresses the *autonomy* of literacy, the extent and nature of which is revealed in the following assumptions:

- (a) Literacy is a unitary, self-contained, universally constant set of discrete, cognitive and technical (largely linguistic) skills;

- (b) these cognitive and technical skills distinguish literacy unambiguously from orality, which is made up of entirely different cognitive and technical skills;
- (c) the single most important feature of literacy is its capacity to express meaning without reference to context (this is an *implicit* assumption);
- (d) literacy and the technology which constitutes it is ideologically *neutral*, i.e., literacy is presumed not to be ideologically invested. It is simply a ‘technology’ which an individual either possesses or else does not;
- (e) literacy has far-reaching cognitive, social and economic consequences. Exponents of the autonomous model believe, according to Auerbach (1992:73) that, because of its *inherent features*, literacy “facilitates logical thought and leads to the capacity for higher order, decontextualised thinking. In addition, it leads to a sense of self-worth, personal achievement, and upward mobility for the individual, and economic advancement on the societal level”.

Research orientations associated with this model derive, as expected, from the above assumptions. Considerable research effort has been devoted to identifying the discrete, technical elements which constitute reading and writing. In this regard Scribner (1988:72) refers to the quest by many to identify “the ‘true’ critical components of literacy”, believing that literacy has “an ‘essence’”. It is worth noting in addition that the research to which I have been referring has focused almost exclusively on *Western* literary genres. This has been so, presumably, because it considered such genres to be universal. Other research shaped by the autonomous model has investigated the cognitive consequences of reading and writing, and the role of literacy within specific modern institutions.

The *research methods* which those working within the autonomous model have relied on have typically decontextualised data from its interactional context. Experimental methods of a positivistic kind have frequently been employed, as has conjecture, often on a broad scale, and based on what appear to be narrowly eurocentric interpretations of culture and literacy cf. Havelock (1963;1982) and Street’s critique (1984:chs. 2 & 4). Data, for its part, has tended to be drawn from a narrow band of essentially written sources, produced largely by intellectuals.

2.2.3 The ethnographic model of literacy

Critical reaction to the underlying assumptions of the autonomous model of literacy takes two forms. The first is the emergence of what is essentially an ‘ethnographic’ model of literacy as a rival to it. Less rigid in its assumptions than the autonomous model but sharing with it a non-conflictual view of social processes, the ethnographic model provides what is fundamentally a functional descriptive/interpretive view of literacy in the communities in which it is practised. The second form of reaction to the autonomous model is really a further development of the ethnographic model. For, while the ethnographic and autonomous models are apparently ideologically neutral, the *ideological model* is not. As its name suggests, it addresses ideological issues openly, is itself ideologically ‘committed’ and adopts what is usually an essentially conflictual, negative view of human agency and social processes (cf. Thompson 1990:54).

By far the most influential figure associated with the ethnographic model of literacy is Heath, whose seven year long ethnographic investigation of the literacy practices of three communities in close proximity to one another in the Piedmont Carolinas - which she refers to as Trackton (working-class, black), Roadville (working-class, white) and Maintown (middle-class, white) - is widely cited and highly regarded. The essential features of this work of hers are:

- (1) the thoroughness of the ethnographic account she provides, having herself lived in each community;
- (2) the highly revealing insight she provides into the ways in which newcomers are socialised into the literacy practices which each community values (in regard to which she, for example, describes the vastly different reading practices, including bed-time story reading which take place);
- (3) the different outcomes of (or, put differently, the variability in) the literacy socialisation provided within each community; and
- (4) the varying degrees of ‘fit’ she shows to exist between the literacy practices children acquire at home in their different communities and those rewarded by the middle-class teacher in the school they jointly attend. Significant as well in this regard is the degree of synchrony or otherwise between community-acquired and school-required literacy practices and expectations. What emerges very clearly are

the advantages children from Maintown enjoy over all of the other children since the practices they are socialised into are largely compatible with those of the school and so require relatively minor adaptations on the part of these Maintown children. The same, however, does not apply to children brought up in Roadville, and even less so, to those from Trackton.

Another exemplar of research in this paradigm is Scollon & Scollon's (1984) more obviously cross-cultural examination of the literacy socialisation of Athabaskan children who attend 'mainstream' American schools and also suffer as a result of mismatches between home/community literacy assumptions and those rewarded at school.

In 2.4 I review various other studies (cf. 2.4.2-2.4.4 and 2.4.6) which similarly represent literacy in terms of the ethnographic model. I present them as scenarios which demonstrate the ecological embeddedness of the literacy practices, in each case in specific socio-cultural and geographic contexts. I point to the social meaning such practices have for their users and cross-refer to the setting in which I conducted my news-time research and to aspects of literacy which are pertinent to it too.

What is distinctive about the studies of Heath, Scollon & Scollon and these scenarios is that while they *describe* the community practices/literacy practices employed in each setting and *interpret* what takes place as a form usually of unsuccessful or else conflict-ridden interaction, they stop short of *explaining* interaction and its outcome/outcomes as forms of social action. It is precisely this concern - to explain literacy behaviour as a form of social action - that distinguishes *critical* responses to literacy and pedagogy generally (cf. 1.1.4) from those which are purely ethnographic. According to Heath (personal communication) anthropologists don't try to explain behaviour. In this thesis my goal is eventually to *explain* the literacy practices in evidence during news-time. The ethnographic model on its own does not permit this. The ideological model, by contrast, does, serviced as it is by the methods of critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis which I describe, for example, in 1.1.4, 3.6 and 3.7.

2.2.4 The ideological model of literacy

Critics such as the contributors to Mitchell & Weiler (1991), Street (1993) and Hamilton, Barton & Ivanic (1994), consider the autonomous model to have a number of serious inadequacies. They believe the autonomous model distorts and under-represents the nature of literacy; that it conceals ideological biases which favour a small, Western, educated (usually male) elite; and that it perpetuates forms of ethnocentrism which at worst amount to little more than thinly disguised racism and sexism. What ultimately unifies the critics is their adherence to the core belief that literacy practices “are varied and contentious and imbued with ideology” (Street & Street 1991:143). This belief justifies the label “*Ideological*” for this alternative model of literacy.

To characterise the ideological model more systematically and in slightly more detail, I shall now list the underlying assumptions about literacy which guide those who subscribe to this model:

- (a) “Literacy” refers to a *plurality* of interactional practices. It is not a single, monolithic entity;
- (b) it is inaccurate to conceive of literacy simply as a set of technical skills. Street (1993:9) expands as follows: “The ideological model...does not attempt to deny technical skill or the creative aspects of reading and writing, but rather understands them as they are encapsulated within cultural wholes and within structures of power” (See also (d), (e) and (f) below);
- (c) literacy practices depend on both oral and literate resources, usually mixed or blended in different combinations. The ideological model strenuously rejects the idea that there is a ‘great divide’ between speech and writing;
- (d) literacies express a range of cultural and individual meanings, including values, identities and ideologies. They are decidedly not neutral in these regards;
- (e) literacy practices are constantly contested. They are, and historically have always been, sites of struggle and conflict. This is because they are not neutral media. They carry contentious social meaning and, as indicated earlier, are ideologically “imbued”, even when this appears not to be so;
- (f) different literacy practices indeed have far-reaching cognitive, social and economic

consequences. This, though, is not because of technical properties inherent to literacy per se, as the autonomous model suggests, but because of the way in which hidden ideological biases assist powerful groups in discriminating against and dominating less powerful groups.

Turning now to the *research orientations and methods* adopted by those who favour the ideological model, I start by noting researchers' over-riding commitment to detailed investigation of *actual* literacy practices - a characteristic they share with proponents of the ethnographic model. Such investigation is conducted *in situ*, it is increasingly cross-cultural in orientation and focuses more and more on the role of institutions in shaping and promoting literacy behaviour. Educational practices have enjoyed particular attention in this regard, as the text edited by Mitchell & Weiler (1991) indicates. Contextualisation of the research in terms of this and the ethnographic model is, typically, as rich as possible, and attempts to reflect (and then employ) emic categories and understandings, i.e., those of the participants themselves, rather than those of analysts who are outsiders. Such research tries, moreover, to explore the reciprocal influence of contextual factors (including ideologies) on the shape and function of literacy practices as well as the influence, in turn, of the literacy practices on the context. Reliance, according to both models, is placed, as far as data sources are concerned, on collecting multiple sources of information, which researchers then triangulate with one another to achieve as objective and representative an understanding of the data as possible. Not surprisingly, anthropology (especially ethnographic perspectives), sociolinguistics (especially micro-perspectives) and critical approaches towards education and linguistics, in particular, figure prominently in the growing body of academic studies of literacy which embrace the broader, culturally and politically more complex conception of literacy which is associated with the ideological model of literacy. This body of studies informed by the ideological model is known as 'New Literacy Studies'. (See, too, 2.3.1).

2.2.5 The pragmatic model of literacy

While assumptions consistent with the autonomous model of literacy, in my experience, remain dominant in education (as I noted in 2.2.1) and most other avenues of public life in South Africa, literacy research in general increasingly reflects (and endorses) assumptions (cf. those just outlined) consistent with the ideological model of literacy.

There are, however, dissenting voices. What for example renders the work of Hill & Parry (1994) noteworthy - to which I now turn - is that these authors outline an *alternative* to Street's ideological model and counterpart to the autonomous model - in the form of the 'Pragmatic model of literacy'. Since this decision reflects dissatisfaction with aspects of the ideological model and since it draws attention to perceived inadequacies of the ideological model, I briefly consider the pragmatic model below. I do so, in addition, in the interest of presenting as balanced a picture of the field of literacy studies as possible.

At the heart of Hill & Parry's alternative model appears to be their need, driven by their involvement in language testing/assessment - particularly of reading - to foreground *linguistic* rather than anthropological considerations, especially those relating to 'social and psychological processes' (p. 20), and to play down the role of ideology and social practice. In particular, Hill & Parry appear uncomfortable with the idea that what determines the nature and consequences of literacy is the ideological embeddedness of that literacy. Moreover, as they explain (1994:20):

Whereas he (i.e. Street) is interested in literacy in general and how it is used in different societies, we are more concerned with particular texts - those used on reading tests - and how they are interpreted by particular readers from various language backgrounds. This perspective leads us to conclusions that, in some respects, differ from his, and so we distinguish our own model of literacy by describing it as pragmatic rather than ideological. The choice of the word is deliberate: pragmatics is that area of linguistics concerned with 'the use of language in communication' (Richards et al. 1985, p. 225).

As a way of translating the above, and so better understanding how they conceive of "language use in communication" and what "social and psychological processes" they have in mind, I turn to the main features of the explanation they provide of "text", "communication" and "literacy skills".

Texts, as Hill & Parry explain via a consideration of the various activities involved in their production, storage and retrieval, are essentially *social*. Producing a text, they point out, for example, entails using words, which are "communal property". Texts always "locate" their writers, for example, in relation to current debates. They also "evoke" other "text makers" and so are "social gestures". Moreover, texts are preserved, not for their own sake, but because of their perceived social value - and they are only ever retrieved and understood in a social context. Thus, for example, reading the same text at different

times renders the two experiences different.

The account Hill & Parry provide of *communication* is more extensive than that of *texts*, and draws strongly on Widdowson (1978), which, however, they modify. It also incorporates ideas strongly reminiscent of critical reading theorists such as Wallace (1992;1994) and Talbot (1992) as well as Ivanic & Simpson (1992) who all give prominence to the role of positioning in texts - i.e., how writers construct *themselves*, the *issues* they write about and their *readers* - and how readers can resist such constructions/positionings.

A key feature of the expansion they provide of Widdowson's model of communication is what they refer to as 'internal reciprocity' which, they claim, gives rise to a richer notion of reciprocal exchange than Widdowson describes. This notion of reciprocity relates to the *identities* that communicators construct for themselves and for their interlocutors through the vocabulary and syntactic choices made, and the amount of background knowledge that is assumed or else provided, etc. Such 'linguistically constituted identities' are "ascribed" or else "assumed", depending on whether one views the process from the *writer's*, *productive* point of view (in which case the writer has an assumed identity and the reader an ascribed identity) or whether one views it from the *reader's*, *receptive* point of view (in which case ascribed and assumed identities as I have indicated them, swap around).

'Internal reciprocity' has a second dimension, which is that writers and readers take on the role of the other, "modelled on talk in the external world" (p. 27), in order to negotiate meaning with their interlocutor, i.e., they ask questions, seek exemplification, etc., of the other, if not overtly, then subconsciously. By this means readers establish, for example, how reliable writers are and can modify or even reject the role the writer ascribes to them. Hill & Parry are also at pains to emphasise that, unlike Widdowson, who *distinguishes* the psychological dimensions of communication from the social (by differentiating interpreting from talking or corresponding), they prefer not to. For them internal reciprocity is "inherently social" (p. 28).

Hill & Parry apply issues such as those I have outlined above to the situation/literacy event that prevails in testing situations and seek, among other things, to explore what identities are linguistically constructed (i.e., assumed and assigned) for the various parties

involved - i.e., the tester, test-takers, authors of texts, etc.

Of note is the dilemma that inexperienced test-takers allegedly confront when attempting to ascribe an identity to the test-makers - since their identity, for reasons of security, *cannot* be known. Instead, test-takers are expected to infer “the presence of homo legens, a figure that draws only on knowledge normatively associated with the words on the page” (p. 30). As they point out further, “homo legens, as represented by the test, can be quite an intimidating figure, for test-takers know that they must produce responses that have already been designated as correct”. Some, in addition, are fearful “that the questions have been set up for the express purpose of tricking them” (p. 30).

Turning, finally, to Hill & Parry’s notion of *literacy skills*, it is sufficient to note that such skills entail that the reader engages in an appropriate reciprocal exchange with a text. To this end, readers need to be able to:

- (1) decode words;
- (2) apply appropriate background knowledge; and
- (3) draw on such communicative skills as enable them to ascribe an identity to the writer, assume one for themselves, and then work with and revise these identities as they negotiate meaning with the author.

In sum, the pragmatic model of literacy is claimed to emphasise “the social character of literacy”. It views text “as social instrument”, and “readers and writers as embodying social identities”. It views literacy skills as “involving social interaction” (p. 33).

The model clearly contrasts, in terms of each of the above characteristics, with the autonomous model. This emphasis on the socio-psychological and interactive dimensions of literacy, on the other hand, is consistent with central tenets of the ideological model. The essential difference, it seems, is that while Street explicitly acknowledges the central role of ideology in his model, Hill & Parry do so only implicitly. For example, Hill & Parry focus on the process by which interlocutors negotiate identities with/for one another in literacy events but do not characterise this as an ideological struggle (see 2.5). However, they are concerned with how power is exercised ideologically as we see in their drawing attention to the marginalising effects which unshared and undeclared assumptions within the testing enterprise have on

newcomers and outsiders. Such conduct effectively amounts to the ideological exercise of power by testing agencies and the interests they represent over powerless and marginalised individuals and groups. The effects are similar to what takes place during news-time in the context of early formal education. There too, as I show in 5.3.3, institutional power is exercised indirectly, i.e., by *ideological* means. Moreover, issues of teacher-pupil identity during news-time, as they are in the case of testers and test-takers, are similarly confusing, giving rise, as Baker & Perrott (1988:23) explain in relation to news-time, to “an institutional paradox”. As they further explain, this paradox, like the effects produced by *homo legens* in the case of reading texts, is ideologically motivated and helps to reinforce power asymmetries in the situation.

2.3 Clarification of some key terms

Given the range of definitions of literacy and assumptions about its nature, it is not surprising that there is not as yet a standardised terminology for talking and writing about literacy. With this in mind, I turn now to describing eight key terms which will figure prominently in the pages to come, some of which I have already used. The eight terms are: New Literacy Studies; literacy events; literacies; literacy practices; dominant literacy; vernacular literacies; sub-rosa literacy; and expository or ‘schoolled’ literacy.

2.3.1 New Literacy Studies

The term *New Literacy Studies* labels a class of literacy studies which, as I indicated at the end of 2.2.4, subscribe broadly to the assumptions of the ideological model. An influential collection of New Literacy Studies is Street (1993), which he describes as being “a programmatic document of the New Literacy Studies” (1993:3). It comprises twelve studies of literacy in a wide range of third world and Western settings, all of which are ethnographic in orientation. Of the twelve studies, eight are revisions of publications which appeared earlier, one dating back to 1983, the other seven dating to between 1986 and 1990. The remaining four studies were commissioned for the book. On this evidence, therefore, New Literacy Studies are relatively recent. Prinsloo & Breier (1996), as I indicated in 2.1.1, is a recent collection of South African new literacy studies, and, as I have also already indicated, I regard this thesis, too, to be a contribution to the emerging field of New Literacy Studies.

2.3.2 Literacy events, literacy practices, literacies

The next three terms, *literacy events*, *literacy practices* and *literacies* are mutually related and mutually defining. As will emerge shortly, I will treat *literacy/literacies* as a superordinate term, in the sense that literacies are made up of *literacy practices*. Both, in turn, are employed during *literacy events*, i.e., specific, culturally-defined occasions of use. News-time, of course, is the focal literacy event in this thesis. I now consider each term in turn.

Barton (1994:36) traces the origin of *literacy event* to Hymes's sociolinguistic notion of 'speech event' and from there to the literacy work of Anderson et al (1980) and Heath (1983;1984). For Heath (1983) a literacy event is "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretative processes". While this definition could be made to work in relation to news-time, it does so only if one adopts a 'great divide' view of literacy and if one then accepts that writing is a remove or two away from what actually happens during news-time. As Michaels (1981) argues, using great divide terminology, news, or rather, its American equivalent, is oral preparation for literacy (i.e., writing). Teachers in my data in fact see no link between news-time and writing though, as I will show in chapter 4, guided by Michaels (1981), they clearly are driven by the norms of expository writing when steering and shaping children's news-time contributions. The question thus for me is how "integral" Heath envisages the link to be between "participants' interaction", their "interpretative processes" and "a piece of writing".

The 1994 definition by Heath which Barton (1994:36) refers readers to is "communicative situations 'where literacy has an integral role'". Barton approves of the breadth of communicative situations which this definition can encompass, which for me is also an important consideration. However, Barton (and Heath) still envisages communicative situations which involve encounters with the *written* word only, and the question of what is meant by "integral" still remains.

In order, firstly, to avoid the potentially troublesome associations of literacy with writing in the context specifically of news-time and, secondly, to avoid what is ultimately a form of great divide thinking, cf. 2.2.4 (c), I prefer to base my understanding of literacy events on a broader definition of literacy than Heath's, e.g. that provided by Sola & Bennett

(1991) and discussed earlier in 2.2.1. Accordingly, I shall assume that literacy events are occasions which promote “cultural and communicative practices associated with...spoken and written (as well as non-verbal) forms among (and between) specific social groups”. Clearly this view of literacy will not find favour with those who rigidly align literacy with writing. The case of news-time, however, requires us to question this very association, and to perceive the products of news-time afresh.

According to Barton (1994:37), *literacy practices* are “the general cultural ways of utilising literacy which people draw on in a literacy event”. He follows this definition in the source from which I have drawn it with an illustration in which two men plan a letter to the local newspaper after having discussed the contents of the newspaper. Afterwards, Barton explains: “In deciding who does what, where and when it is done, along with the associated ways of talking and the ways of writing, ... participants make use of their literacy practices”. Three points made here by Barton are worth drawing attention to. Firstly, he casts his opening explanation of literacy practices in very broad terms, linking them to “general cultural ways”. Secondly, he too is as vague regarding the specific referent/s of “literacy” as Heath was earlier. In Barton (1994:viii) he repeats the first part of the material quoted above, but specifies more explicitly what he means by “literacy”, by substituting “reading and writing” for “literacy”. The third point of relevance is the distinction which Barton makes, following his illustration involving the two men, between a macro-dimension to literacy, i.e., “who does what, where and when it is done”, and a micro-dimension, i.e., “the associated ways of talking and the ways of writing”. These two dimensions to literacy are strongly reminiscent of macro and micro sociolinguistic dimensions of communicative competence.

For Street (1993:12), the term “literacy practices” refers both to “behaviour and conceptualisations”, the latter incorporating what he calls the “folk models” of speech events and “the ideological preconceptions that underpin them”. What he adds to our understanding of the notion of literacy practices, therefore, is the idea of folk/popular schemata associated with literacy behaviour in speech events. He also reminds us that ideologies underpin literacy practices, i.e., no literacy practices are ideologically neutral.

The notion of literacy practices as I shall be using the term incorporates both of the insights provided by Street. It also recognises that there is a macro and a micro

dimension to literacy practices, along the lines suggested by Barton. I would want to specify these as closely as possible, as I do, for example, in 2.3.5 when I characterise expository literacy and as I do much later in 4.3, for example. I think it is important, too, that we understand that the knowledge and behaviours which constitute literacy practices should be as inclusive as possible, incorporating speech and the full range of non-verbal behaviours, for instance, so as not to misrepresent literacy in ways similar to the conception of literacy according to the autonomous model. Lastly, we need to remember that literacy practices are multiple and variable and, as with any form of *linguistic* diversity, carry social meaning (cf. the illustrations provided in 2.4 and 2.5 and then in 5.4 and 5.5 in relation to news-time).

The notion of *literacies*, as readers will recall from my earlier discussion in 2.3.1, deliberately directs our attention away from the stereotypical, autonomous view that literacy is singular and monolithic, i.e., “with a big ‘L’ and a single ‘y’” (Street 1994:11). Instead, it reminds us of the *plurality* of practices which people employ in the process of engaging in daily life. In this thesis I shall use literacy/literacies as a superordinate term to literacy practices, in that different literacy practices constitute a literacy. Literacy/literacies, though, is a very vague term. Barton (1994:38) defines a literacy as follows: “A literacy is a stable, coherent, identifiable configuration of practices”. He associates literacies with different domains of life; different cultures; different historical periods; and, in multilingual settings, with different languages and/or different scripts. This means, as Barton concedes, that the notion becomes vaguer and vaguer. To my mind, this vagueness is unproblematic. A “literacy” remains the label for a set of literacy practices, regardless of the domain, time, place, culture or associated linguistic and scriptal conventions. Where confusion might occur, is with notions like “genre”, “speech style” and “discourse”. But, to obviate such confusion, I shall not use these terms. I will, however, equate literacy/literacies with discourse/discourses (cf. the discussion in 2.3.3).

It is important to recognise once again that there is *variability* within different literacies, a matter which I investigate in detail in chapter 4. For now I draw readers’ attention to the distinction Michaels (1981) makes between ‘topic-centred’ and ‘topic-associating’ news-time contributions in her American data. She shows, moreover, that these two variant literacies are not equivalent in status. Whereas topic-centred accounts have

prestige, in that teachers develop pupils' news-time themes which are based on such literacy, topic-associating accounts, by contrast, often result in unsatisfactory pupil-teacher interaction and premature closure of the pupils' news. What this evidence suggests, therefore, is that literacy practices are not equal, there is a hierarchy among them. This recognition, supported by the news-time data I describe in chapter 4, leads me to make various policy-level recommendations for the teaching/learning of literacy in early education, in 6.3.

2.3.3 Synonyms used in this thesis

The use of multiple synonyms is inevitable in a work such as this, and attributable to two reasons, at least. The first is my own need as a writer to maintain cohesion over what is a substantial amount of text, in which regard the use of synonyms rather than repetition alone is a useful resource. The second is a consequence of the relatively unsettled developmental stage achieved to date by literacy researchers working within a critical paradigm - a by-product of which is inconsistent use by different writers of central concepts and terms. Apart from the terms so far mentioned in this section (2.3) and those still to be, it is necessary, I feel, to clarify other conventions I adopt. Thus, I paraphrase the central notion of emic salience (cf. 3.2) as *expectations* and *assumptions* (using either one or else both of these words in any given instance). Considerable overlap (and potential confusion) surrounds the equation in the writing of a number of people of *practices* with norms/conventions/forms/structures. In this thesis I use *practices* to refer to behaviour, and *forms* and *structures* to refer to the traces or evidence of such practices. I use *norms* and *conventions* to refer to what "underlies" structures and forms and informs practices.

As regards the relationship between literacy and discourse (cf. 2.3.2 earlier), I treat *literacy* as a synonym for *discourse*; and *literacy practices* as a synonym for *discourse practices*.

2.3.4 Dominant, vernacular and sub-rosa literacy

The term *dominant literacy*, along with the remaining three, namely, *vernacular literacy*, *sub-rosa literacy* and *expository literacy* or *schooled literacy* are intimately related. Expository/schooled literacy is a clear example of a dominant literacy, while vernacular

literacies, of which sub-rosa literacies are a sub-class, are dominated or marginalised. From an institutional point of view, they are powerless literacies. Bearing in mind the closeness of their association, I turn now to a brief description of each notion individually.

The issue of *dominance* as suggested in “*dominant literacy*” is very important. This is because it draws our attention to a process which traditionally has been conveniently ignored, and leads us to ask at least one question about that process, namely, how a given set of literacy practices achieved its dominance. Answering this question presupposes that there were other literacies available at the time, that they were in competition with the now dominant literacy, and that it defeated them or the groups that “own them”, or, in some other way, marginalised them. We are reminded, in other words, that literacy practices are not God-given, nor are they neutral, and nor are they ‘there’ simply because that is the way things are. Rather, they are contested and ‘win’ their status.

Mitchell (1991:xviii) uses the term “exclusionary literacy” for what appears to me to be the equivalent of “dominant literacy”. What distinguishes her choice of label is that it highlights the process (and effects) of the contest between literacies, but does so from the vantage point of the *powerless* group. She explains what is entailed as follows:

Situating centrally, an exclusionary literacy views itself as a universal form of reading, writing, and language use. Discourse forms situated at the boundaries of this centrally located form are designated as deviant, as lacking in rationality, and as in need of eradication. Those situated outside the confines of the monolithic, exclusionary literacy are designated as the Other, alien and troubled, lawless and frustrated, and marked by an inherent failure to learn to read and write, and an inability to use language appropriately. Also, although many do step beyond blaming the individual for this failure, ... and move to a recognition that institutions and institutional policies serve to perpetuate the so-called literacy problem, few move beyond this level of critique and truly problematise the very nature of literacy itself and, in turn, problematise how literacy is acquired.

Mitchell’s account draws attention to the essentially psychological and political effects of an exclusionary literacy from the point of view of the ‘vanquished’, not the ‘victor’ group - which is what the notion ‘dominant literacy’ does. In addition, her quotation reminds one strongly of the conception of literacy favoured by the autonomous model of literacy. It also recalls the criticism levelled against the autonomous model, that while

supporters claimed ideological neutrality for the model, they were in fact endorsing just the opposite, i.e., the marginalisation of those whose literacy practices were different from their own, cf. discussion in 2.2.2 and 2.2.4. It is very important, as Eagleton (1991) and others show, to understand that claims of ideological neutrality are an essential part - an ideological strategy, in fact - by which groups legitimise their own literacy and marginalise the literacies of others.

The most obvious example of a dominant literacy in the context of this thesis, is schooled/expository literacy, the influence of which is demonstrated in a number of the scenarios which follow, particularly in 2.5.

Vernacular literacy is the sixth of the eight terms I am considering. Such literacies relate to dominant literacies in much the same way as regional and other stigmatised accents and dialects do to standard (or “dominant”) accents and dialects. In Labov’s (1966) terms, they have covert prestige, unlike dominant literacies, such as schooled/expository literacy, which have overt prestige. Camitta (1993:228-9) notes that vernacular literacies are “closely associated with culture which is neither elite nor institutional, which is traditional and indigenous to the diverse cultural processes of communities as distinguished from the uniform, inflexible standards of institutions”. Elsewhere she notes (Camitta 1990:262-3) in regard to what would be their overt status, that “vernacular literacies are known, at best, as cultural alternatives to official literacy; at worst, they are believed to be partial, incomplete forms that are subordinate to the real thing, by which is meant essayist prose (expository literacy)”. Such sentiments strongly echo those earlier of Mitchell (1991), and remind one of how potent the status hierarchy is among literacies.

Vernacular literacies are ‘alternative’ literacies, often deliberately forms of resistance against the power of the dominant literacies. Their low (overt) status, Camitta suggests (referring to *written* vernacular literacy), derives from two sources: (1) the fact that they are typically associated with domestic, community and local contexts (which, from work on diglossia, we know are rated lowly); and (2) because they “share features of modern, oral or tribal, popular and ethnic literature”. Written vernacular literacy is highly innovative, but, presumably because it is made up of mixed modes, is considered “*noncanonical*”.

There are two major ironies here. The first is that all literacies presumably have their origins in the lowliness of ‘domestic, community and local contexts’, but this is conveniently ignored in the case of dominant literacies. As Lemke (1990) shows, science is also ‘anti-historical’ when this suits it. The second irony is that all literacies, except as defined within the autonomous model, are mixed. This means that neither of the properties mentioned here, i.e., ‘lowly’ origins and their mode mixing, distinguishes vernacular from dominant literacy in any essential way. The distinction ultimately rests on a social judgement as to their relative worth and the ideological position/s which those literacies come to endorse.

What bearing, readers might ask, does the notion of vernacular literacies have on news-time? My data will show that news-time is a literacy event where one witnesses at first hand a confrontation between a dominant literacy, that of the teacher, and a set of vernacular literacies, those of the pupils (cf. the list provided two thirds of the way through 5.3.3). Some of the children’s vernacular literacies are close enough to the teacher’s literacy for her to remould them slightly so that they assume the shape of the teacher’s literacy. Others, however, require major recasting. Whatever the case, the children’s vernacular literacies are frequently misconstrued and undervalued. These are issues which I shall give considerable attention to later in this thesis, prompted by the work, in particular, of Collins (1991), Bennett (1991), Michaels (1991) and Sola & Bennett (1991).

The notion *sub-rosa literacy* again reminds us of the central role of contest and conflict (cf. the ideological model) when literacies interact, as commonly happens in the classroom. Sub-rosa literacy is in effect peer discourse/literacy and, as such, a form of vernacular literacy. It is one of two “streams” of communication which characterise school interaction, according to Sola & Bennett (1991:39). The “official stream” is that of the teachers and administrators, the “unofficial stream” the covert discourse of the pupils. Both are constantly involved in what Sola & Bennett (1991:53) call “the pull and push of various discourses that inhabit a particular environment, the struggle for voice” (cf. scenario 6 in 2.5.3).

Sub-rosa literacy employs spoken, written as well as non-verbal resources of many different kinds e.g. winks, stares, gestures, increased or decreased volume, objects such

as notes, magazines, combs, etc.. Employed to signal resistance to the influence of expository literacy, which is dominant in the setting, sub-rosa literacies ensure that different meanings, values and social relationships of power, inter alia, are signalled from those sanctioned by the school. I shall return to the notion of sub-rosa literacy when I consider the role of conflict in classroom interaction and will relate ideas associated with sub-rosa literacy to the behaviour during news-time of one pupil in particular, namely, Siphon (cf. 4.5.2).

2.3.5 Expository or schooled literacy

“*Expository*” or “*Schooled*” literacy (I treat the two as equivalent and use them interchangeably) is the core or reference literacy around which this entire thesis coheres and is the last of the eight terms which I shall be discussing here. Targeted by the school system from an astonishingly early stage (as my data in chapter 4 will show), expository literacy is undeniably the dominant literacy at all levels of formal education in settings which embrace Western conceptions and models of education. As authors like Collins (1987;1991); Cook-Gumperz (1986); Camitta (1993) and Willinsky (1991) show, schooled literacy (in keeping with *all* literacies) have constantly jostled and competed with others for supremacy, as they continue to do today. The authors just mentioned remind one in fact that part of the justification originally for introducing schooled literacy in Britain was the middle-class desire to counter the threat to the social order which they perceived vernacular (largely working-class) literacies to pose in the mid-nineteenth century.

Part of the reason for the ensuing dominance of schooled literacy relates to the power and influence in education (e.g. via teachers) and in society, generally, of those whose conventions and values are represented by schooled literacy. Education (and other professions) has simply taken over and then entrenched those literacy conventions in the literacy events which we associated with schooling. As Collins (1987;1991); Lemke (1990); Street & Street (1991), and others show in different ways, the autonomous model has been extremely influential in strengthening the position of expository literacy within the school. Its assumptions, in tandem with a prescriptive ideology of language have, for example, fuelled the ‘back-to-basics’ movement in education, of which Auerbach (1992:75) writes:

The back-to-basics thrust reinforces the status of dominant groups by denying the variability of literacy practices. At the same time, it elevates one culture-specific set of practices (namely the Western essay-text tradition) to universal status: The diverse socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic realities of students are thought to be extraneous to the “scientific” task of teaching (and of learning) and to the acquisition of “neutral” and “universal” content. The exception to this rule is, of course, if the students are young, white, middle class (and probably male) for it is this cultural capital that is a valued commodity in school settings (Walsh 1991:9).

Moreover, middle-class literacy in general is being ‘pedagogised’, according to Street & Street (1991), leading to further entrenchment of autonomous views of literacy and what it symbolises (modes of thinking, values, etc.) through the penetration of expository literacy into seemingly non-educational domains of social and family life, e.g. what toys children play with and how they play with them, what forms of entertainment people engage in, etc. By such means expository literacy is strengthened while other local/vernacular literacies are marginalised. Lemke (1990) and others suggest that other and, in some ways greater forces, this time essentially ideological in nature, help to promote expository literacy. These forces, which I shall detail later (in chapter 5), ensure that expository literacy remains dominant in the really influential domains of public life. But, importantly, they ensure that the ability to use expository literacy persuasively, is restricted to a small percentage of people. This measure ensures that particular group interests are maintained and that power in the society is ultimately allocated *unequally*. The continued dominance of expository literacy, in other words, depends on unequal command of it - and it is part of the school’s job to ensure this. It is precisely for these reasons that Mitchell (1991) refers to expository literacy as *exclusionary*.

Thus far I have ignored the more *formal* features which characterise expository literacy, but turn to them now. In the sense in which I shall be using the term, expository literacy has two primary functions, *analytic*, and *descriptive*. As such it expresses relationships such as “classification, taxonomy, and logical connection among abstract, or generalised, terms or processes”, which Lemke (1990:158) believes typify the literacy of science. It also expresses relationships of “time, place, manner, and action among specific, real or fictional, persons or events” which Lemke considers to be more “narrative” relationships, likely to be expressed in subjects, such as literature and history.

Expository literacy is *maximally efficient*. This means that it is consistent with the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner. The resultant literacy, as

Lakoff (1979) and others have shown, typifies that of the prototypical middle-class, Western, male - the individual who, traditionally, has tended to fill the powerful institutional roles in Western society. In more detail, expository literacy assumes the following features:

- (a) It is topic-centred (i.e., pursues a central topic) rather than anecdotal (i.e., held together by loose, implicit associations between ideas);
- (b) it explicitly verbalises meaning, relying on lexical and grammatical devices, not prosodic or non-verbal ones;
- (c) the speaker/writer draws only such inferences as s/he intends to be drawn for the hearer or reader, i.e., the speaker/writer provides explicit guidelines regarding the process of inferencing which s/he intends the hearer/reader to follow;
- (d) it eschews multiple voices, and is not accompanied by dramatisation, singing or other forms of performance;
- (e) it is objective, detached, and unemotional;
- (f) it presupposes a speaker/writer - hearer/reader relationship which does not assume personal familiarity or friendship, i.e., relationships of closeness are discouraged.

As I will show in section 2.5, expository literacy encourages various powerful forms of understanding and facilitates the expression of a range of important types of message. However, it is not without limitations. Michaels (1991:118), for instance, shows how complex, often original thinking (i.e., *content*) is often sacrificed because transparency of *form* enjoys such high priority in expository literacy. Many others note in support of this criticism that expository literacy is 'empty' and 'safe'. Bennett (1991:29) argues that, because of the emphasis placed on explicitness, topic-centredness and clearly signalling the route by which intended inferences should be drawn, expository literacy can in fact *inhibit* the expression of meaning. Some meanings are simply not expressible in terms of the literacy practices which define expository literacy. Another criticism is that of Baker & Perrott (1988), who note that expository literacy is 'cold' rather than 'hot'. It is the vehicle, in other words, of distance and considered opinion, not the vehicle of immediacy or spontaneity. Bennett (1991) and Evans (1993), among others, draw attention to the anxiety, bewilderment and feeling of anomie which expository literacy engenders in some

of its victims. Finally, Sola & Bennett (1991), Lemke (1990) and others remind us of the non-neutrality of expository literacy. It is in effect the repository of mainstream middle-class values such as “quiescence and passivity” (Gee 1991:40), which many, especially non-middle-class, reject. By so doing, their rejection mirrors the greater conflicts and tensions in the wider society, which literacy research is ill-advised to ignore.

In later chapters I will show that news-time is a literacy event where the ideological issues associated with expository literacy (as mentioned at the beginning of this account of expository literacy) are played out. I will show too (e.g. in 5.4 and 5.5) that news-time is an event in which many of the literacy practices, social meanings and values associated with expository literacy, are passed on. Also transmitted, indirectly, are its limitations. News-time is a *key* situation in both the lay sense and the technical one of Erickson (1975), i.e., of a gatekeeping encounter with important consequences for those who engage in it. It is clearly also an event where strategic intervention is possible, e.g. if one’s goal were to loosen the stranglehold of expository literacy and attempt to democratise school interactions by allowing other “vernacular” literacies to be heard (cf. 6.3).

2.4 The ecological embeddedness of literacy practices

Barton (1994), subtitled *An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, relies for its coherence on an *ecological* metaphor. That metaphor, I feel, offers a useful way of envisaging and exploring literacy. Drawn from the biological/organic sciences, the essence of it is its emphasis on the interrelationship of an organism, in this case, *literacy*, and its environment, i.e., *the context in which that literacy is used*. It is a metaphor, moreover, that encourages one to explore the ways in which different literacy *events* or *practices* influence, and in turn are influenced by, contextual factors. Mutual influence of this kind, as I pointed out in 2.3.4, is a major research goal within the ideological model of literacy.

If we follow Barton, the notion ‘contextual factors’ should be interpreted broadly, i.e., to include social, psychological and historical dimensions, not simply the fixed perceivable factors which can be pointed to in interactive situations, such as the time and place of the interaction and the identity of the interlocutors. Writers like Collins (1987;1991),

Fairclough (1989) and Lemke (1990) encourage one to expand the list of contextual dimensions to include *ideology*, i.e., assumptions about such matters as social relations, social identities, and values (cf. 2.5), which Barton appears to play down. So, in line with the writers just mentioned, I shall treat ideological considerations as having a much more central bearing on the literacy choices people make and will include them as a dimension of context.

The ecological metaphor emphasises not only the *contextual embeddedness* (social, psychological, historical, ideological) of literacy, it also emphasises literacy *diversity* which, as I have already indicated, is a further key concern in this thesis. According to Barton (1994:31), in the original biological senses of ecology, diversity is “a virtue”, “a source of strength”, and “the roots of the possibilities of the future”. The data which follows will, I believe, endorse these beliefs, as also the value of nurturing diversity, the applied implications of which I pursue in chapter 6.

Sections 2.4.1-2.4.6 below consist of six scenarios, each featuring a different literacy ecology. My principal objectives in providing them are:

- (a) to illustrate the sort of recent literacy research which I mentioned in 2.2.2-2.2.4;
- (b) to demonstrate the ecological embeddedness of different literacy practices;
- (c) to cast news-time, ultimately, in a revealingly comparative perspective so that we can understand it better; and
- (d) to point, wherever possible, to the applied relevance of features of each scenario to news-time in the emerging democratic dispensation in South Africa.

By way of overviewing each scenario, I start in scenario 1 with a very brief account of literacy behaviour in a domestic setting in Lancaster, England. Something of a snapshot, it depicts what are common-place, everyday literacy activities, i.e., for those whose cultural background and material circumstances are similar to those assumed in the snapshot. Scenario 1 is noteworthy, moreover, because the literacy events/practices referred to (i.e., the literacy ecology) are seemingly neutral, appearing not to embody social values of any kind or to position individuals unequally. By this I am not claiming that they have *no* ideological content. This is not possible, since *all* literacy practices embody assumptions about social relations of power, even if those relations are relatively

egalitarian.

Scenario 2 features a literacy ecology which is very different from that in scenario 1. It depicts literacy conventions which are embedded in Amish traditions and values and which, in turn, help promote those traditions and values further, as all such conventions do in all societies. In the Amish situation these literacy conventions sustain and bolster the community from outside intervention/influence. Furthermore, because the literacy conventions are compatible with those employed in the exclusively Amish schools to which the children are sent, continuity is assured and the literacy practices are further reinforced.

Scenarios 3 - 6 depict literacy ecologies involving ideological struggle. In scenario 3 that struggle takes place through a common language, namely, English, but involves literacy practices, conventions and ideologies which are different from one another. As with scenario 2, those conventions/practices carry strongly felt social meanings because of the values they embody for Maine fisher folk and their children who have always used them and are forced to adapt to the conventions/practices of another (more powerful) group.

Scenario 4, located in Los Angeles, America, is distinctive in that it provides us with an ecology in which literacy conventions as well as different languages (English and Spanish) are in conflict. It is a scenario, moreover, which draws attention to how disempowering language legislation can be. The language situation described in California labels those not proficient in the dominant language, English, illiterate. It thus marginalises them in terms of opportunities, and it renders them forever dependent on the host community and its institutions, deliberately ignoring the fact that the people treated in this way have mother-tongue facility in Spanish and are not illiterate. However, discrimination and domination in this scenario are not enacted by forces outside the Spanish-speaking community alone. They also take place *within* it. We see that men in their turn discriminate against women by only permitting them to engage in a restricted range of literacy events, which means that they acquire a restricted range of literacy conventions. The end result is that women are disempowered and rendered further dependent, this time on their husbands and other males. In general, scenario 4 presents us with an ecology of disempowerment - with little likelihood of freedom and independence for those involved.

The fifth scenario - involving Panjabi immigrants in Southall, London - features a literacy ecology which includes many of the same basic contextual features that are present in the preceding scenarios, i.e., a multilingual and multiliteracy setting, an overriding language policy whose effect is to discriminate against non mother-tongue speakers of English, literacy practices which embody cherished though conflicting social (and this time, religious) values, adaptation on the part of an immigrant community, etc. What distinguishes it though from the other scenarios is the fact that the discriminated group, i.e., the Panjabis, are able to alter the ecological balance within Southall (and particularly within the schools in the area) to the point where they achieve greater prominence for *their* literacy practices and a better deal for themselves than they enjoyed previously. This outcome, though by no means fully achieved, is the result of literacy “activism”.

The final scenario captures interaction in three classrooms in a junior high school in East Harlem. Eighty percent of those in each class are Puerto Rican, the other twenty percent Afro-American. All are from working-class communities which, the authors explain, have not been well served by the school system. The surrounding macro context, in other words, is a hostile one, and it is in such a context that two of the three teachers described fail in their attempts to promote schooled literacy practices - because the value system their own literacy practices embody affirms their group identity, while that underlying schooled literacy does not. The third teacher successfully manages to ‘create community’ with her learners through employing literacy practices they value, and gets them to use schooled literacy. She, interestingly, is black and originally from the area, whereas neither of the other two is.

As I indicated earlier, I am concerned in the pages which follow not simply to highlight the ecological detail which distinguishes each scenario but also to point to insights which have potentially important applied relevance to news-time in the context of education in a democratic South African society - issues which I take further in chapter 5, and which I attempt to accommodate in the literacy policy suggestions I make in 6.3.

2.4.1 Scenario 1: Literacy at breakfast time in Lancaster, England (Source: Barton 1994:3-4.)

Consider the details in the following literacy scenario:

“Imagine a person waking up in the morning: they may well be woken up at seven

o'clock in the morning by an alarm which turns on a radio automatically. The first voice they hear might be someone reading the radio news to them, a written text which is being spoken. Going for breakfast, they pick up the newspaper from the door mat. Breakfast might consist of drinking a cup of tea while listening to the radio, browsing through the newspaper and opening some letters. Other people might be present, adults and children, and they might participate in these activities".

".....Around breakfast time there might well be a hurried letter to be written to the teacher, or a school form to be filled in. There may be a note to be left for someone, or a bill which has to be paid urgently. People write reminder notes for themselves at the beginning of the day and write in diaries and on calendars. Some people get up early to write personal letters before the bustle of the day begins".

The 'ecological' details of note in this account, are the following:

- (a) Literacy is clearly integral to the activities which are described above. The activities, moreover, are considered by the participants to be commonplace, everyday occurrences, not in any way 'special' or surrounded in mystique for those who participate in them;
- (b) the literacy activities appear, for the most part, to be engaged in subconsciously. They are 'natural', seemingly 'inevitable', and are not reflected on, i.e., they are practices which are observed and engaged in but are apparently largely 'unseen';
- (c) the literacy behaviour takes the form of a number of different literacy events which cluster together. Each, in turn, is made up of different literacy practices, which we could describe if we wanted to do a full investigation of them. The actors in the above snapshot engage in all of them;
- (d) children are presumably socialised into the literacy practices mentioned partly through being present and participating in the literacy events which are mentioned;
- (e) the literacy events and the practices which constitute those events are apparently 'neutral'. They are uncontested, and depicted as not advantaging anyone or promoting inequalities of any sort within the family, or beyond it, in the greater society.

Subsequent scenarios will show that the literacy behaviour described in the "slice of life" in scenario 1 can only be called "commonplace", "natural", "inevitable" or be referred to as "largely unseen cultural practices" if one's cultural background or prior interactional

history renders it as such. For many, because their cultural background and material circumstances are incompatible with it, the literacy behaviour is just the opposite: alien, culture-specific, probably largely meaningless. Since the account consists of no more than the briefest listing of literacy events, it is not possible to investigate the issues mentioned above in (e), i.e., those relating to the neutrality or otherwise of the literacy practices mentioned. While it might be tempting to argue that outsiders to the literacy behaviour described in scenario 1 would not know how ‘neutral’ or otherwise the literacy events are, insiders, usually, are “blind” to the ideological content of literacy practices. Outsiders might not recognise the ideological content as such, but would *feel* the effects of it.

Scenario 1 raises the possibility that a literacy event such as news-time will be embedded within the “everydayness” of ordinary junior and pre-primary school educational practice in much the same way as the above literacy events are in the everyday activities which surround breakfast time. As such, there is a good chance that they will be seen as integral to the school’s general academic objectives and that they will be construed, particularly by teachers, as “natural”, i.e., in the context of early formal education. (For confirmation, see 4.2.1). As far as pupils are concerned, three possibilities present themselves: (1) some pupils will have encountered news-time before, and so will be familiar with the expectations which surround it; (2) they will not have encountered news-time before but will have encountered a literacy event which at least partially resembles news-time and so will be prepared for it to some degree; and (3) pupils will be unfamiliar with news-time, will find it lacking in precedent, and so will approach it either unsuspectingly or else with uncertainty, possibly even suspicion. What actually prevails is described in detail in chapter 4.

2.4.2 Scenario 2: The literacy practices of Eli Fisher, Jnr (Source: Fishman 1990:29-38.)

This scenario features Eli Fisher, Jnr, the six year old son of Eli, Snr and Anna, who, along with five older siblings, is raised in Pennsylvania according to Old Order Amish tradition and belief. The literacy ecology which Fishman describes contrasts interestingly with the breakfast snapshot provided in 2.4.1 and is noteworthy for a number of reasons:

(a) The literacy practices described reflect and clearly reinforce core Amish *values*,

namely, of group uniformity, group co-operation and group reliance. They also signal the *distinctive group identity* of the Amish, contrasting it mainly with groups within mainstream modern American society. Not surprisingly, Amish literacy practices have distinctive ‘symbolic’ or ‘social’ meaning.

By way of illustrating the above points, Eli, Jnr is always included in reading, singing and writing activities, despite his age. Through a system of group care - either the nearest in age attends to him or some other older person does - Eli not only participates in *all* the group’s literacy events, but is led to believe that his participation is *equivalent* to that of his elders. Fishman illustrates these points, for instance, as follows: “When all the Fishers took turns reading the Bible aloud, for example, someone would read Eli’s verse aloud slowly, pausing every few words, so that he could repeat what was said and thereby take his turn in the rotation” (Fishman 1990:32). Further, if Eli wanted to write a letter, he would do so by dictating his thoughts to his sister, who would record them, after which he would copy what she had written. As a consequence, Fishman (1990:34) contends that Eli, Jnr soon came to “affiliate himself with the larger Amish world and to identify himself as Amish, a Fisher, a boy, and Eli Fisher, Jnr.”

- (b) Particularly noteworthy is the fact that there is no break in continuity in the literacy practices which Eli, Jnr acquires at home in his pre-school years and those expected in the (Amish) school to which he proceeds. Two of many instances of home practices which persist at school are, firstly, his ability to “empathise with people in texts and to discern the implicit lessons their experiences teach”, and, secondly, his ability accurately to recall/memorise texts.
- (c) There are, by contrast, very marked differences between the literacy practices approved of within the Amish community, and those valued in mainstream educational settings. The reasons for these differences are, once more, a reflection of fundamental differences in Amish and mainstream values. Thus, the Amish community reject “critical (i.e., individual) reading”, because of its potentially divisive effects within the community. In this regard we recall the high value placed on group conformity and uniformity. The Amish also eschew what Fishman calls “literary appreciation” i.e., objectifying texts and studying how rhetorical effects are

achieved. Instead, they prefer simply to accomplish the rhetorical effects without reflecting on how they are achieved. In addition, they reject writing which adopts an impersonal “third-person-singular point of view”. Such a perspective is anathema to them since, as Fishman puts it (1990:37), theirs is an inclusive “first-person-plural society”. Moreover, hallmarks of expository literacy (cf. 2.3.5) such as “thesis statements”, “topic sentences” and ideas of “coherence”, “unity” and “emphasis”, are also alien. Finally, the community places limitations on what count as “appropriate topics” and limits originality (of form) and individual creativity. This is because, as noted earlier, restraint and uniformity are group values which are highly rated, unlike their opposites.

The relevance of the above ecological (or contextual) details to news-time lies, firstly, in the recognition that literacy practices are often closely tied to the identity, value system and world view of groups. Appreciation of these facts needs thus to be extended to the local news-time situation where, potentially, many different values are embedded in the literacies in which children cast the news which they offer to their teachers (cf. 4.3 and 4.5). Secondly, while it is possible that there will be continuity between home and school values (as there is for Eli, Jnr), it is more likely, particularly in *post*-apartheid South Africa (as in most urban or peri-urban settings in the world today), where integration and not separation of groups is espoused, that there will not be this same continuity for a great many children since the group isolation of before is deliberately not being sustained today. Thirdly, the teacher’s value system in the South African context (as I show in chapters 4 and 5) becomes a crucial consideration at news-time, given that while in my data all classes are racially and culturally mixed, the teachers are all white and their prior interactional experience, like that of the Amish, has been restricted largely to their own (i.e., the white) group. Lastly, the differences in literacy practices indicated in c) above warn one of the extent of the disparity which is possible between vernacular and expository (or mainstream, ‘schooled’) literacy. It therefore seems safe to suggest that those involved in teacher-training would do well to sensitise teachers (and they in turn need likewise to sensitise pupils) to the diversity of literacy practices which people employ, so that it can be appreciated and be woven into the fabric of classroom interaction at news-time and otherwise (cf. 6.3.1.1). Such diversity is, after all, “the roots of the possibilities of the future”, according to Barton (1994:31) as quoted earlier.

2.4.3 Scenario 3: Conflicting literacy practices in a Maine fishing community (Source: Lofty 1990:39-49.)

Lofty's account of his English teaching experience in a Maine fishing community in the late 1970's provides a nice counterpart to Fishman's account of the literacy ecology of the Amish. Like Fishman, Lofty reports on literacy practices within a small, bounded community, the fishing community being *physically* isolated since they lived on an island. Unlike the Amish community, however, which appeared resilient, i.e., not susceptible to influence from outside and assured of continuity in its literacy practices, largely because parents, teachers and others closely monitored and nurtured their Amish values and identity, the Maine fishing community is vulnerable, and cultural continuity and the preservation of local literacy practices appear to be threatened.

The threat comes from two outside sources, teachers (like Lofty) and the influx to the island of "highly literate professional people" (p. 45) who are buying the properties of islanders no longer able to rely on the fishing industry. Both groups of newcomers bring with them different literacy practices and different value systems from those embraced by the islanders. Reflecting on the essence of the predicament which students on the island face, Lofty (1990:46) writes: "the island students are caught in a tension between values located at different positions on the spectrum of time: values conventionally ordered to serve an institution and values derived from the natural world".

For the islanders, time is synchronised with "the fluid fluctuations of tide, season, and sun" (p. 39) rather than linked with the uniformity of clocks and timetables which regulate formal schooling and bureaucratic procedures. Of special significance is the fact that the islanders' time values strongly influence not only the way in which they carry out fishing and quilting tasks, for instance, but also the manner in which they engage in literacy events. Islanders, according to Lofty (1990:40), adopt a "Do it until it's done" or "one-shot" approach to work. He notes that "whenever possible, labour is not distributed consciously into stages to reflect and prepare for the next step. The stages of designing and making a project usually evolve together". In addition, Lofty (1990:41) draws attention to the fact that "the islanders construct the material texts of their houses, boats, and fishing gear with clear conceptions of the final product that preclude revision". They do so, believing that: "If it works, leave it alone. This is good enough - finest kind". Lofty also notes that there is a "fisherman's style" to making things which he

says is driven by “the pragmatics of necessity, the aesthetics of improvisation, and limited time”. He illustrates the concrete effects of this philosophy of making things with the following examples (p. 42):

...a quilt maker assembles different squares of material from those on hand, and the builder of a small rowing skiff recycles wood and fastenings from materials appropriated from previous projects. The maker pieces and patches a new project together from what fits and works with little concern for the intended purpose or the formal qualities of the old pieces.

As I indicated earlier, the islanders’ value system and general world view, especially relating to time and their management of it, have a very interesting impact on their *literacy* behaviour. This impact was felt acutely by Lofty, for two related reasons. The first of these is that he was not familiar with the islander world view and value system when he arrived on the island. The second reason is that he attempted to introduce an approach to writing (a set of literacy practices, in other words) which, while modern and pedagogically well-grounded, conflicted fundamentally with islander writing/literacy practices. These islander practices were consistent with and deeply embedded within the world view, value system and philosophy of work and of time which they had inherited from their parents.

A “process approach to writing”, which is what Lofty attempted to introduce, relies on pupils breaking the writing process down into separate stages, during each of which they concentrate on selected facets of writing, for example idea generating, or drafting, or editing, etc., rather than attempting all of them concurrently. A process approach, therefore, is the opposite of a “Do it until it’s done” or “one-shot” approach. A process approach is also different from the islander approach in that its advocates consider revision to be *integral* to the process of writing. Such a belief is fundamentally at odds, this time, with the islanders’ “If it works, leave it alone” philosophy. The basis of the difference between the two approaches in this instance derives, I assume, from the fact that those favouring a process approach recognise that there are degrees to which something “works” and that revision narrows these down until one arrives at the option which “works” *best*. A process approach in tandem with tacit acceptance of the desirability of encouraging his students to produce *expository* literacy conflicts, finally, with the “fisherman’s style” of making things which I illustrated earlier in relation to quilt and rowing skiff making. According to Lofty (p. 43) students’ writing relies on

appropriating “prior texts” (e.g. personal experience, observation, information heard from various local sources, memories of stories and how island people told them, etc.) and then “weaving” stories from these texts. The resulting stories, he contends, showed “scant regard for such conventions as a formally delineated beginning, middle, and end”. Commenting though on a six-sentence story by a grade six pupil which exhibits these features, Lofty notes (p. 43) more positively that:

She assumes authority and creates a personal identity by narrating an event from the town’s past and her family’s place within it. Part of her identity as a writer emerges from managing time in ways consonant with the islanders’ practice of interweaving their past and present personal experiences.

Crucial in the quoted material is the powerful sense which it conveys of the symbolism (i.e., personal and islander *identity*) of the literacy practices which the sixth grader employs. Clearly they are immensely important for her from a social psychological point of view - and yet, in her case and that of other pupils, those literacy practices conflict fundamentally with the teacher’s preference, namely, for a *consistent* time frame and *linear* movement from past to present. It is not difficult to understand why pupils such as those on the island resist teacher intervention and the kinds of reshaping of their literacy that Western teachers typically require. It should also be apparent, I believe, why pupils would perceive their teachers as “taking away ownership of a piece of writing by asking that it be done in the teacher’s own way” (Lofty p. 44) and why, as a result, pupils’ feelings of competence and dignity can so easily be undermined.

This scenario (i.e., scenario 3) and the literacy ecology which it reveals, has considerable relevance to our understanding of news-time. Unlike scenario 2, it is an instance of literacies *in contact*, which is very much what one witnesses at news-time. Central to scenario 3, as s/he is at news-time, is the teacher, a change agent clearly whose effectiveness in managing change depends on how sensitive s/he is both to local (e.g. islander) values and the values which are implicit in the alternative literacy practices s/he intends imparting to the pupils. Scenario 3 reveals, as did scenario 2, how closely related group values and community beliefs are to literacy practices and how closely they reinforce one another. On this evidence it is very clear that literacies are not ‘neutral technologies’ as the autonomous model would have one believe, cf. 2.2.2. Equally, it is highly unlikely that the literacy practices which underlie news-time will be neutral

technologies, regardless of whether proponents of news-time acknowledge this or not.

Scenario 3 is important for another reason, which is that it highlights the value of exploring what the contextual factors are that shape literacy practices and the discourse conventions that are associated with them (as for example I do in 5.6.1 and 5.7.2, when I explore the influence of the apartheid education system on news-time). Scenario 3 also alerts one to two reasons (among many other potential ones) why groups resist the literacy practices of others in cases where their different literacies come into contact. In the case described by Lofty, resistance is traceable to different conceptions of time and how people use it, as well as to how people make things, including how they put literacies together and use them. But it is not only different perceptions and ideologies of time that are likely to be the basis for conflict about school-based literacy events. “Distance from community values”, as we saw in scenario 2, is another potential basis for conflict, for the Amish. Readers will recall that their rejection of “critical” reading, for example, is based on the belief that it is too individualistic and therefore is likely to divide rather than consolidate the group. Another example is their rejection of the *impersonal* “third-person-singular point of view” associated with expository literacy presumably because it undermines the *inclusive* “first-person-plural” identity which the Amish prefer to promote. Conventions by which discourse/literacy identities are signalled and participants differently positioned recur in the research literature, cf., for example, the conventions preferred in academic literacy, described in 2.5.2. The question which illustrations like these, begs, is: What are the sources of conflict likely to be at news-time in South Africa?

Scenario 3 also alerts one to the dominance within mainstream American society of expository literacy. In terms of the island literacy ecology, it is powerful “professional” outsiders, and college-educated teachers who can command its resources, not locals, since their experience has not brought them into contact with the literacies of these influential people. To empower themselves, in fact, islanders increasingly perceive the need to acquire the influential outsiders’ literacy, particularly if they hope to pursue non-traditional island occupations. With this in mind, a number leave the island in search of higher education and training and the literacy which accompanies them. It seems to me that many pupils at news-time are likely to be in a similar situation, having also been equipped prior to entering pre-school with the literacy of a closed community (that,

largely, of family, community and of intimacy) but then being encouraged to acquire a different, seemingly more powerful (?) literacy. This is not to say that all pupils belong to “closed” communities. In reality, communities differ along a continuum of closed and openness. I am also not suggesting that closed communities are good and open ones bad - or, indeed, that all community literacies are equally distant from expository/schooled literacy. Heath’s research (cf. 2.2.3) is very convincing evidence of this. The likelihood also exists that some pupils at news-time, like the school-going islanders described by Lofty, will also experience the alienating effects which the islanders do in scenario 3 - of self doubt, feelings of insecurity and even anger - over the way in which the teacher takes away the ownership of their messages by recasting them. I return to ways by which local as well as power literacies can be fostered in 6.3, and present evidence of the self-doubt, feelings of insecurity and anger which is generated during news-time, in 4.3.2.2 (see extract 12, for example) and in 4.5.2.

Lastly, this scenario suggests various fundamental points of departure as regards intervention, cf. 6.3. Firstly, it would seem that both the islanders and news-givers require *a repertoire of literacies* if they are to compete on an equal footing with others and gain access to opportunities both within as well as beyond their literacy communities. This argument is equivalent to the argument within sociolinguistics and applied linguistics for increasing learners’ linguistic repertoires generally, whether they be accents, dialects, styles, registers, etc. In keeping with them, one is not arguing for local or vernacular literacies to be replaced by institutionally more powerful literacies, but rather for those local/vernacular literacies to be augmented by the inclusion of the others. Secondly, there is a need to sensitise teachers to dimensions of difference between literacy practices which, because of the newness of modern literacy studies, they have not been equipped to notice. Process versus “one-shot” approaches to literacy are one example of literacy-level differences to which they might be alerted, so too is the contrast between “woven” and “linear” accounts of time within narrative as described by Lofty (cf. 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2). There are potentially many other dimensions of difference which the analysis of news-time accounts should reveal, which in turn can inform teachers’ interpretation of and response to different pupils’ news-time contributions. Thirdly, and less apparent, perhaps, than the issues just raised, is the influence on literacy practices and the teaching of them, of non-linguistic factors, like time (cf. 6.3.1.4). Teacher-training would, on the

evidence of Lofty's study, presumably want to recognise the impact which time has on literacy and whether there is a "politics of time" which is embedded within different literacy practices, and any other non-linguistic issues which impinge on literacy behaviour generally and on news-time practices more particularly. Lastly, the research conducted by Lofty alerts one to the benefits of *learning from pupils*, so that educational practice can be based on consensus. Lofty notes in this regard (p. 47) that:

My students on the island taught me the importance of respecting their need to write without interruption, to work at their own pace, and to have time to be silent. Our students will assume greater responsibility for their own writing and see more reason to own it as we involve them in shaping their own timescapes of writing.

2.4.4 Scenario 4: The politics of literacy as felt by Hispanic women in Los Angeles (Source: Rockhill 1993:156-175.)

Focal figures in the next literacy snapshot are immigrant Hispanic women living in Los Angeles. They are an oppressed group who, short of abandoning such security as their families offer in pursuit of education and the vague promises of improvement that mainstream America seems to link to this, will remain powerless and oppressed. These women, along with the rest of their families, are 'illegal aliens', and so have an uncertain status in the society as a whole. They are also non mother-tongue users of English in a state, California, which a short while back declared English to be its only official language. This means that their linguistic heritage also marginalises them. Official 'macro-level' pronouncements characterise the women as 'illiterate', which means that they are eligible for literacy training through various Adult Basic Education programmes. These programmes are justified by the state on ideological grounds, contending that literacy is a liberty of the individual and a prerequisite to equality and individual success in a democratic society. Stemming from this, as Rockhill explains (p. 162), is the assumption that "with the provision of opportunities, success is dependent only upon individual capacity and motivation". The Hispanic women do not, however, take advantage of literacy programmes. In what Rockhill (p. 156) refers to as "the professional discourse of adult education", this is ascribed to "a lack of motivation" on their part. In other public discourse, these women simply become part of the greater illiteracy which many mainstream Americans see as threatening the nation's security, liberty and other cherished values.

But there are further ecological (or contextual) forces which determine the women's literacy options. Awareness of these helps us to understand why, given state provision, the Hispanic women do not take advantage of the opportunities offered to become "literate". They allow us, in Rockhill's words (p. 162), to "get at how inequality is constructed and domination is reproduced and lived in the power relations of everyday life".

Central to the domination which Hispanic women encounter in their daily interactions are their husbands and other men, supported by older community members who endorse traditional beliefs regarding the rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women, particularly those of wives to their husbands. The subjugation which the women encounter at the hands of men is reflected in facts such as the following:

- Hispanic women are largely confined to the home;
- they venture into public only in order to attend church or to attend to family needs (purchasing goods, social services, health care, schooling for children, etc.);
- if they work, that work is an extension of what they do at home, or else consists of factory work, usually in Spanish-speaking ghettos;
- they are frequently victims of violence and abuse. Some are physically beaten by their husbands;
- many yearn for English classes, and while some start attending them, usually they stop. According to Rockhill (p. 169) "the typical pattern is one of several attempts. They (the women) explain stopping in terms of the enormous pressures of their daily lives, including resistance at home". Many women are actively discouraged, often violently, from going to school, since, with "literacy", they are a potential threat to the power relations in the family and the dominance within the family, particularly, of men;
- women are more likely to develop their English literacy skills if they leave or divorce their husbands.

Not surprisingly, the marginalisation of Hispanic women is mirrored in - and also perpetuated by - the restricted literacy abilities which they are permitted to develop. It is to these features of the overall ecology of disempowerment that I now turn, briefly.

In essence, the women's literacy behaviour is limited to two domains: housework, on the one hand, and social service and other bureaucratic spheres on the other. 'Housework' literacy events were presumably engaged in in Spanish, using the *oral* mode, while their participation in the 'bureaucratic' literacy events was done exclusively in English and predominantly through the *written* mode. This contrasts with the situation as far as men

are concerned. Rockhill (pp. 166-167) explains as follows:

The most striking pattern is that the women we interviewed tend to use and to depend more upon the written word, whereas men acquire and use more spoken English. This has a great deal to do with the silencing of women, their confinement to the domestic sphere, and the structure of work available to people who speak little English. Women talk of being afraid to speak, ashamed of not knowing English. Men stress the importance of talking, of making themselves understood by whatever means necessary. The men we interviewed feel at ease in the public in a way that women do not.

Moreover, the women's bureaucratic encounters were highly specific and often not recurrent. The encounters therefore did not enable them to build up and practice relevant literacy behaviours. Available work options, meanwhile, required minimal interaction often, as I noted earlier, in Spanish-speaking ghettos, thereby further precluding practice in English. Men, by contrast, are spared having to engage with bureaucrats to anything like the extent that the women have to, and have work options which bring them into often unstressful contact with the English-speaking public.

The above scenario has a valuable bearing on how we conceptualise news-time. Much of the understanding of the ecology of literacy in this setting derives, I believe, from Rockhill's analytic technique of first separating and then integrating macro and more micro ecological factors in her account. In the process of doing so, she alerts one to the multiplicity of contextual factors which shape literacy behaviour and which in turn are shaped by it. She also provides us with a scenario in which bold macro-level pronouncements (imputing "lack of motivation" to the women) are shown to conflict substantially with the women's 'lived realities' as the women "do the daily work of literacy production and performance" (Rockhill, p. 164). What she highlights is the value, firstly, of exploring peoples' lived realities, and, secondly, of exposing the ideological content and suppositions which underlie public assertions linked to literacy, particularly in the face of contradictions such as those which she found.

In the South African setting where I collected my data, i.e., immediately prior to the democratic elections, it is inevitable that there would be contradictions roughly along the lines of those in Rockhill's study between the more public pronouncements of teachers, for example, and the lived realities (within and beyond its walls) of different groups of pupils enrolled in the schools. I believe contradictions are inevitable because this was a

time when people in South African society were bracing themselves for democracy, were not sure what this might mean, and wanted to be positioned advantageously. This is evident, for example, in claims that the schools were already democratic, that they treated all pupils equally and that they were places where children were free to be themselves - all of which are claims that need to be treated with caution and scepticism. They need to be seen as empirical questions to be investigated and not truths simply to be accepted.

In addition, Rockhill's account urges us to go 'behind the scenes' - I did so only superficially - and consider the lived realities particularly of children (such as Siphon, cf. 4.5.2) from racial groups which have been systematically discriminated against in the past, since their struggles are likely to match the hardships of the Hispanic women more closely than do those of children from other groups. The central features of the lived experience of African pupils - for example, maids' children like Siphon - would be revealing, including an indication (as Rockhill provides for the Hispanic women) of the extent and nature of the literacy events which they engage in both in and outside school, and in what way/s they do so. Though I do so only for selected pupils (in 4.5.2), it would also be revealing to correlate this information systematically with teachers' perceptions of these children and their behaviour towards them, at news-time, for example.

Another particularly valuable feature of scenario 4 is the fact that it draws attention to *language, as distinct from literacy*, and shows how individuals gain the label "literate" only once they are proficient in the powerful group's language, namely, English. Proficiency in Spanish, and presumably halting proficiency in English (but not the opposite), do not qualify one as literate in scenario 4. No official provision appears to be made in scenario 4 for bilingual literacy and neither does it seem that room is made for code-switching or similar accommodative behaviour on the part of members of the dominant language group. 'English only' is thus an important means of ensuring the marginalisation of minority groups. It will be clear from the data I present in chapter 4 that precisely the same applies in the South African school settings at the time that I investigated them. No code-switching or code-mixing take place. In fact, not a single word of Zulu or any other language, other than English, occurs in over twelve hours of news-time recordings. This is particularly significant in regard to class 1 where the

predominance of silent or reluctant news-givers were black or Indian.

In enacting what is essentially an 'English only' policy, quite apart from expecting a certain kind of literacy (i.e., one which bears a close resemblance to expository literacy), teachers and other macro-structural forces are effectively discriminating against a pupil constituency within the school, by silencing it, if only temporarily. Concurrently, they are preserving the hegemonic position of English in the schools and strengthening the hand, initially, of children who are mother-tongue users of English. They are also excluding other communicative options in the setting, for example, bilingual literacy and biliteracies - for apparently the same reasons. I develop all of these alternative options in 6.3. I also consider them further in the next scenario.

2.4.5 Scenario 5: Literacy activism among Panjabis in Southall (Source: Saxena 1994:195-214.)

Saxena's account alerts us to another fascinating literacy ecology. It differs from those described in scenarios 1 and 2 in that it highlights multilingualism and multiliteracies, not their mono- alternatives. It is similar to the ecology described in scenarios 3 and 4 because it deals with literacies in contact. Like them (and scenario 2), it also chronicles the social meaning of different literacy practices and the values they come to embody, and it deals with *adaptation* of literacy practices (as in scenario 3) and *discrimination* against them (as in scenario 4). What distinguishes scenario 5 is that, in spite of Saxena's (1994:212) acknowledgement that Britain today is essentially still "a monolingual, monocultural and monoliterate state", it suggests that domination is not the inevitable fate of once powerless groups (as Rockhill's research certainly does in scenario 4). Saxena's account suggests that literacy 'activism' is a means by which groups can alter the ecological balance and thereby achieve greater prominence for their literacy practices and a better deal for themselves. His account is interesting, too, because it is suggestive, I think, of some of the kinds of changes one can anticipate in early education in South Africa as democracy establishes itself. Some in fact are already discernible in my data.

The feature of Saxena's account that I find most revealing, is the historical framework which he provides, because it is against this that one understands better the changing contextual forces which have shaped the literacy choices of Panjabis in Southall, Britain, for the last forty years, and determined what those choices have come to signify. Thus, it

is to events in the lives of three generations of Panjabi immigrants to Southall in the period 1950 to the mid 1980's that I now turn before reflecting on the relevance of Saxena's work to news-time in South Africa.

Arriving from India in the 1950's in response to a need for unskilled labour, the mainly Panjabi Sikh and Hindu men lived as cheaply as possible while trying to accumulate as much money as they could, their aim being to return with it to India. Some of them even shared beds, if they worked on different shifts, to save money. Their main literacy events apart from spoken interaction with one another consisted of writing home in Panjabi and Hindi and leaving notes, also in Panjabi and Hindi, for others sharing their accommodation. Very few knew English and since they had no real intention of assimilating to the host society, were apparently not overly troubled by this.

The 1960's saw an influx of South Asians to Britain in the face of a threat to toughen immigration legislation. In Southall this meant, for example, that wives and children joined their husbands already in the country. First contacts with English came, as it does today for many Africans in South Africa, when (second generation) children entered school and started bringing home English readers as well as letters and other communication from the schools requiring parents to respond *in English*. Some Panjabis recognised that socio-economic mobility for themselves as well as their children lay in English literacy and sought it mainly through radio, television and the print media, not through social contact with the host community, because the host community distanced themselves from the immigrants and looked down on them.

By the 1970's parents were increasingly aware not only of a linguistic gap between themselves and their children, but, along with it, a cultural gap. They started campaigning for Panjabi and Hindi to be taught in schools, 'English Only' having been the dominating philosophy up until then, a philosophy whose symbolism events at that time were calling into question. Apparently meant to assimilate them, English was also the vehicle for expressing racist sentiments against Panjabis and was partly instrumental in frustrating Panjabi aspirations within the society at large. Concurrently, parents (first generation) were feeling that traditional cultural customs and values were being eroded and disregarded by their children, and they (the parents) were threatened by this. In order to preserve those values and customs, they attempted to revive cultural teaching.

This endeavour was reinforced by the arrival of South Asian refugees from East Africa at this time who, according to Saxena, helped to build up the necessary infrastructure for this, having had experience of doing so in East Africa, in addition to having had their own cultural identity threatened recently.

Saxena notes that by the mid 1980's Hindi and Panjabi and the scripts in which they could be written (Devanagari and Gurmukhi) had become part of the secondary school curriculum, which is a far cry from the non-existent literacy options and facilities available to the original Panjabi immigrants in the 1950's, or those who entered British schools in the 1960's. Saxena does not indicate how this notable change was effected within the monolingual British education system but the fact that activism had indeed achieved this is very significant.

I want at this stage to refer, firstly, to what Saxena refers to as the "print environment" (p. 210) of schools in Southall, and, secondly, to institutional provision for 'minority literacies'. Of the former, Saxena offers a particularly graphic image of how changed the print environment is today compared with what it would have been like, say, in the 1960's when English only was offered, when he writes:

The print environment in the schools at all levels had begun to reflect the multicultural and multilingual nature of the local communities multiliteracy posters in Panjabi, Hindi and English were seen on classroom and school corridor walls. They depicted curriculum contents (e.g. science and arts projects) and cultural aspects (e.g. food, religion, dresses, etc.) of the school and the community. Doors of head teachers' rooms, staff rooms, classrooms, school offices, toilets, etc. bore labels in multiliteracies.

As far as institutional recognition of minority languages and literacies is concerned, it is significant to note that social service provisions are now available through interpreters and translators and there are new job opportunities for individuals who are bilingual / biliterate. These jobs, especially on a part-time basis, are apparently very popular among women, a state of affairs which contrasts powerfully with that of women in Rockhill's study, and attests to the increased social power which Panjabis have achieved.

Apart from again illustrating the *contextual embeddedness* of literacy practices, which is a central tenet of the ideological model of literacy, the value of scenario 5 lies in the questions it poses regarding the changing context of early formal education in South Africa and the values and identities which news-time currently promotes (and frustrates)

and those which it might promote/frustrate in the future.

A major theme in scenario 5 is activism. It takes the form of a powerless group asserting its identity and group rights not only through its languages but also through devices such as scripts which are used to express different religious and cultural identities. The powerless group does so in the face of counter measures on the part of the macro society which aim to entrench established, indigenous British values and privileges. On the surface, these same general issues appear to be absent in my data. Black, Coloured and Indian parents did not seem to me to be actively promoting their group identities at the schools where I conducted my fieldwork, though this may be that those who had entered the white enclave were people who had risen by virtue of espousing 'white' values. Nor was I conscious of an obviously white identity being expressed by white parents, pupils or teachers, or of whites deliberately frustrating the aspirations of other groups. This might be because education in the pre-election period took place at a time of considerable uncertainty and caution. Expression of racial and political identities might therefore have been suppressed and restrained in the light of this, pending the outcome of the election. Alternatively, different groups in the schools might temporarily have tolerated the status quo, which was originally created by whites for whites, for similar reasons. This would mean that they were effectively engaging in a holding act until after the elections.

Subsequent events seem to support this. A fully representative, democratically elected government now rules the country, the constitution stresses the equality of all individuals and, particularly relevant to this thesis, a language policy has been adopted which, among other things, stresses the equality of eleven national languages and *encourages the promotion of multilingualism*. Such measures clear the way for groups to express multiple identities, challenge white supremacy and promote equality. Governance of the schools which I investigated is a further barometer. Particularly noteworthy is the assertiveness and influence of Indian parents. Firstly, the enrolment of their pupils has increased to the point where Indians are now numerically dominant in both schools. Secondly, Indian representation on the school boards in each case is noticeably increased - whites are less well represented than before while black enrolment and parental participation, while slightly higher than before the elections, remains small. Thirdly, Indian resistance to previous school policies, for example the promotion of narrowly

Christian practices and values, is more concerted than before.

If the assertion of group identities and values was not overt prior to the election, it is still possible that it was expressed *covertly*, which might be why I was not aware of it at the time. The preoccupation with identity in scenario 5 encouraged me to explore this matter more fully, by returning to the news-time interactional data for evidence of *children* asserting their group identities, for example in the manner in which they tell their news, the accent in which they do so, what they choose to talk about and how they react to the news of others, etc., and for evidence of the *teachers* asserting an alternative identity through the ways in which they respond to children's different literacies, different choices and treatments of topics, etc. My reporting on these issues is implicit in this thesis.

A broader issue related to the above is what the teacher's obligations are (or should be) as regards the promotion of different group identities and different value systems in a multicultural democracy such as South Africa now is. Should this be done on an equitable basis, and, if so, what would this entail in the case of the marginalised, largely silent black pupils in my data? Employment of Zulu-speaking black teachers or teaching assistants would mean that Zulu values, etc. would be expressed and Zulu identities could be mediated through these teachers. This is one solution. Indian and Coloured pupils could presumably also benefit from teachers drawn from their communities for the same reasons. The interchanges between all of these teachers would in turn greatly facilitate multiculturalism, an idea which lies behind the Equity Bill (cf. 5.7.2). In the absence though of a multicultural teaching force, which would seem to be the ideal solution, the question one is led to ask is what training or retraining is needed of teachers in circumstances such as the ones I investigated which will increase their bilingualism and biculturalism? A slightly different question now: does the school itself promote/inculcate institutional values, norms and preferred literacies, i.e., an institutional culture that may transcend national boundaries and languages, and are these school values and identities conveyed during news-time? If so, do these, in tandem with a preference for standard English, not advantage the white group over others? This would mean that news-time is basically assimilative in its effects, amounting to a kind of colonisation of different literacies, and identities. I return to these issues in chapter 5 - sections 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5, in particular.

Finally, the “print environment” of a school strikes me as being a useful barometer of, or metaphor for, the degree of overall multilingualism and multiliteracy in a school. That described by Saxena is the outcome of approximately thirty five years of Panjabi engagement with the school system. It represents a victory in many ways for the expression of multiple identities, traditions and values in those schools. The print environment in the schools where I did my research, by contrast, still is totally monolingual. Today children at *Natal Pre-Primary School* where I collected data can choose between black, brown and olive in addition to the pinky white previously provided when they do body painting. There are also displays in the foyer of the pre-primary school during religious and cultural festivals. *At Natal Junior Primary School*, children participate in a cultural evening each year. These are the only overt signs to date of change to the communicative environment (print or otherwise) in the two schools.

2.4.6 Scenario 6: Literacy and cultural values in a Harlem school (Source: Sola & Bennett 1991:35-55.)

This scenario - or set of scenarios, really - captures classroom interaction in three junior high school classrooms in East Harlem, where 80% of the pupils are working-class Puerto Ricans and the remainder, working-class Afro-Americans. The account highlights various issues, namely: the different literacy practices of the pupils (for whom “performance dimensions” - i.e. non-verbal ones - are important) and teachers (who value explicitness and reliance, largely, on strictly linguistic channels when communicating); the differing ideological investment of each set of literacy practices, specifically in regard to what social relationships and cultural knowledge each encodes; the influence of the macro-context on the pupils’ and teachers’ literacies, and the nature of the struggle and conflict which arises as a consequence of the two sets of literacy practices being in contact with one another (within the educational setting). The study also has various important applied implications.

Three teachers are central to Sola & Bennett’s account: “Mr C” who teaches composition, “Ms S”, the social studies teacher, and “Ms L” who teaches language arts. All are highly committed and experienced teachers - as the teachers are in my own data - all are captured attempting to promote schooled literacy with their pupils, and none are successful, except for Ms S, who is the only black teacher.

In turning first to Mr C's class, I refer to the account provided of a group play-writing activity, the purpose of which was for the pupils to produce dramatic scripts featuring characters who disagree with one another and who argue for their position in what Mr C referred to as "a convincing way". Mr C apparently frequently exhorted the pupils to make their arguments as convincing as possible and, according to Sola & Bennett (p. 42), "seemed to be looking for dialogue in which characters used formal logic to be convincing". The activity is described as having promoted intense involvement on the part of pupils - both during its preparation - and when the pupils performed their scripts for Mr C. Sola & Bennett note, however, that, in spite of this, the teacher considered the resulting texts to be unsatisfactory - believing, firstly, that the arguments they had provided were insufficiently persuasive, and, secondly, that their choices of theme were tiresome. According to Sola & Bennett he completely under-valued the literacy practices they *did* employ (e.g. economic use of dialogue and other dramatic devices to set the scene, portray character, and move the action along (p. 43); use of humour and irony to influence audience reaction, etc.). In trying to make sense of the mismatch in literacies and the mismatch of the parties' assessments of the pupils' final performance, Sola & Bennett suggest that "the students (are) using the play scripts and performances as a vehicle for establishing relationships with other students in the class" (p. 43). The two authors refer to them as possibly "creating a (Puerto Rican) community within the classroom", noting that "the struggle that ensued as Mr C attempted to make the official assignment the primary focus of the students' attention is one that occurred over and over again in this classroom".

As readers will see, there are significant overlaps between the circumstances described above and the outcomes achieved in many of the news-time exchanges I present in chapter 4. There, too, there is a mismatch between the teachers' underlying assumptions regarding appropriate news-time behaviour (what I refer to in 4.3 as teachers' core norms) and those of the pupils. The greater restraint, reliance largely on *linguistic* means (lexis, syntax, etc.) for signalling meaning and circumscribed range of preferred topics which characterise Mr C's preferences in the literacy event described, strongly echo those of the teachers in my study during news-time. Mr C's radical under-valuing of the pupils' alternative literacy strategies is matched, for example, by Mrs French's of Siphon and Warwick's alternative news-time contributions (e.g. in 4.5.2) which, similarly, reflect

considerable virtuosity and creativity. The central paradox in Mr C's class is also matched in my data, for while in both cases the teachers' ostensible goal is that pupils should *enjoy* the activity - and in instances such as that described by Sola & Bennett and those which I record in 4.5.2.1 and 4.5.2.3, they clearly *do* - the teachers in each case are essentially dissatisfied and do not reward the pupils for their efforts. In seeking to explain such incongruous behaviour Sola & Bennett appeal to forces in the macro-context - which is what I do too in chapter 5. An interesting difference is that while Sola & Bennett view matters from the *pupils'* point of view - i.e., their literacy practices take the form they do because they enable them to build a Puerto Rican community in the classroom, i.e., they have an inclusive function among the subordinate group in this situation and thereby reaffirm their Puerto Rican, and *not* American, identity - I view matters more from the *teachers'* point of view, suggesting that largely exclusive motives are at work - by which the dominant group asserts its hegemonic position - the principal means for doing so being the promotion of schooled literacy and the derogation of anything else. From the point of view of applications, it would seem that teachers such as Mr C would benefit from a richer understanding of the nature of literacy, its potentially multiple manifestations, its ideological loadedness and the bearing which the institutional and the greater macro context can have on shaping people's choices and promoting or else frustrating their chances (cf. 6.3).

The scenario presented of interaction in Ms S's social studies class again highlights mismatching literacy practices. While Ms S assumes, for instance, that her pupils will respond to an open-ended topic by bidding for a chance to speak, allowing *her* to select the speaker and thereafter expect that she will summarise, mediate between and explain different pupils' points of view, they do not. Instead, turn-taking by-passes her, pupils direct their contributions/reactions to other class members, the one-at-a-time rule falls away, and non-verbal modes of communication, in concert with verbal ones or else on their own, become prominent: "Some bang hands or books on desks when someone else makes a particularly funny joke or a salient or controversial point. They sometimes mimic disgust with someone's expressed view, sometimes support it with a nod and a 'right on!'" Sola & Bennett (p. 46) also draw attention to the effect Ms S's interventions have on the *form* of pupils' arguments. Thus, they note that the Puerto Rican students "usually provided a hypothetical narrative to support their points, and

made these more and more personalised as the argument grew more and more heated”. Ms S, by contrast, “would paraphrase the logic and generalise the point ... to show the students that they did not disagree as much as they thought”. The students, however, do not model their subsequent contributions in ways consistent with her preferences.

This scenario raises a number of interesting issues which are again generalisable to my own data. To start with, Ms S’s lack of success either in influencing her pupils or in achieving any form of interactional synchrony with them is markedly out of kilter with her understanding of the history and status of the working-class Puerto Rican community, her sensitivity to it and her desire to assist such pupils to understand this. What this suggests is how deep-seated the norms for literacy practices are, how inaccessible they are, for the most part, to conscious reflection, and how ignorant even well-intentioned people are of their own and, especially, the literacy conventions of others. I write this prompted by Ms S’s case since sensitivity of one sort (e.g. historical and social knowledge and understanding of the Puerto Rican community) is clearly not matched by similar knowledge and sensitivity at the level of literacy practices. This mismatch is mirrored on the parts of the teachers in my study and prompts me in chapter 6 to propose various means by which teachers’ awareness of such issues can be raised (cf. 6.3.1). Such issues also partly lie behind my suggestions for a micro-literacy policy aimed at promoting understanding of and facility in literacy practices equivalent both to those Ms S seeks to promote (i.e., literacy strategies of power) and those through which the pupils - as they do here in Ms S’s classroom - dissociate themselves from the teacher’s literacy practices. The reason they do so is that they reject the forms of consciousness implicit in the teacher’s literacy practices. The pupils create, instead, a sense of Puerto Rican community, using the resources available to them in the larger community, as Sola & Bennett explain, “to make some statement about who they are vis-à-vis the official institution of schooling”. A clear parallel, I believe, exists between the Puerto Rican pupils described in relation to Ms S’s class and both Siphon and Warwick in extracts in 4.5.2 who likewise ‘build community’ with their peers rather than acquiesce to the teacher’s preferences. This scenario (as do scenarios 2, 3 and 5 earlier) prepares the way, in addition, for an exploration of the pupils’ and the teachers’ news-time value systems along with the cultural assumptions that accompany them. Implicit values such as high regard for individuality, articulacy and rationality (in preference, for example, to

emotionalism), accompany the literacy practices which Ms S seeks to promote, while high regard for spontaneity, involvement, community allegiance, and emotionalism, for example, appear to be values which the Puerto Ricans' literacy practices embed and promote. In 5.4, 5.5 and 5.7.2 I report on the value system associated with news-time literacy as promoted by the three teachers I investigated.

Finally, Ms S's conduct alerts one to the fact of, as well as one effect of teacher intervention during literacy events aimed at promoting schooled literacy. In the instance under consideration, the teacher is represented as *recasting* the pupils' contributions. A particularly powerful illustration of this (among many others at news-time) is described in 4.3.2.2 (see extract 13).

What I find most noteworthy about the details Sola & Bennett provide of what takes place in Ms L's classroom, is this teacher's ability, because of the degree of congruity between her background and theirs and her familiarity with (black) literacy practices which are meaningful to them, to: elicit oral participation from the pupils; genuinely appreciate "performance before an audience as a value in itself and as a source for achieving rapport and solidarity with students" (p. 47); dialogue with her pupils (often using elements of drama) and also herself perform for them, so further encouraging them to do likewise. She also makes considerable use of personal narrative, by which she "consistently attempts to get students to see the relevance of assigned reading to their own lives by eliciting narratives of personal experience from them in both oral and written forms. Most importantly, she reciprocates by providing personal narratives of her own, making them relevant to readings and topics current in the class".

In the course of the above, she exposes pupils to a wide range of schooled literacy practices. As such, she both promotes what the school values and at the same time fosters the pupils' pride in their (non-mainstream) group identity. The three teachers in my own study are, as I explained in 1.2, all white and all drawn from the middle-class. Unlike Ms L, therefore, they are unable, as I explain in 5.7.2, to empathise fully with 'non-mainstream' pupils, nor are they able - because of their ignorance of the language and culture of some of their pupils - to promote schooled literacy while also enhancing such pupils' sense of identity and worth, as Ms L does. Indeed, it is with Ms L in mind that I make some of the recommendations I do in 6.3.1.4 and 6.3.2.1.

The value of Sola & Bennett's paper lies, finally, in the macro-ideological issues that it draws attention to, which led me, in turn, to reflect on the influence of equivalent factors operating in South Africa during news-time. They note on p. 53 that, regardless of the quality of teacher training, "for most community members the schools remain major progenitors of unequal opportunity". Reading between the lines, I understand Sola & Bennett to be drawing attention, ultimately, to the vested interests which the prevailing system (i.e., capitalism) served. In 5.7 I point in a similar vein to the likely bearing macro ideological forces and the interests they serve have on proceedings during news-time. In 6.3.3 I deal with the challenge which vested interests in current news-time practices are likely to pose to changes I propose in 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

2.5 Power, ideology, hegemony and ideological strategies

The notions "power", "ideology", "hegemony" and "ideological strategies" are implicit in my interpretation of the relevance of all of the above scenarios to my own work. In this section I wish to clarify these notions, before, in 2.5.1-2.5.3, looking more penetratingly than I have so far at the interplay of these issues in institutional discourse - for all of which, I suggest, news-time literacy is a fore-runner.

Fairclough (1989) explains that *power* is exercised in two ways: coercively, i.e., through force, or, more relevant to this thesis, ideologically, i.e., through consent. It is exercised ideologically, for example, whenever individuals accept as appropriate (whether consciously or otherwise) the use of literacy practices favoured by dominant groups in various institutional settings. In so doing, they consent to these practices being given priority over the vast array of other practices potentially available to them for expressing their meanings (e.g. as happens to the Maine fishing folk described earlier in 2.4.3: scenario 3).

Embedded within any set or subset of literacy practices, are implicit assumptions about the following: *knowledge*, for example, what is worth knowing and worth displaying, and what is not; *social relations*, for example, whether those interacting are to consider themselves as close to one another or distant, to see themselves as equals or as unequal, etc.; *social identities*, i.e., who one is allowed to "be" when employing the literacy practices in question and what roles one is allowed to take on; and *values*, i.e., cherished

behaviours and/or beliefs which the literacy practices are seen as embodying and symbolising (recall, for example, the values represented in Amish literacy conventions in 2.4.2: scenario 2).

In conforming to a set of literacy practices - for example those favoured in institutional settings such as law, formal education and science - people conform, in other words, to the implicit assumptions regarding knowledge, social relations, identities and values which are part of those literacy practices and, typically, belong to whatever group is dominant.

With that information by way of background, one can define *hegemony* in largely literacy-related terms. Accordingly, I shall treat hegemony as *the successful production or reproduction of ideology*. The vehicle through which that ideology is produced or reproduced is the literacy/discourse conventions in which the ideological assumptions are embedded. (It is such hegemony - of English, *British* English, specifically, that Panjabis resist in scenario 5: 2.4.5). Thus, hegemony is established in institutional settings when members employ the subset of literacy practices preferred by (usually) the dominant group, within the relevant institution. That group can be said to be exercising its *power* when others conform to its practices and accept - or at least conform to - the ideological assumptions associated with them.

Eagleton (1991) identifies six *ideological strategies* which groups use in order to establish their hegemony. One such involves “promoting beliefs and values congenial to it” (p. 5). Two other strategies are closely related. They entail “naturalizing and universalizing beliefs and values congenial to the group”, treating the assumptions implicit in their preferred set of literacy practices as commonsensical and natural, hoping that others will do likewise, and so accept those practices (and the assumptions underlying them) as “self-evident and apparently inevitable”. It is the naturalness/commonsense status that Ms S assumes her literacy conventions have which makes it impossible for her to comprehend her pupils’ alternative ones in scenario 6: 2.4.6. Unnoticed, because they come to be considered unremarkable, the assumptions take root and, indirectly, guarantee that the group’s implicit definition of the social structure, power relations and values which the literacy practices embody, are not contested. The fourth strategy mentioned by Eagleton (1991:5) sees members of the dominant group

denigrating ideas (and, presumably, literacies) which it construes as challenging it. The fifth strategy depends on excluding rivals (such as forms of thought or, here, literacy practices) “perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic”, while the sixth strategy involves obscuring social reality “in ways convenient to itself”, for example, through mystification. Eagleton notes that in particular situations all six of the strategies are likely to be employed in complex interacting ways.

In what follows I consider evidence of hegemony in relation to the institutional domains of law, tertiary education and science (i.e., in scenarios 7, 8 and 9). I do so because these are high status institutional domains and because there are interesting parallels in the ideological strategies the dominant groups employ and the literacy conventions they promote and what takes place at news-time. In 5.3.3, as part of my explanation of what is at stake at news-time, I return to Eagleton’s (1995) ideological strategies and describe those that are employed on the evidence of the news-time data analysed in chapter 4. I argue that teachers promote news-time very assiduously because of the importance of the ideologies which are invested in it, because of the power expository literacy enjoys, and because of the power which they as teachers also enjoy from promoting such literacy, even if that enjoyment takes place somewhat obliquely. They are engaged, in other words, in maintaining the hegemony of the ideology which underlies news-time.

2.5.1 Scenario 7: Hegemonic practices in courts of law

Here I consider the work of Penman (1987). Employing three criteria akin to those I outline in 3.5, in as much as they are located within the discourse itself, Penman arrives at nineteen “rules of court”. Her criteria are: metacommunicative utterances that “evoked or implied a rule of courtroom discourse”; enactment of requests for resaying in various forms, indicating that an infringement had taken place; and turn-taking aberrations. The nineteen rules of court, she shows, are compatible with the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner, in that they facilitate maximally efficient information transfer. In the court setting their purpose is purportedly to ensure that the “truth of the matter” is arrived at in a coherent and orderly manner.

Many of the nineteen “rules of court” coincide with the core norms which I show in 4.3 are promoted at news-time. The following are examples of the rules of court, including all instances of overlap between the core news-time norms and the rules of court. These

are asterisked. Of note is the fact that none of the court rules relating to questioning overlaps with news-time norms for questioning, since during news-time (in my data) only the teacher is permitted to ask questions of a news-giver:

- Rule 1 Do not ask leading questions in examination;
- Rule 2 do not ask double-barrelled questions;
- Rule 7 questions must be relevant;
- Rule 8 do not ask broad or general questions;
- * Rule 9 make your responses audible to the representatives of the court;
- * Rule 10 make your responses give the precise information required;
- * Rule 11 make your responses answer the question clearly and unambiguously;
- * Rule 13 make your responses brief and orderly (the second part of this rule is consistent with core news-time norms);
- * Rule 15 a response must be based on personal knowledge/experience only;
- * Rule 16 do not give information that is not warranted or relevant;
- * Rule 19 witnesses are only allowed to answer what is asked (The news-time proviso is that this question will have been asked by the teacher).

Of particular note is Penman's observation (p. 214) that while the nineteen rules promote co-operation, observance of them relies on *coercion*. Forms of coercion include the following (p. 214): direct admonitions and orders by the judge; refusal to acknowledge information perceived to be outside the parameters of questioning; the use of closed questions in cross examination; and being threatened with contempt of court. In Eagleton's (1991) terms (cf. 2.5), these count as instances, largely, of strategy 4 (denigrating rivals) and strategy 5 (excluding rivals).

Significant, further, are the following observations (p. 215):

...the frequency with which conversational difficulties occurred in the cases under analysis and the frequency with which witnesses had to be instructed how to answer "properly" (i.e., according to the Cooperative Principle) would suggest that *adherence to the four maxims is not something that comes "naturally" or at least not something that is always done in more "normal" circumstances.* (My italics).

Other general parallels with news-time are that the conventions of courtroom interaction are not explicitly and overtly declared in advance; that the conventions and the extreme rigidity with which they are applied underscore strong institutional rejection of discursive diversity; and that a markedly authoritarian ideology prevails. In terms of the ideological assumptions that prevail, what counts as relevant information is determined by the judge, social relations are extremely formal and hierarchical, there is no room for the expression

of personal identity, and clients are dependent on “scribal elites” (cf. Besnier 1995:177) whose services they pay for.

2.5.2 Scenario 8: Hegemonic practices in tertiary education

The following account of the literacy practices and underlying ideological assumptions dominant in tertiary education is based on the work of Clark (1992) and Ivanic & Simpson (1992) who, in different ways, have sought to act as brokers of academic literacy for those unfamiliar with its discourse conventions. Both sets of authors note that academic literacy is impersonal, objective and is written in ‘academic style’. By ‘impersonal’, Clark means that referring to oneself (by way of first person reference) is discouraged, while quoting *other* peoples’ views *is* encouraged. The passive voice and nominalisation are other grammatical choices which are favoured because they promote impersonality as well as objectivity, while long words, long sentences and close argumentation are regarded as features of ‘academic style’, according to Clark, because they distinguish academic literacy from ordinary language. In their turn, Ivanic & Simpson (1992:147-8) maintain that academic literacy is dominated by what they call ‘ego-I’ conventions: impersonal language; few pronouns other than ‘it’ or ‘this’; long “nouny sentences”; densely packed abstractions, and generalisations. They also add the use of Graeco-Roman words (p. 163), lengthy and complex sentences (p. 167) and long clauses (p. 167). All of the above-mentioned features characterise schooled literacy, and certain of them (objectivity, close argumentation, long and complex clauses as well, possibly, as “long words”, if this implies referential specificity) also occur in my news-telling data.

As far as the ideological assumptions that are implicit in academic literacy practices are concerned, the authors note that what counts as *legitimate* knowledge within the academic literacy community, is narrowly delimited, as is the range of individuals who may be purveyors of it. Essentially, those who have published are treated as knowers, and what they publish is accorded legitimacy. Conversely, those who have not done so, are not considered to be knowers. Opinion and personal experience, also potential sources of knowledge, are not treated as legitimate.

As to the matter of social identities and social relations within the academic literacy community, it is clear that academic literacy practices position students as dependent, and

largely identity-less. To clarify: academic literacy practices oblige them to adopt a deferential attitude towards received knowledge and towards those who produced it, and to play down almost completely what they have learnt from personal experience. As a result, they are dependent on the thoughts of others. In avoiding first person pronouns, using the passive voice, nominalisations, etc., students are furthermore positioned by the power group within the academic discourse community as *identity-less*. This is because these discourse-level practices lead to their disappearing as agents in their own writing.

An assessment of social relations within the academic discourse community further confirms the powerlessness of students and others at the bottom of the academic ladder. More particularly, it emphasises the gate-keeping function that established members of the academic discourse community perform over would-be members, thereby confirming the power which they exercise, and at the same time highlighting the role which acquisition of academic literacy plays in ensuring membership of the academic discourse community. Collins (1987) points to the asymmetry which characterises academic-student relations when he highlights the right of academics to subject students to surveillance such as during examinations. Ivanic & Simpson (1992:146) argue in support of much the same basic point that academics read students' essays less to engage with their ideas, and much more to judge and correct them - evidence again of surveillance but also suggesting the disregard of members for the point of view of students. Ivanic & Simpson (1992:146) note that, by their very nature, academic institutions position staff and students differently, since the brief of staff is to "maintain standards ... and discriminate among candidates for degrees", revealing that the agenda of higher institutions of learning is elitist. The agenda underlying news-time is similarly elitist, a matter confirmed by the special treatment accorded to the group of school-readiness children known as the Eager Beavers (cf. 1.1.1), the "leaders in waiting", according to Mrs Byrd, who receive extra and longer opportunities to hone their news-telling skills. It is elitist, too, because of the overlap between news-time norms and those of the Utilitarian Discourse System (explained in 5.6), the latter 'defining' interactional conduct of those who occupy the truly influential positions in corporate and other life.

As far as values are concerned, academic literacy promotes effacement of the individual, respect and deference towards those already established in the academic discourse community, and the undervaluing of personal experience. In general, too, conformity to

established norms/conventions is encouraged, meaning that conservatism is valued - and not, for example, innovation or diversity. Thus, the values promoted through academic literacy are compatible with the “quiescence and passivity” which Gee (1991:40) associates with schooled literacy (cf. section 2.3.5). It is quite clear that the dominant group’s literacy practices help sustain a social order which is advantageous to it - one in which access to power and influence is closely monitored and in which major disparities in power are sustained. As with classroom discourse, the literacy practices targeted at universities have been largely undisclosed. This is because they have been assumed to be common sense. Traditionally, this assumption went unchallenged, since a high percentage of students enrolled at universities (particularly in South Africa) were at least partially socialised into the value systems and practices of university study through contact with their parents who themselves were graduates. With the advent of students drawn from other groups, such assumptions have increasingly needed to be articulated e.g. in basic writing courses at North American universities and through core, bridging and other programmes at South African universities, in addition to other forms of intervention/democratisation of university-level studies. Grading practices, by their very nature, attest to the operation (as in court) of Eagleton’s (1991) strategies 4 and 5, i.e., ‘denigrating rivals’ and ‘excluding rivals’, while the association of objectivity, rationality and, ultimately, intellectuality with academic discourse suggests that the sixth ideological strategy - mystification - is also employed. In this latter regard Simpson’s contribution to the joint account with Ivanic (Ivanic & Simpson 1992) is especially revealing. As an outsider, older person and expert - through knowledge gained in the working world - Simpson is well-placed to expose myths associated with academia.

Inequity is also revealed in Wallace’s (1992) work on EFL reading instruction. I refer briefly to it because of how tellingly it reveals the ideological shaping of a preferred social order by those with power and how, in the particular case she describes, this bears on race relations - race relations being also partially at stake during news-time in my data. In the circumstances she describes, the shaping I mentioned is achieved through the almost total rejection of alternative literacy (i.e., reading) practices to those traditionally employed, which is an instance of Eagleton’s fifth ideological strategy: ‘exclude rivals’, coupled with his first: ‘promote ideas congenial to the group’, since it is widely asserted (in the face of counter-evidence) that EFL reading activities and EFL reading

methodology, generally, are unproblematic. Wallace's investigation of EFL readers and EFL instruction clearly suggests otherwise. It shows that the assumptions just mentioned mask the fact that the preferred reading practices (i.e., those promoted) serve, in reality, to preserve the status quo at the macro-societal level of power, including race relations. Wallace (1992) argues, thus, that the effect of the reading strategies taught to EFL learners is to keep other races in their place through: (a) preoccupation with form while ignoring the ideological meaning of texts; (b) substantial decontextualisation of reading texts; (c) lack of recognition that readers, their reading histories and texts differ; and (d) promotion of an essentially uncritical, passive reading stance. These strategies undermine learners' confidence in English, especially strategy (a); inhibit them from taking up assertive and independent positions towards the English texts that they encounter (strategies (a), (b) and (d)); and prevent them from assuming any kind of equality with the authors of what they read. Overall, foreigners are equipped with reading strategies which ensure that they can not threaten the prevailing social order, (i.e., the hegemonic position of the British middle-class) through challenging it and its institutions by means of critical responses to its discourse.

While the strategies involved are clearly different, EFL reading instruction, on the evidence provided, promotes literacy which, like that promoted at universities, selectively empowers participants. It positions some as powerful norm enforcers, and others as dependent and powerless norm followers. News-time does likewise in its positioning of teachers and pupils, especially those who do not already command the targeted literacy practices. News-time is responsible, too, for other forms of positioning, as I explain in 5.3.3, and in sections 5.4 and 5.5.

2.5.3 Scenario 9: Hegemonic practices in the teaching of science

Lemke (1990) also alerts us to the role of policing in ensuring that preferred literacy practices take root and so help to preserve the dominant group's hegemony - this time in relation, particularly, to the teaching of science. He argues (1990:137) that the "stylistic norms of science" reinforce two sets of beliefs about science: (1) that science is objective, true and authoritative; and (2) that science is different from common sense, i.e., that it is a special form of truth available only to scientists (i.e., experts), not to laypersons. These beliefs, he claims, help create and sustain the mystique of science, and,

ultimately, serve the interests of a powerful elite. Since mystique is a means by which social reality is obscured, we see that this, the sixth of the ideological strategies outlined by Eagleton (1991), is prominent here.

The stylistic norms which Lemke identifies (p. 133-134) follow, those asterisked being common to the teachers' core news-time norms described in 4.3. A number are common, too, to the nineteen rules of court outlined by Penman (1987) and the features of academic literacy described by Clark (1992) and Ivanic & Simpson (1992), but I have not identified them here as such:

- * (a) Be as verbally explicit and universal as possible;
- (b) avoid colloquial forms of language and use, even in speech, forms closer to those of written language;
- (c) use technical terms in place of colloquial synonyms or paraphrases;
- (d) avoid personification and use of specifically or usually human attributes or qualities;
- * (e) avoid metaphoric and figurative language, especially those using emotional, colourful, or value-laden words, hyperboles and exaggeration, irony, and humorous or comic expressions;
- * (f) be serious and dignified in all expression of scientific content. Avoid sensationalism;
- (g) avoid personalities and reference to individual human beings and their actions;
- * (h) avoid reference to fiction or fantasy;
- * (i) use causal forms of explanation and avoid narrative and dramatic account ... Similarly forbidden are dramatic forms, including dialogue, the development of suspense or mystery, the element of surprise, dramatic action, and so on.

Significant, moreover, because it echoes the experience of the pupils in my data, because it recalls Baker & Perrott's (1988) comments about news being "cold" (2.3.5) and because it is consistent with the effects on outsiders of the dominant discourse practices in the fields of law (cf. Penman 1987) and tertiary education (cf. Clark 1992, Ivanic & Simpson 1992, et al), are a number of additional observations of Lemke's (1990). The first is his belief (p. 134) that the stylistic norms above "are a recipe for dull, alienating language", since "they mainly serve to create a strong contrast between the language of human experience and the language of science", which in turn reinforces a sense of there being a fundamental division between the objectivity of science and the subjectivity of experience. The second is Lemke's observation (p. 134) that most good science teachers "find it necessary to break the rules and violate these stylistic norms, humanising science as they communicate". Finally, there is the related point that Lemke makes, namely, that

these scientific norms are so well established, that where teachers do in fact depart from them, pupils may feel talked down to, and feel that “what they are being taught is somehow not “genuine science”” (p. 134). This final point attests to the power of the ideological strategy of naturalisation which teachers, through their policing, have achieved. The effect is paradoxical: science becomes accessible and enjoyable but that experience is distrusted. A similar paradox prevails at news-time. Pupils claim that news-time is ‘fun’ and ‘exciting’, yet, for many (e.g. Danny - extract 13: 4.3.2.2) the experience of news-giving is far from ‘fun’ or ‘exciting’.

Science teaching, according to Lemke, propagates the mystique of science through the language (and underlying ideologies) it helps promote. Moreover, the restricted ways in which it is taught also function as a gate-keeping device (cf. Wallace’s (1992) findings in regard to the teaching of reading), ensuring that, as Lemke tellingly expresses it “those who succeed in science tend to be like those who define the “appropriate” way to talk science: male rather than female, white rather than black, middle- and upper-middle-class, native English-speakers, standard dialect speakers, committed to the values of North European middle-class culture (emotional control, orderliness, rationalism, achievement, punctuality, social hierarchy, etc.” (p. 138). Lemke argues (p. 138) that “there is nothing “special” about the truth of science. It is just one specialised offshoot of common sense. It can be mastered by any normal human being”.

As to who benefits from the mystique of science, Lemke (pp. 139-140) argues that it is not teachers or most scientists, but a technocratic elite, i.e., “much more powerful groups in our society who make policy decisions for large institutions and justify their decisions by appealing to technical expertise in “management science” and innumerable specialised fields. They are individuals, moreover, “who do not understand science as a scientist does” but who “pick and choose” from science in order to promote *as facts* what suits their policies and, ultimately, their interests. Particularly significant is Lemke’s concern not to blame teachers for the mystification of science: “I don’t want teachers to be blamed for all this. It is not just science teachers, but everybody who has been taught to believe that science possesses an objective and special sort of truth and that only the most intelligent people can really understand it”. I return to Lemke’s point of view when I deal with the matter of the teachers’ culpability for what takes place in news-time, in 6.2.1.

2.6 Research into “sharing time”, “morning news” and “show and tell”

As I indicated in the opening page of this thesis, I have been significantly influenced by previous research into news-time. As subsequent chapters will show, I have also extended that research, *inter alia*, by drawing on the rich body of New Literacy Studies, underpinned by the ideological model of literacy (cf. 2.2.4), by drawing generally on critical orientations towards literacy, discourse analysis and pedagogy and then by relating it to the South African situation. In this final section of my review I seek to do three things: (1) briefly identify who the key figures are in news-time research, grouping them ‘geographically’, ‘occupationally’ and ‘chronologically’, so as to reveal trends in this work and features of it; (2) outline the research approach or orientation each figure has adopted towards news-time, highlighting major insights for which each is responsible; and (3) explain which aspects of the above research and which insights I draw on - and in some cases extend - in the chapters which follow.

2.6.1 Key figures in ‘news-time’ research

While I am aware of precursors to the work I describe here (e.g. that of Hahn 1948), what has influenced me most is the work of the following researchers: (a) Michaels (1981;1992); (b) Michaels and associates (Michaels & Cazden 1986; Michaels & Collins 1984); (c) Gallas (1994); (d) Christie (1987;1990;1993); and (e) Baker and Perrott (1988). The setting for the work referred to in (a)-(c) is America, most of it classrooms in California. However, some of the work, specifically that in (b) by Michaels & Cazden, compares the Californian sharing time data with data collected in Boston. Gallas (1994) draws her data from interaction in her own classroom, i.e., in Massachusetts. The work referred to in (d) and (e), by contrast, is by researchers situated in Australia, and draws on data collected there. To my knowledge no equivalent work has been done in any other country, certainly not in South Africa. As far as chronology is concerned, it is clear that Michaels’s original work, and much of that in (b), preceded that of Christie, which was followed by Baker & Perrott (1988) and Gallas. Michaels’s engagement in the field is distinctive for two general reasons: firstly, the length of time that her involvement has spanned (1981-1993) and, secondly, the breadth of associated concerns that her work reflects (cf. Michaels 1992) - i.e., other than simply describing sharing time. Finally, of the research referred to in (a)-(e) above, Gallas’s, the most recent, reflects the thinking

and the responses of a classroom practitioner-researcher, not an academic researcher, which is the occupational basis from which all the other work is written.

2.6.2 Research orientations and major insights from previous ‘news-time’ research

In outlining the different research orientations in the above work and indicating insights I draw on, I shall refer first to the American work in categories (a) and (b), then the Australian work in categories (d) and (e) and finally to Gallas’s - thereby capturing the distinctive ‘geographical’, ‘chronological’ and ‘occupational’ influences which characterise it.

Michaels’s earliest work (1981) - as well as much that she has done subsequently - employs the methods of traditional ethnography and interactional sociolinguistics. Influenced by Gumperz, she explores, in sharing time, a recurrent speech event in a social context that *matters* i.e., early education, hence her reference to and definition of sharing time as a *key event* (p. 424-424). Influence from traditional ethnography is reflected in her concern (Michaels 1981:1992; Michaels & Collins 1984) to capture the participants’ perspective, while the influence of interactional sociolinguists is evident in (a) the fine-grained analysis she provides of sharing time interactional behaviour focusing inter-alia on the role of supra-segmental phenomena in accomplishing synchronous (or topic-centred) or else asynchronous (or topic-associating) sharing time discourse; (b) a pre-occupation with intercultural interaction highlighting intercultural miscommunication; and (c) explanation of synchronous or asynchronous interaction in terms of matching or else mismatching communicative styles and the schemata which underlie them. Asynchrony, in Michaels’s data, is predictable in sharing time exchanges whenever the child involved is black. The effects of such asynchrony are that little building takes place on the black pupils’ themes, their accounts are interrupted, there is much simultaneous talk and, typically, their news contributions are terminated prematurely. Black pupils are therefore denied practice in the conventions underlying schooled literacy and consequently do not achieve mastery of them.

Predictably, given the stage of development which interactional sociolinguistics had achieved at the time when she was writing, Michaels under-represents the influence of the macro socio-political and socio-historical context on any instance of sharing time

interaction. Issues of power, too, are dealt with superficially with the author concerned not to blame the teacher for what transpires, and showing only a mild concern for the long-term social repercussions (e.g. for race-relations) of sustained sharing time asynchrony or, indeed, for measures by which, e.g., to promote more successful sharing time interaction. It needs to be said that Michaels & Collins (1984) reflects some appreciation of the above, and in her most recent work Michaels refers explicitly to ideological biases implicit in teacher-targeted sharing time literacy.

Finally, what also characterises Michaels's work is her conceptualisation of sharing time as a form of "oral-preparation for literacy", i.e., she argues that the discourse that is rehearsed during sharing time is anticipative of / a precursor to (written) literacy - which is highly valued in the context of education. The idea is an extremely important one, running counter to, or at least challenging, dominant thinking at the time regarding the relationship between speaking and writing. However, Michaels is herself constrained by that same great divide thinking, since she finds it necessary to preserve, as fundamental, a distinction between the two modes of interaction.

As will become evident in the chapters that follow, Michaels's influence on my own work is strong: (1) I, too, draw on the methods of traditional ethnography but, unlike Michaels, augment them with those of critical ethnography, by so doing drawing in as an explanatory force, the macro context in which news-telling takes place; (2) like Michaels I also seek the participants' perspective and believe, thanks to the criteria suggested by Erickson (1982) and McDermott, et al (1978), cf. 3.5, that I am able to do so more richly; (3) like Michaels I take very seriously the idea that news-time is a *key* situation and that, as such, it deserves exploration; (4) like Michaels I focus on first grade children (i.e., children in class 1), but I also investigate children a year younger than this; (5) an integral feature of the close analysis I provide of my news-time is the descriptive terms "topic-centred" and "topic-associating" - which I have drawn from Michaels; (6) finally, the conception of news-time as a precursor to expository literacy, as I indicate above, is fundamental to my own vision of the significance of news-time. For it, and the supporting evidence she provides, I am indebted again to Michaels.

While largely stimulated by her, I believe my research represents a refinement of the research she did. This refinement is reflected, for example, in the unmasking I provide

particularly of the ideological strategies teachers employ during news-time, of the value system that news-telling supports and promotes, of what is at stake more generally during news-time and of the non-commonsensical character of news-time, or, indeed, of any other set of literacy practices. Michaels appears to accept sharing time as a largely unproblematic “given”.

Finally, I am compelled (cf. p. 1 of this thesis) to challenge at least one aspect of Michaels’s work, namely, the neatness of her finding that sharing styles (narrative strategies and prosodic conventions) correlate exactly with ethnicity (or home-background), as she describes it. Given the highly systematic and vigorously controlled system of racial separation in South Africa under apartheid, one might, following Michaels, be tempted to hypothesise similarly. However, belief in there being a restricted set of “home-backgrounds” leading to a restricted set of uniform literacy practices is inherently implausible. My news-time data (in chapter 4), moreover, bears this out.

Earlier work on news-time e.g. that of Michaels (1981) and Baker & Perrott (1988), is relevant as regards whose interests are served, even though that work does not deal explicitly with the ideological motivation behind news-telling. I deal with it here briefly because it raises crucial issues which inform the set of arguments I will develop in relation to (a)-(e) above.

Christie’s work is framed as a contribution to genre analysis and is informed by systemic functional linguistics, which, at the time when she started exploring news-time, was beginning to influence the work of many in Australia interested in textual analysis. Christie’s work thus offers a very different perspective on news-time from that of Michaels and her associates. Not surprisingly, unlike Michaels, Christie provides an essentially *analyst’s* perspective on news-time which, as I argue in 3.2, needs at least to be supplemented by a participant’s perspective if we are to achieve the ethnographic goal of emic-level understanding of news-time. What is further distinctive about her work is:

- (a) her concern to describe the various phases in the overall pattern or “schematic structure” of morning news as represented in her data;
- (b) her characterisation of news-time as a ‘curriculum genre’ and description of it in terms of two constituent registers;
- (c) her interest in the power which teachers exercise during news-time and what

mechanisms enable them to do so; and

(d) the largely implicit suggestions she makes regarding alternative news-time formats.

Of these features of her work, the last three, particularly, shaped my own thinking as regards what is at stake at news-time (cf. chapter 5) and prompted me to consider alternative news-time formats (cf. 6.3.2). In what follows I briefly outline (a)-(d) because of their more substantial impact on my thesis than that of (e).

Thus, Christie categorises news-time as a curriculum genre - along with many others that pupils participate in in the course of a school day - on the grounds that it is a “staged, goal-driven and purposive activity in which students are initiated into ways of working, thinking and dealing with experience valued in English-speaking culture” (p. 155). She explains that it comprises a pedagogical register, concerned with pedagogical goals, specifically, the structuring of morning news activity, and a content register, associated with the “actual morning news-giving role” (ibid). She contends that the content fields of morning news, unlike those in other curriculum genres, for which teachers have prime responsibility, are distinctive because they are selected from the *children’s* experiences. In this one hears strong echoes of what is claimed locally for news-time (cf. 4.2).

As far as phases in the overall pattern or schematic structure to morning news are concerned, Christie (1993:161) discerns the following, all of which, except for stage 3, are similar to the structure of my data, as I describe it in 5.2.2:

Lesson initiation	where the teacher gets the activity going
Morning news nomination	where a child is nominated to take the morning news giving role
Morning news greeting	where the selected child exchanges greetings with the rest of the group
Morning news giving	where the child actually tells his or her news
Morning news finish	where the activity of giving the news is brought to a conclusion
Morning news closure	where the whole morning news genre is brought to a close, preparatory to going on to some other curriculum genre.

For me, the really key point which Christie (1993) makes in regard to the above structure is how it enables teachers to exercise power. As she explains: through controlling the

pedagogical register, the teacher establishes and then constantly confirms her authority at morning news as s/he controls the children's behaviour in line with the underlying goals of this genre. Control is seemingly relaxed during phase 4: "morning news giving". However, in exploring possible reasons for the fact that a number of children do not perform well in the role of news-givers, Christie notes (p. 164) that "teachers tend to favour particular kinds of fields of personal experiences in morning news activities". She notes further (same page) that "an important ideology actually operates determining that choice. Celebratory experiences, such as the birth of a new baby or the acquisition of a new possession, or funny experiences such as having a horse that often escapes, are particularly valued and rewarded with teacher approval. Children most disposed by prior life and language-learning opportunity to construct fields of personal experiences of these sorts are likely to be advantaged when they participate in morning news-giving activities". In other words, pupil control over the content register is largely *illusory*, the possible exception, according to Christie, being cases where the pupils are from families where the breadwinner practices a "higher-autonomy profession", as opposed to a "lower-autonomy profession", though she notes that even in such instances pupils are constrained both in their choice of topic and treatment of it.

These are insights which are integral to the explanation I offer for news-time in chapter 5 and contribute helpfully towards explaining the mismatch between teacher claims regarding the goals of news-time (cf. 4.2) and what actually happens during the teacher-pupil interaction that takes place during news-time (cf. 4.3 and 4.5.2).

Where Michaels and Christie both rely in their work on news-time on influential linguistic paradigms (interactional sociolinguistics and genre analysis coupled with systemic-functional linguistics) that were establishing themselves in the geographical contexts in which they were working, Baker & Perrott's work is less easily characterised in this way. Its influence, for me, lies in the highly accessible way in which it foregrounds the role of ideology during news-time though, interestingly, nowhere do the authors employ the word "ideology". Of the other news-time researchers mentioned above, Baker & Perrott's work overlaps most with that of Christie, because of their joint concern for how power is exercised at news-time. A further common denominator is the Australian ambience in which they worked. Turning to the specifics of Baker & Perrott (1988), we note that, recognising, as Christie does, that news sessions are "ostensibly spaces in the

school day where children may introduce their own topics and interests” (p. 19), Baker & Perrott contend that news sessions, in fact, are “occasions for the initiation of pupils into school culture, for the definition of ‘school knowledge’ and for the development of interactive competencies relating to acceptable interrelationships in the classroom community” (p. 20). The interrelations in question are, firstly, those between the pupils (news-giver/audience and questioners/answerers) and, secondly, those between the teacher and the pupils. Contending that news sessions (p. 35) “construct(s) formal relations among children”, they argue that news “also recapitulates the socially agreed nature (or dominant view) of pupil-teacher relationships”.

A major preoccupation in their article is how, through “stage managing” news-time, teachers appropriate the “private/personal realm” of the pupils, namely, their choice of topics, and get them to “transform (that) subjective experience to make it fit the contours of the activity schedule and the accepted format of interrelationships as well as of the language requirements of classrooms” (p. 25). Elsewhere (p. 26) they note that “it is the teacher who receives and transmits what the children’s ‘news’ is, coded into the categories and domains of school knowledge”.

Importantly, they show, too, how news-time relies on a number of contradictions or “institutional paradoxes” (p. 23). Thus, they show that the IRE turn-taking format so typical in traditional, Western, teacher-dominated classroom instruction prevails during news-time, yet it is fundamentally at odds with the alleged learner-centred ethos of news-time. Pupils, moreover, are confronted with two audiences at news-time - the teacher, on the one hand, and their class mates on the other - and required to establish the speech event that they are really engaged in, since as Atkinson (1981) explains (quoted by Baker & Perrott on p. 23) “when there is ‘public’ talk in the class, pupils do not normally speak to pupils unless specifically directed to do so by the teacher”.

While they point out ways in which teacher-pupil interactions at news-time differ from one classroom to another, and in this way hint at alternative news-time formats (cf. 6.3), they nevertheless conclude (a) that teachers rarely release their control over their pupils at morning news; (b) that the outcome of news sessions is little different from that of other (‘ordinary’) pedagogical events in the school day; and (c), that whilst some might want to argue that what takes place during morning news is pedagogically sound, none

can reasonably claim that news-time is *pupil-driven*.

The value of Gallas's (1994) teacher-researcher account of sharing time lies principally in how strong a hold she shows conventional sharing time assumptions have over teachers when they engage in sharing time, highlighting thus the effect of hegemony and implicitly cautioning those who seek to bring about a change in social conventions which involves challenging hegemonic practices (cf. 6.3). In the context of what else has been written on sharing time (and related literacy events) Gallas's is a unique contribution furthermore, because it is an introspective account by an 'insider', and because it amounts to an insider talking back at the societal institution which she belongs to and criticising it for the discursive constraints it imposes on her and other teachers, as well, of course, as on the pupils. Such discomfort leads to her seeking to reconstitute sharing time, and grounding it in a different ideology. However, even then she is forced to reckon with the power of conventional sharing time assumptions. These she finds are deeply embedded in her consciousness and so still constrain her in how she responds to sharing time accounts according to the reconstituted format.

Describing sharing time as "one of the most commonplace daily occurrences in the primary classroom, a part of every teacher's day that is embedded in routine" (p. 13), Galas notes that the event was never meaningful to her because it, along with all other school-generated discourse, did not deal with what was important to *her*. As she explains:

...what I needed as a child in school was a teacher who wanted to hear my voice, my ideas, the words that were always present but never spoken; a teacher who would have given me support and safety and a space in which to project that voice; a teacher who might have asked to hear my thoughts spoken out loud, who by asking me to talk without fear of judgement would have valued my voice just because it was mine, not because it provided the right answer.

These ideals, while readily compatible with the goals of news-time as they are typically espoused, were not in Gallas's experience realised in practice. However, as a beginning teacher herself some time later, Gallas notes that she too found herself employing sharing time as a regular feature of her teaching. She (1994:17) writes as follows:

Like most teachers, I had been taught to think that show-and-tell, or sharing, was an important time in the day when children could take center stage and bring something of their home life into school, a time when they were encouraged to speak publicly on topics of their own choosing. Truthfully, though, I had had

little understanding of sharing time as a speech event, and I had also been a victim of the anomie that afflicts most primary teachers when faced with sharing time. Inside my head, it sounded something like this: “I know I’m supposed to do it, but it truly is so deadly boring and repetitive, and the children don’t really say anything, but heck, I’m conscientious, so I’ll grit my teeth and tolerate it”. I had certainly thought this, and had had many teachers say the same thing to me.

As a means of promoting a different ideology at news-time Gallas sought, inter alia, to:

- (1) position herself less centrally (cf. my account in 5.2.2) in the news-time talk, i.e., both physically, by sitting at the back of the room rather than in the sharing chair at the front of the room, and through seeking to encourage the *pupils* to ratify the discourse produced, rather than herself taking sole responsibility for this;
- (2) implement what she refers to as “a noninterventionist style” (p. 17) with her sharing time groups. (The point above regarding ratification is consistent with this);
- (3) foster an ethic of what she calls “*social* inclusion” rather than “*school notions* of inclusion”, which she finds are ultimately too private and too egocentric;
- (4) actively seek to build a classroom culture and community which would do such things as: (a) capitalise on the cultural information which children provide via their topic choices at news-time; (b) privilege all kinds of talk, mainstream and other, and (c) seek to influence and change every child: “African-American children will attempt to master mainstream talk, new immigrants will find acceptance for their efforts to communicate, and, conversely, as non-mainstream narratives are included, white children will attempt to master those genres” (pp. 18-19).

Worth emphasising are the following, namely:

- (a) the fact that, inspite of her resistance and unsatisfactory childhood experiences, the ‘dominant’ mode of news-giving still managed to insinuate its way into her classroom;
- (b) how deliberately Gallas needed to set about reconstituting the ideology of news-time if she was to succeed in changing it;
- (c) the fact that the context for this attempt at social change was one like the one described in this thesis, i.e., where the children were drawn from markedly different language, cultural and social backgrounds; and

- (d) how, in spite of her resolve, Gallas's attempts at social transformation via a changed ideology of news-time produced considerable stress for her. They faltered on two occasions that she documents and, in one instance, even threatened to backfire.

The root cause of the stress she endured was, ultimately, the power of traditional, dominant mainstream assumptions regarding teacher intervention and control, topic choice and how a topic should be developed at news-time - all of which are issues which figure prominently in my own data and which I seek to explain in chapter 5. Thus, while the *children* were tolerant of the halting news-telling early on of Jiana, the child from a markedly non-mainstream background, Gallas herself found it "terribly painful to witness" (p. 22) and not either intervene or send Jiana to remedial English. She notes (same page) that "often, as she struggled, I wanted to look away and preoccupy myself elsewhere, much as one might avoid looking at a handicapped person laboring to perform a simple function". Choice of topic induced stress because, on one occasion, Jiana chose to disclose "the most secret of family secrets" (p. 23): her parents' drug addiction and some of the consequences of this. Gallas writes as follows (p. 24) of her dilemma: "Was this appropriate for school? Should a child be allowed publicly to disclose to her classmates the difficult circumstances of her life?" and continues "As I listened, I knew that to stop the conversation would have been akin to censoring her world. My decision to let her continue reflected, I think, my intuition that this child's wish to tell her story took precedence over my discomfort at hearing it". As regards the matter of topical treatment - at which Gallas's efforts at changing the ideology of news-time teetered for a while - it is sufficient to note that what was at issue was that Jiana was "faking", i.e., fabricating/improvising details in her news account instead of being true to fact. What nearly undermined matters was that Gallas intervened very swiftly when Jiana fabricated news details the first time. I bear such 'gut reactions' on the teacher's part in mind in chapter 6 when I, too, make various proposals for a micro-literacy policy in this country for children in the earliest levels of formal schooling.

2.7 Summary

With the above by way of an outline of the reading which I have relied on in particular, I

turn now to methodological issues, and report on the methods of data collection and analysis I employed.

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

In collecting data for this thesis I have been guided by general ethnographic principles and have adopted essentially ethnographic methods. As explained in 1.1, I complement these with the principles and methods of critical (particularly micro-) ethnography. Many of my key informants are school-going children between the ages of four and eight, who posed a special challenge because of their age and because very little ethnographic investigation has been done which I could draw on into the discourse practices of informants so young. Corsaro (1985:2) bears this out, and Saville-Troike (1982:245) notes, in general, that "...while children have been frequent objects of observation by ethnographers, they are seldom interviewed". As a result of the challenge they posed, I was led to innovate in order to capture the *children's perspective* on news-time (cf. 3.4.3). On the matter of innovation within ethnographic research, Shimahara (1988:84) notes that the researcher's personal response to data collection is common within ethnography:

... ethnography has no standardised procedures of investigation that all ethnographers use ... This reflects the fact that ethnographic research is the craft of participant observation. Ethnographers often combine different methodological techniques, some of which are devised personally, in such a way as to facilitate their data collection in particular field situations.

In addition to employing a number of innovative means of eliciting data (described in 3.4.3) I also employ well-established traditional ethnographic methods of data collection, which I describe in 3.4.2. The collection of macro-contextual information is also important because of the overall critical perspective I adopt. I explain the methods by which I collected such information and also describe the sources of such information in 3.7.

My research is also characterised by, and has profited immensely from, prior familiarity with the area in which the schools are located, prior association with personnel at each school and daily, informal contact with children attending each school. From late August 1992 until the third week in December 1993, which is when my school-based fieldwork was most intense, I was able to rely on the trust, co-operation and generosity of the principals and teachers at both institutions. They permitted easy access to the children and

to themselves when I needed it, and were always willing to answer my questions. The outcome, I believe, is that the data base on which this thesis rests, is rich and varied. Data analysis, in its turn, combines microethnographic criteria for inferring norms from the transcripts of news-time interaction and the methods of critical discourse analysis (cf. 3.5 and 3.6).

These observations suggest that in this chapter I want to do the following:

- (1) define ethnography and critical ethnography and explain what a general ethnographic approach to data collection entails;
- (2) outline the strategies I adopted when “entering the field” of my research and interacting with focal (or “key”) participants in it;
- (3) explain the traditional ethnographic data collection methods I employed, namely, observation, audio and audio-visual recording of news and other literacy events, and interviews;
- (4) describe the innovative methods of data collection that I devised, provide the rationale for them and, where relevant, indicate their limitations as well as those of the traditional methods I employed;
- (5) outline the methods by which I collected macro-contextual information and explain what sources I relied on in this regard;
- (6) explain the criteria I used to infer particularly the teachers’ norms for news-time interaction from transcripts of their news-time interaction;
- (7) explain the methods I employed when doing a critical discourse analysis of my news-time data; and
- (8) direct the reader to later chapters in the thesis where I deal with the data collected and analysed by means of each of the methods mentioned.

3.2 Critical ethnography and what such a perspective entails

My major purpose in what follows is to clarify what ethnography is, what a general ethnographic perspective entails, and how a critical ethnographic perspective complements a general ethnographic perspective. In doing so I first clarify “ethnography”, then explain

what the underlying purpose is of ethnographic research and, finally, outline five core principles of such research, cross-referring in each case to general aspects of my investigation of news-time. Where relevant, I cross-refer to the distinctive features of critical ethnography first mentioned in 1.1.2 and 1.1.4. Critical ethnography, it is important to note, has emerged from conventional ethnography and, as May (1997:197) notes, “reflects many of the characteristics of conventional ethnography”. In so far as it addresses macro-contextual issues, it complements conventional (especially micro-) ethnography. As readers will see, I carry it further in the sense that I employ a critical perspective even in my analysis of classroom data, i.e., critical microethnography (borrowing from critical discourse analysis). In this way, incidentally, I address one of the limitations of critical ethnography, namely, its failure to explore the role of language in legitimating power relations.

Saville-Troike (1982:1) defines *ethnography* as “a field of study which is primarily concerned with the description and analysis of culture”. Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) also emphasises culture in her definition. She writes that ethnography is “the study of people’s behaviour in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behaviour”. Mehan (1981:46), another prominent ethnographer, uses the term ethnography “to refer to a description of the culture of a community or society, where “culture” implies “members’ knowledge” - what people need to know to do in order to act acceptably in a society or community”.

The purpose of *ethnographic research*, according to Wolcott (1987:42-3), is “to describe and interpret cultural behaviour”. Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) notes that such research is *naturalistic* rather than experimental, i.e., it focuses on naturally-occurring behaviour, not behaviour that is experimentally induced and takes place in a laboratory. Shimahara (1988:84) clarifies what the focus on naturally-occurring behaviour entails by writing that “all ethnographers study events as they *evolve* in natural settings - the ‘*contexts in process*’ in which human experience takes place” (my emphasis). Shimahara (1988:84) notes, moreover, that “the ethnographic commitment is to study *ongoing realities without affecting their process*” (again my emphasis), thereby implying ethnographers’ sensitivity to the delicate processes which underlie and constitute naturally unfolding behaviour.

Spindler & Spindler (1987:4) add that ethnographic research rejects predetermined schedules of categories of observation or rating scales associated with experimental research because they are unlikely to be sufficiently responsive to the *particularity* of behaviour in given situations. Erickson (1986:119) emphasises that ethnographic research is *interpretive*, in that it attempts to elucidate “human meaning in social life” and Mehan (1981:47), in the same vein, contends that it should “resonate(s) with the members’ point of view”. Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) notes that ethnographic research is essentially *qualitative* rather than quantitative. By this she means that it aims to reveal the nature and distinguishing features of people’s behaviour, rather than to measure it. Erickson (1986:119), Spindler & Spindler (1987:4) and others, by contrast, are more cautious about characterising ethnographic research in such “either-or” terms. They recognise that quantification of various kinds contributes valuably to ethnographic research, which is the approach I adopt in this thesis. Thus, Spindler & Spindler (1987:4) write: “Careful use of statistics defines relationships and parameters in a most valuable way that helps define what must be explored with direct observation and interviewing, and conversely, makes possible the extension of generalisations initially derived idiographically”.

Five *core principles* which underlie all ethnographic research are implicit in what I have written above. First, as Watson-Gegeo (1988:577) points out, ethnography is *holistic*, i.e., it seeks to explain behaviour “in relation to the whole system of which it is a part”. What this means in relation to news-time, for example, is that I investigate it as one school-based literacy event among many, for instance, ‘story maths’, ‘birthday ring’ (cf. 3.3), ‘object description’, ‘topic discussion’, and ‘picture discussion’. I also (in chapters 4 and 5) compare and contrast news-time behaviour at one educational level (e.g. the school-readiness group) with that at an earlier level (those in their second year at pre-school) and that at a later level (class 1). In addition, I contrast news-time with literacy practices in other domains, such as law, tertiary education and science teaching, cf. 2.5. A holistic account also entails viewing news in terms of the socio-political circumstances of the school, e.g. the ethnic/racial backgrounds of the pupils and the teachers and how well each group is represented in relation to the population profile in the country as a whole, as well as in terms of political preoccupations at the time, such as the upcoming democratic election in 1994, etc. Some of this contextual information was provided in chapter 1, other of it is presented in chapter 4 and, particularly, chapter 5. One thus embeds news-

time in as many contextual layers as possible, so as to understand it as an integrated and not an isolated phenomenon.

If one is trying to look at behaviour holistically, there is a need also, I argue, to view it from a critical point of view. This is because a critical perspective by definition highlights the influence of contextual issues on social conduct (and vice versa) - issues which have been largely obscured until recently. In particular, critical perspectives draw attention to the ideological exercise of power by means, ultimately, of assumptions about aspects of culture (social relations of power, social identities, etc.). Erickson (1987:335-356) is an ethnographer who, in his later work, has incorporated a critical perspective. He does so, for example, when he draws ideological issues into an ethnographic reconsideration of why minorities under-achieve in America. Setting aside many of the finer details of Erickson's argument, I alert readers to his observation that part of the distrust which under-achieving minorities feel, which leads them to disaffiliate from the school's agenda for them and to develop what he refers to as "an oppositional identity", derives from what he describes as "the cultural hegemony that inheres in its (i.e., the school's) routine ways of doing daily business". (See, too, the scenario in 2.4.6 based on Sola & Bennett's work in East Harlem.) By way of clarification, what Erickson (1987:352) means by "hegemonic practices" are "routine actions and unexamined beliefs that are consonant with the cultural system of meaning and ontology within which it makes sense to take certain actions, entirely without malevolent intent, that nonetheless systematically limit the life chances of members of stigmatised groups". He notes in further clarifying hegemonic practices that they "are not only ramified throughout the general society and in the local community outside the school, they are also alive and well inside the classroom". News-time, as I demonstrate in detail in chapter 5, also embeds cultural as well as other forms of hegemony. In addition, I provide evidence that it has become such a routine way of doing daily business that the teachers I interviewed are not able to say why they rely on and continue doing news, particularly since it is not required in the syllabus. Through the routine-izing of news-time (and other ideological strategies outlined in 5.3.3) dominant groups entrench the cultural and other forms of hegemony just mentioned.

A second core principle underlying ethnographic research is that behaviour is investigated *in its own terms*. This means three things which I will detail over the next few pages. *Firstly*, it means that one tries to understand behaviour *emically*. Saville-Troike

(1982:130) clarifies this key notion by referring to an emic account as one “in terms of categories which are meaningful to members”. An emic account of behaviour is thus the anthropological equivalent of a phonemic account of the sound system of a language, since it reflects those categories and contrasts which are meaningful in the language, i.e., for the members. Harris (1983:14) corroborates Saville-Troike’s view: “In carrying out emic research, anthropologists attempt to acquire a knowledge of *categories and rules one must know in order to think and act as a native*”. (My emphasis).

An *etic* account, by contrast, is, according to Saville-Troike (1982:130), one “in terms of *a priori* categories”. “Etic” is the term used to refer to the *researcher’s* interpretive framework. According to Shimahara (1988:81) who develops this point: “Eticists believe that the conceptual categories of cultural reality must be determined by the *researchers*, based on their identification of the causes of cultural phenomena”. (Again, my emphasis). Saville-Troike (1982:130) explains that an etic account “...is a useful preliminary grid for reference and for comparison purposes, but is usually not the ultimate goal of description”. As to one of the major limitations of etic operations, Shimahara (1988:82), quoting Harris (1979:32), notes that “frequently etic operations involve the measurement and juxtaposition of activities and events that native informants may find inappropriate or meaningless”.

Ethnographic analyses are, however, seldom exclusively emic. Spindler & Spindler (1987) explain that the native view of reality “can rarely stand on its own”. It needs translating, for example, into the vernacular of those who might read ethnographies, which means that it needs translating into *etic* categories. Watson-Gegeo (1988:580), in turn, writes that “a carefully done emic analysis precedes and forms the basis for etic extensions that allow for cross-cultural or cross-setting comparisons”. This provides a further justification (along with those implied so far) for combining emic and etic analyses of ethnographic data. Also relevant to the argument that etic and emic perspectives complement and mutually inform one another is the critical ethnographers’ insistence that all ethnographies are theory-laden and that a researcher *must* begin from a theoretical position, to assume otherwise is both idealistic and misleading. A major goal of this thesis is, on the one hand, to demonstrate what categories and rules inform the teachers’ conceptions of news-time and their behaviour during it - what I shall be referring to as their ‘core norms’ - and, on the other, that of the pupils, bearing in mind that there need not be unanimity across the two groups

or within each group. I provide this account in chapter 4 and, in doing so, move recursively back and forth between emic and etic perspectives.

Investigating behaviour in its own terms means, *secondly*, that one employs *the descriptive language of the members/natives*. The underlying assumption here is that peoples' descriptive labels are crucial indicators of the fact that the events they label are distinctive *cultural* events. In this regard it is important to note that what appears to be the same literacy event as news-time in South Africa is labelled differently by members of the school-going community in America, who, as we saw in 2.6, use the labels 'show and tell' and 'sharing time' and by Australian educators who write about 'morning news'. Likewise, in local South African schools formerly under the control of the House of Delegates (H.O.D), a literacy event known as 'daily news' bears resemblance to news-time in the schools I investigated.

Investigating behaviour in its own terms means, *thirdly*, that one aims to capture "the *local meanings* that happenings have for the people involved in them" (Erickson 1986:121-2). Local meanings are so named because (a) they are particular to the *specific set of individuals who use them* (who constitute the equivalent of a microculture), and (b), more radically, they are particular to the *moment of their use* because, as Erickson (1986:129) puts it, "life is continually being lived anew, even in the most recurrent of customary events". The goal of capturing local meanings is important, moreover, according to Erickson, because it discourages one from settling for surface interpretations and seeming similarities in behaviour in different settings and time periods. Viewing my news-time data in *its* own terms, therefore, means being sensitive to variation across the different age levels that the data represents, as well as to variation from one day to the next in the news of any given pupil. It also means resisting the temptation of assuming that "daily news" in previously H.O.D. schools, "morning news" in Australian schools and "show and tell" or "sharing time" in American schools are *exactly the same* literacy event, and that they are strictly comparable. As comparative, structural details provided in 5.2.3 show and as my overall argument in chapter 5 suggests, news-time is shaped by forces common to "morning news", "show and tell" and "sharing time". However, it is also a uniquely South African response to uniquely South African political forces. Consequently, the social meaning of news-time differs significantly from that of "morning news", "show and tell", etc.

A third core principle which underlies ethnographic research is that such research typically “focuses on people’s behaviour *in groups* and on *cultural patterns* in that behaviour” (Watson-Gegeo 1988:577) rather than on the behaviour of individuals. Thus, the news-time behaviour of individuals in my data is significant because of what it tells one about *group* preferences. It is not interesting from the perspective of my thesis if it simply highlights idiosyncratic behaviour.

Even though, as noted above, ethnographic research investigates behaviour in its own terms, such research is also *comparative*. This is the fourth core principle that Watson-Gegeo and Erickson both endorse. Ethnography seeks to make generalisations about behaviours (such as those typical during news-time) across specific situations, for example school-based interaction locally and internationally. Erickson (1988:1087) makes the point that ethnographic observation is “inherently critical”, but stresses that it is not necessarily critical in a negative sense. (I need to note that he is not referring to critical ethnography here, though there are clear overlaps with critical ethnography in what he writes, cf. 1.1.4). Erickson explains: “It (ethnography) simply does not take any given customary reality for granted, as do the full participants in everyday events”. Instead, an ethnographic approach leads one to examine and document that “customary reality” in very close detail, relying, if at all possible, on multiple sources of information in order to verify the interpretation of it. It is very easy for researchers to take customary reality for granted because, as Erickson (1986:121) reminds us, and my analysis of news data in chapter 4 and explanation of it in chapter 5 very clearly show, “everyday life is largely invisible to us (because of its familiarity and because of its contradictions, which people may not want to face)”. He continues: “We do not realise the patterns in our actions as we perform them”. Ethnography is thus a means of exposing and then allowing the researcher to reflect on the invisibility of everyday practices. As Mehan (1981:47) expresses it, “the ethnographer working in a foreign land is attempting to make the strange familiar, while the ethnographer in local scenes must reverse the process and make the familiar strange in order to understand it”. One of the functions of reading case studies, considering scenarios such as those I present in 2.4 and 2.5 and then reflecting in a comparative way on their relevance in understanding news-time, is that it promotes these very processes, i.e., it helps make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, and does so at different stages in the research process.

The final core principle I want to mention here relates, as does the previous one, to one's basic point of departure when engaging in ethnographic research. Ethnography is an *inductive enterprise*, but it is neither *radically* inductive (i.e., one arrives in the research setting "with a tabula rasa mind carrying only a toothbrush and hunting knife" - Erickson 1986:140) nor is it *simply* inductive (as critical ethnographers quickly point out). In Erickson's view induction, intuition and "intensive firsthand presence" in a setting are important components of ethnographic research. But so too are more "deliberative" processes of data collection, in terms of which one enters the field, as I did, with a prior set of research questions (cf. those listed in 1.5). These both direct data collection and are *modified and changed* as a result of the data which one collects. In other words, being more deliberative means being both "theory-driven" and "data-driven" (Seliger & Shohamy 1989), premises, again, that critical ethnographers strongly endorse. According to Watson-Gegeo (1988:578), "theory is important for helping ethnographers decide what kinds of evidence are likely to be significant in answering research questions posed at the beginning of the study and developed while in the field". Shimahara (1988:83) provides an alternative perspective on the matter. He contrasts what he calls "the linear social science approach" with ethnography, and observes that while "the linear social science approach - quantitative research - not only predetermines what enquiry is to take place, it also forecloses other researchable problems inherent in a natural context. *In ethnography, the perspectives of the observer and the observed are intertwined in the generation of questions and hypotheses*". (My emphasis). Critical ethnography, we need to note, is avowedly 'political' (i.e., theory driven), and as May (1994:50) indicates, is attentive to the "wider power relations in society that shape both the setting itself and the 'common sense' interpretation that participants (and we as researchers) have of it", hence the need for "thick description" of the contexts in which interaction takes place (cf., for example, 1.2, 1.3 and 5.7.1) and "thick explanations" of the behaviour itself (as is provided in chapter 5).

3.3 Negotiating entry into the field setting

In contemplating how best to enter my chosen field setting and deal with ethical issues associated with the fieldwork I was influenced mainly by Erickson (1986) and Corsaro

(1985). In what follows I briefly summarise the insights which shaped my thinking on these matters and then explain what form my field entry took at each school.

Erickson (1986) warns would-be researchers that inadequate negotiation of entry into the field setting can severely compromise one's research and encourages researchers to approach field entry with sensitivity and care. Both he and Corsaro (1985), while stressing the importance of gaining as much access as possible to data sources in the setting, argue that such access is likely only if the research has the consent of key informants and can take advantage of that access "under conditions of trust and rapport" (Erickson 1986:142). Both, therefore, recommend openness with gatekeepers (such as principals and teachers) about one's *research intentions* (Corsaro (1985:7-12) is a model in this regard), and reassurances that any data collected will be treated *confidentially*, and that informants will be protected from risks. They remind the researcher that the most vulnerable informants are those who have least power (e.g. the children in my research), but that focal informants and single occupants of an institutional status, such as school principals, are also vulnerable. They suggest that in order to secure the co-operation of such people and also protect them, it is necessary to negotiate what use will be made of the findings which emerge from one's research and who will have access to those findings. It is also standard procedure to conceal the identity both of one's subjects/informants and the institution/s from which one collects one's data. Assuring their anonymity through, for instance, using pseudonyms, as I have done (cf. chapter 1), is a clear way of protecting the individuals and institutions and is also a way of gaining their trust.

Saville-Troike (1982:112) warns that it is "the ethnographers' responsibility not to exploit the communities in which they work" and continues: "Often access can be negotiated to the benefit of all by including relevant feedback into the community in a form it may use for its own purposes". She also advises that "there are some data that should go unreported if they are likely to be damaging to individuals or the group" and that "information which is given confidentially must be kept in confidence" (p. 113), cf. 3.4.2.5.

In the case of my own research, I was careful to assure principals, teachers and the pupils in their care that I would not disclose their identity. I also indicated to the gate-keepers (principals and teachers) that I was willing to share my findings with them if they were interested, cf. Appendix B-1 and B-2, for example. To date this information has been

sought in one instance only, and then only informally, and I happily shared the broad insights I had gained by that time with the interested individuals. As I explain in chapter 6, I will be returning to the schools and the teachers with copies of this thesis and will explore the implications of my research with them.

According to Saville-Troike (1982) ethnographers should also be alert to the possibility that, in return for access, focal informants, especially in gatekeeping positions (such as teachers and principals), may try to co-opt the ethnographer, i.e., encourage him/her to accept their attitudes and practices and discourage him/her from questioning or exposing these attitudes and practices. Saville-Troike (1982:113) alludes to the risk of such co-option in referring to past studies conducted in minority communities by members of the majority group: "... the myth of the observer as a detached, neutral figure obscured the social fact that whether a conscious participant or not, *the observer was inescapably part of the social setting and affected the behaviour of other participants, as well as being influenced and sometimes even manipulated by them*" (my emphasis.) To avoid the possibility of co-option, I relied, as will be evident in 3.4-3.7, on a wide range of data sources, elicited and collected by a number of different means. In addition, I employ various methods of data analysis (cf. 3.5 - which seeks to elicit the participants' perspective on news - and 3.6) and carefully triangulate both the sources and the interpretations they give rise to. In all of these ways an important goal is to avoid being manipulated by teachers and others perhaps wishing me to place a 'preferred' interpretation on what takes place at news-time.

Erickson (1986) in fact argues that the process of explicitly negotiating entry for oneself into the research setting with gatekeepers and key informants can create the "high trust and rapport" that he sees as crucial to productive fieldwork. This, he contends, is not simply a matter of niceness, but is "essential if the researcher is to gain valid insights into the informant's point of view" (Erickson 1986:142). Indeed, Erickson (1986:142) and Corsaro (1985:18) remind the ethnographer that maintaining trust should be an ongoing concern throughout. What complicates matters though, because it tests informants' trust, is the tendency "for informants to assume, whatever the researcher's presentation of the purposes of research was during the initial stages of negotiation of entry, that the researcher's purposes are in some way evaluative" (Erickson 1986:142). As I argued

earlier in section 3.2, the ethnographer's purposes are, indeed, ultimately evaluative. As a way of retaining informants' trust, Erickson recommends involving them directly in one's research, as collaborators. Again, Corsaro (1985:12-18) is exemplary in this regard. As I will show throughout this chapter, I collaborated with my (adult) informants in the collection of data. This allowed me to gain valuable insights into their perspectives on news-time practices.

In 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 I describe the form that field entry took at each school, highlighting evidence of the "trust and rapport" which was achieved and the collaborative nature of the relationships I established with key figures, principally the teachers. I point out that my prior association with each school and with some of the personnel ensured that the working relationships established were very productive. I deal first with Natal Junior Primary School, class 1 then class 2, before moving on to Natal Pre-Primary School (in 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Field entry at Natal Junior Primary School

3.3.1.1 Class One: 1992

I negotiated entry to Natal Junior Primary School by writing to the Principal, Mrs Richards, on 30 August 1992. In this letter I referred to a school-readiness meeting with her and my son the previous year and asked if she would be willing to record similar meetings that year for me given my increasing interest as a linguist in the language development of my children and young people like them. Relying firstly on the fact that my son that year was in class 1 at her school and secondly that I had met and interacted with his teacher before he started at Natal Junior Primary and so was on friendly terms with her, I also asked for permission to approach Mrs Higgs for assistance in recording "some of the interaction which takes place ordinarily in her class, for instance, news-time". The letter is included as Appendix B-1. Mrs Richards made a set of school-readiness recordings for me and approached Mrs Higgs, who agreed to assist me.

I was careful both to define my relationship to Mrs Higgs independently of the prior acquaintance my family had had with her and to build on the goodwill that existed. Accordingly, I tried to be as efficient and purposeful as I could be, for example, in monitoring and supplying audio tapes, but joked on occasion and was friendly, so as not to

over-emphasise the researcher side of my identity. We communicated mainly by means of letters which we slipped into my son's homework book, brief messages which we occasionally wrote in this book, and by telephone. These ensured regular, easy contact, helped maintain the researcher-teacher role-relationship and also fostered rapport and solidarity.

I was open with Mrs Higgs about the goals of my research, but was grateful that she was satisfied with a very general account. This is because, particularly in the early stages of my fieldwork, I could not be sure what I wanted to concentrate on and needed the freedom which an inductive approach offers to clarify my research intentions in the light of preliminary analyses of accumulating data. Among other things, I needed to establish that news-time was a sufficient focus for my research.

Openness, as well as evidence of the collaborative relationship which I sought to foster with Mrs Higgs (and all of the teachers I worked with) is apparent in the following excerpt from our correspondence of 25/11/1992. It deals with the design and administration of a proposed elicitation task (cf. 3.4.3.1):

.... would you mind if I devised a means of eliciting from the children what they see as the functions of news-time - and would you be willing to administer it a day or two before school closes? I'm curious to see (a) if they can verbalise why they think they contribute (or else try to avoid contributing) to news sessions; (b) how uniform their perception is, and (c) how consistent their sense of its function/s is/are with yours. For this reason I want to get your and their views independently.

The kind of thing I had in mind for the children (please tell me if it is appropriate) is a colouring-in task which features two children, one slightly bigger than the other and therefore likely to be older. The bigger child, they will be told, is, like them, at the end of class 1. S/he is talking to a child who will be entering class 1 next year at Natal Junior Primary School. The little child has asked the big child one or both of the following questions: What happens at news-time in class 1? Why do you give news in class 1? Having coloured-in the picture, the children will be asked to write one or two lines in response to the little child's question, in space provided at the foot of the page. I suppose the children could instead, individually, tell you (or me?) what the big child is probably saying to the little one, and their answers could be tape recorded. With 20+ children, though, this may be tedious - maybe not.

What do you think? I want somehow to involve the children in an activity from which I can capture their spontaneous sense regarding the purposes of news. I would appreciate any suggestions and guidance. You might even know of a

suitable colouring-in task along the lines that I have suggested - or have a totally different and much better idea.

The extent of Mrs Higgs's willingness to assist me and her commitment to my research is reflected in the following details:

- (1) She audio recorded eighteen news sessions for me. Each was approximately twenty minutes long and, on average, featured nineteen of the twenty four children in the class. In total, there are 336 class 1 news contributions;
- (2) she permitted me to observe two sessions (cf. 3.4.2.2) and to videotape two further sessions (cf. 3.4.2.4);
- (3) she assisted in devising and administering the elicitation task referred to above in the extract from my letter to her (cf., too, 3.4.3.1); and
- (4) she allowed me to interview her for just over an hour (cf. 3.4.2.5).

3.3.1.2 Class Two: 1993

My data collection involving Mrs French's class 2 group took place at Natal Junior Primary School between March and December the following year, and was greatly facilitated by my presence at the school the previous year. As a result, relatively little new "prior" ethnography was necessary.

I did not renegotiate access to the school with Mrs Richards that year, deeming it unnecessary, but did write to Mrs French (whom I did not know) introducing myself, asking if she would assist in recording "news" as well, this year, as "story maths" sessions, and explained why these two activities interested me, see Appendix B-2.

I considered the timing of my letter to Mrs French very important. Hence, I delayed writing until two months of the school term had elapsed, to enable her to have established rapport, etc. with her class and so not make my entry into the classroom disruptive. I hoped, too, that in that period she would become acquainted with my son as a class member, and so not regard me as an outsider. I timed my request to coincide, in addition, with Parents' Day, an occasion when parents meet with their children's teachers to discuss their progress. Having the previous day secured Mrs French's willingness in writing to assist me, I was thus able to meet her under formal, official circumstances and, once the meeting was over, hand her the first two tapes for recording. Coming as it did a week

before the Easter break, the timing of my request also enabled Mrs French to record a couple of news sessions before the holiday, thereby allowing us a “dummy run”: I could listen to the recordings, she could reflect on the process of recording and I could offer feedback and support (if necessary) so that recording and other forms of data collection could proceed in earnest when the new term started.

The form of our correspondence throughout the year was exclusively by note via my son’s homework book. I stressed my gratitude to Mrs French for her support, frequently indicated my desire not to be burdensome or intrusive, and was always willing to fit in with her arrangements. I took responsibility for managing the data collection and keeping careful records, e.g. labelling and replacing tapes, setting up times, checking on them, etc. As before, I attempted to be as open and explicit as possible regarding my needs and was careful to elicit Mrs French’s guidance and suggestions wherever this was feasible, hoping thereby to maintain her trust and co-operation. For evidence of my openness, see my letter in Appendix B-2. My explicitness about needs is evident in the letter in Appendix B-3, while my desire to involve Mrs French in my plans in a collaborative way and elicit her guidance and suggestions is evident in the following extract from a letter (dated 22/11/1993) regarding a questionnaire for the pupils which I devised (see also section 3.4.3.2):

.... I’m keen to elicit the children’s understanding of why they have news, what they like and don’t like about it and what they think you want from them. With this in mind, I have devised a little questionnaire (enclosed) which I would like the class to complete for me. May I distribute copies on Thursday at 8.15 (when I would normally be at the school) and would you let them complete them in class and collect them? I can fetch them from the secretary first thing on Friday morning. Do you think the wording of the questions is appropriate, i.e., will the children know what I am asking them? Would it help if I typed the questions?

In a postscript I ask:

Do you think the appearance of the little questionnaire needs to be changed so that it looks less like a questionnaire and more like something they are more familiar with, e.g. a worksheet? How can I make it more “reader-friendly” - or am I just fussing?

My conduct towards Mrs French was also motivated by more practical considerations, three of which were:

- (a) Mrs French held news-time less regularly, less routinely and for shorter periods at a time than Mrs Higgs had the previous year;
- (b) I deliberately widened the scope of my interest in 1993 to include both news-time literacy as well as story maths (because of continuing uncertainty regarding the adequacy of concentrating solely on news-time), but reverted to news alone in the second half of the year; and
- (c) Mrs French was heavily involved in the school play and in teaching “new maths”, an approach to maths which required considerable readjustments by teachers to their previous teaching methods and took considerably longer each day than Mrs French had envisaged, thus crowding and putting pressure on other timetabled activities, such as news-time.

The effect of the three considerations was that scheduling regular school visits and collecting data was considerably more complicated than it had been with Mrs Higgs and, consequently, required mutual commitment and co-operation in order to be successful.

The overall extent of Mrs French’s willingness and assistance is clear from the following:

- (1) She recorded close to six hours of news-time interaction for me and two hours of “word problems”, i.e., maths;
- (2) she allowed me to sit in on eleven news sessions, one of which included an extended story maths session, cf. 3.4.2.2;
- (3) she provided me with all the pupils’ writing books, allowing me to investigate their written news entries;
- (4) she assisted in the design and administration of a questionnaire for the pupils referred to in the letter above - cf., too, 3.4.3.2; and
- (5) she agreed to be interviewed for seventy five minutes, cf. 3.4.2.5.

3.3.2 Field entry at Natal Pre-Primary School: 1992 and 1993

My association with Natal Pre-Primary School began in 1989 when my son enrolled there for the first of three years, ending in 1991. During this time my wife and I were actively involved with the school in various ways: we participated in week-end work parties which maintained the school buildings and equipment, assisted with lifts when there were class

outings, eg. to the airforce base and to a bird park, regularly attended and contributed to school occasions and fund-raising ventures. In addition, my wife served on the School Board for a year. The relevance of this contact is that I developed some understanding of the school and its circumstances and, in particular, liaised with and came to know some of the staff. This prior association and the ethnographic insight it provided, facilitated my subsequent field entry and research at the school.

My contact with the school continued through 1992 because, although my son was no longer enrolled there, I was part of a school lift club which included taking the daughter of a friend to the pre-primary school each morning. Because of my research intentions that year and, particularly, the following year, it was important that I did not lose contact with the school. Hence, this link, through the lift club, was ideal. Transporting children to both the pre-school and the junior primary was valuable, moreover, in that the talk which took place in the car kept me in touch with the world view of these and other similar young children. It also revealed the childrens' perspective on their respective schools and teachers and their views on education, in addition to offering comparative insights of what they felt each type of school was like. The Junior Primary children were especially useful in this respect, though the pre-school child's speculations were also valuable.

That year (i.e., 1992) there were a number of staff changes at the Pre-Primary school, the most important of which was the appointment of a new principal, Mrs Byrd. Two measures which she introduced ensured that I had almost daily contact with her: (1) no child was allowed to enter the school grounds unattended; and (2) she personally greeted each pupil as they arrived each day, and whoever brought them. Of relevance, too, since they probably also facilitated access for me, is the fact that Mrs Jones, the school secretary, and Mrs Willis, my son's teacher in his second year at the school, were both still on the staff.

After the half-year, once Mrs Byrd's position had been confirmed, I made an appointment and met formally with her (on 27 October 1992) in her office. As part of my attempts at securing "access to the field", I explained that I was interested in, but needed still to learn (i.e., by a process of induction) which were *key* literacy events at the pre-school level. Having identified them, I explained that I wanted to explore what takes place during such events, and what they anticipate later on in the children's literacy development. Given the

imminence of major political change in the country, I explained that I was also interested in the influence of cultural background on children's behaviour during key school literacy events believing that, whatever the case, this might have valuable practical implications for pre-school education within a new political order.

On a more practical level, I explained to Mrs Byrd that I envisaged using the five weeks that remained of the school year to acculturate myself to the world of pre-school education and to get a sense of researchable literacy options so that in 1993 I could investigate a sub-set in a concerted, systematic and holistic way. I therefore asked permission to sit in on and record a selection of recurrent, seemingly "key" (in the sense of Michaels & Collins 1984:220-1) pre-school activities involving communication, if I felt it necessary. I also indicated a desire to interact informally with the teachers and children. My unspoken goal in being able to do so was to get an idea of the routines which give shape to the school day, to witness the forms of free play which the children engage in in the playground, to get a sense of the ethos of the school and philosophy of education which underpins the teaching there, and to try to determine what approach was adopted to issues such as discipline, gender and racial differences/diversity, etc.

Lastly, I referred Mrs Byrd to the fact that I was at that time also collecting recorded evidence at Natal Junior Primary School of *selection interviews*, with the assistance of Mrs Richards, the Principal, and *news-time*, with co-operation from Mrs Higgs, the class 1 teacher.

Mrs Byrd responded generously and enthusiastically, and promised me her full support as well as that of her staff. I was welcome, she said, to investigate whatever I wanted to, whenever I wanted to, even if it meant that the teachers had to "teach over or through" me. In addition, she alerted me to people in the teacher's training college and elsewhere who she believed I would benefit from talking to regarding my interests. She also lent me a copy of Deetlefs & Kemp's (1990) book Know Your Child - A Practical Handbook, which is subtitled "The development, observation and evaluation of the pre-school child". She did so because it had strongly informed her views on pre-primary education and, in particular, the timetabling of activities in the pre-school child's day at school. This book, because it provided a rationale for those activities, helped me understand better the routines followed at her school.

Shortly afterwards I received a list of pupils' names and birthdays to get a sense of the size of the school and composition of the pupil body in terms of gender and race - cf. the details provided in chapter 1 - and to help me remember the children's names. The advantages of such lists are demonstrated in Corsaro (1985:29-30). I also received an outline of daily school activities - see Appendix B-4 - which I felt would help me understand the routines at the school, know which children were where on the school grounds, when and for how long, and assist me in identifying and then investigating recurrent "key" literacy events. The children's birth dates were necessary because I thought I wanted to explore birthday rings (a members' descriptive label - cf. 3.2), as key literacy events.

By the end of the school year, through liason with Mrs Willis (the junior group teacher who earlier had been my son's teacher) I had attended and tape-recorded three birthday rings, two of which were those of children whose news-time behaviour I was to investigate intensively the following year, i.e., in 1993, when they were Eager Beavers. I had in addition made a number of visits to the school, where I spent time in the playground with the children, conducted informal interviews with the teachers either as they watched over the children during free play, or when they took tea, and sat in on sessions involving individuals talking in a group setting or else sessions made up of reading by the teacher and discussion between her and the pupils. I decided, however, *not* to record these sessions, since I felt doing so would make me unnecessarily obtrusive. Recording birthday rings, by contrast, did not render me so, since it was usual for parents and other outsiders associated with the birthday child to attend and, very often, to video-record the ring. Hence, I did not stand out when attending and recording.

Communication with the pre-primary school at this stage relied on the early morning verbal exchanges I had with Mrs Byrd, Mrs Jones and Mrs Willis, or else I telephoned them. Printed information (notes, references, schedules, etc.) was sometimes given to the child I gave lifts to, who passed them on to me. Whatever the mode, all of my contact with staff at the school was easy and friendly, and unlike everyone at Natal Junior Primary School other than Mrs Higgs, we addressed each other by our first names.

My contact with Natal Pre-Primary School the following year (i.e., in 1993) was more restricted than it had been in 1992 and was limited to the visits I made in order to gather

data. This is because my work schedule prevented me from participating in the lift scheme as I had the previous year. I delayed contacting the school that year until I judged it likely that the teaching programme was well established and the congestion associated with the beginning of a new school year had subsided. In March I wrote to Mrs Byrd, noting as follows regarding my goals for the year:

What I should like to do this year is concentrate on the school-readiness group. In particular, I would like to record news or, at least, provide a tape recorder so that the teacher can do the recording, some of the time. I am also keen to take up your suggestion and record "object description" sessions - though I am not sure now which classes you get to do them. Please refresh my memory. Birthday rings still interest me, but the more routine nature of news and object description might be easier for me to incorporate into my own timetable at this stage.

Two days later I met with Mrs Byrd and Mrs Robbins, the school-readiness teacher, and decided (see Appendix B-5) to devote Mondays exclusively to data collecting at Natal Pre-Primary School and Thursdays to Natal Junior Primary School. As regards the Pre-Primary, I planned to arrive in time to mix with the children, etc., before attending the following:

- (a) Mrs Robbins' fortnightly *object description*, a session which involved the whole class for approximately 25 minutes. These focused pupil interest and all discussion on a single topic which the teacher determined in advance, e.g. "the seasons";
- (b) Mrs Robbins' *topic discussion* sessions. These lasted about 10 minutes and involved 5-6 different children, over 5 days. They, too, were highly focused occasions and had predetermined themes, e.g. the identity and properties of objects. Mrs Robbins agreed to record these when I was unable to be present;
- (c) Mrs Byrd's *news/picture discussions* with the four year old children on Mondays for 15 minutes. Mrs Byrd agreed to record these sessions for me on Wednesdays and Fridays. (Note: "object description", "topic discussion" and "news/picture discussion" are all members' descriptive labels, as described in 3.2.)

Mrs Byrd responded immediately to my requests (see Appendix B-5), and included a number of suggestions on how either I might fit in additional recording - with or without slight adjustments to the routine current at the time - or ways in which she could record additional material for me. This once again reflects her extraordinary willingness to assist me.

By the half-year break I had collected the following:

- (1) four very high quality recordings of object descriptions/object study sessions in Mrs Robbins's group;
- (2) two topic discussion sessions;
- (3) four recordings of news among this same group, but of lesser quality;
- (4) nine recordings of news involving the seven four year-olds who went to Mrs Byrd when the rest of the Yellow Group did school-readiness work with Mrs Robbins. Of these recordings the first two are of poor quality, the following seven, excellent.

Since topic discussion sessions were fragmented and led to highly complicated record-keeping (and at times, considerable confusion) I placed more store by the object study sessions. These were not fractured in any way, drew in the entire group, relied on group co-operation, were usually conducted indoors, and I recorded them myself. As far as Mrs Byrd's news sessions were concerned, these were especially conducive to good quality recording and observation for the following reasons: they involved only seven children plus Mrs Byrd, they were held in the staff room/library, which was a smallish, carpeted room, the door was always closed, and everyone was located in a restricted area of space.

By the mid-year break I had gained useful insight into the nature of two key literacy events, *object description* and *topic discussion*, which exist alongside news-time. They, along with *birthday rings* at the Pre-Primary School the previous year, *story maths* at the Junior Primary School and *placement interviews* the previous year at the Junior Primary School, had helped me to contextualise and understand news-time better than if I had investigated it alone. Since I was by now convinced of the viability of news-time as the focus of my research (cf. 3.3.2) I concentrated only on Mrs Byrd's news sessions in the second half of 1993, observing three sessions and receiving recordings of four others.

3.4 Data collection methods employed at the two schools

In the account which follows, I first refer briefly (in 3.4.1) to general features of the methods I employed when collecting my data at both schools. Thereafter, in 3.4.2, I describe the 'traditional' ethnographic methods which I employed, namely, tape and, later, video recording, observation, along with fieldnotes, and interviews, and draw attention to

decisions which I took and specific issues that arose in relation to each of the three classes I investigated. In 3.4.3 the focus falls on innovative methods, i.e., ones which I devised in response to the challenge of eliciting the *pupils'* emic conceptualisations of news-time. This account is organised chronologically in that it reflects the sequence in which I devised them. I thus deal first with the speech bubble elicitation task which Mrs Higgs and I administered to the class 1 group, followed by the class 2 pupil questionnaire which Mrs French administered (for the most part), and, finally, explain how I interviewed the Eager Beavers and Mrs Byrd facilitated a drawing task with them. In 3.7 I outline the different sources I drew on when collecting information relevant to understanding the influences on news-time of macro contextual (i.e. pre-democratic) factors.

3.4.1 General features of the methods employed

Seliger & Shohamy (1989) explain that data collection procedures vary in terms of their *degree of explicitness*, i.e., in how narrowly or otherwise they specify in advance the data which they seek to capture. In what Seliger & Shohamy refer to as 'heuristic' or 'synthetic' research (of which ethnography is a sub-category), data collection procedures typically have a *low* degree of explicitness, i.e., they are broad and general. According to Seliger & Shohamy (1989:157) heuristic or synthetic research "focuses on understanding a phenomenon within the interactive framework of the environment where it occurs, without isolating variables from the general context and without making precise pre-data-collection decisions". 'Analytic' or 'deductive' research, by contrast, employs procedures with a *high* level of explicitness, i.e., they are carefully structured and are usually determined in advance.

Seliger & Shohamy (1989:157) are quick though to note, firstly, that the choice of data collection procedure depends on the design of a particular study and, secondly, that a given data collection procedure can vary in its degree of explicitness. As will become apparent from the account which follows, these are both features of the data collection procedures which I employed, though, in essence, mine are characterised by a low degree of explicitness.

Two other general points which Seliger & Shohamy (1989:159) make regarding heuristic/synthetic research are, firstly, that data "are often collected by means of procedures used simultaneously, with one piece of data leading to the next". On this same

point they note elsewhere (1989:160) that: “By using a variety of procedures and by obtaining data from a variety of sources the researcher often obtains rich and comprehensive data. Such data usually provide an expanded and global picture of the phenomenon, as each source provides additional data”. Their second general point (1989:160) is that data “are often collected inventively by data collection procedures tailored to the situation and played off against each other”. This, readers will see later in the chapter, is very much the case when we consider how the tape and video-recorded data collected from the class 1 group (cf. 3.4.2) are complemented, for example, by that gathered by means of the speech bubble elicitation task in 3.4.3.1.

Another useful general dichotomy, this time described by LeCompte & Goetz (1984), is that of ‘interactive’ and ‘non-interactive’ strategies for collecting ethnographic data. Interactive strategies involve interaction between the researcher and the informant/subject. The researcher is present, asks questions and actively elicits data from the informant/subject. The principal advantage of interactive strategies, according to LeCompte & Goetz (1984:41), is that “procurement of information is controllable: through elicitation, the investigator is better able to obtain appropriate data”. The drawbacks of using such methods are that they are “more reactive or obtrusive”.

Non-interactive strategies, by contrast, “allow the researcher to gather material with little or no exchange with the participants or subjects of the study” (LeCompte & Goetz (1984:49). Such strategies are less reactive or obtrusive than the interactive ones are. They are also, according to LeCompte & Goetz, less likely to influence the responses of participants. On the other hand, the authors contend that non-interactive methods/strategies are more fortuitous.

As I shall explain below in section 3.4.2, my data collecting strategy with the class 1, class 2 and, to a lesser extent, Eager Beaver groups, was deliberately *non-interactive*. This is because I believed that such strategies were more likely to yield data closer to what it would have been like were this behaviour not being recorded. Only in my final session with the class 1 pupils, which is when they completed the speech bubble elicitation for me, did I really interact with them. But even then I limited my interaction simply to explaining how they were to complete the task. My interviews, though, with the three teachers were clearly interactive in LeCompte & Goetz’s terms, as indeed were all of my dealings with

them during the period in which I collected my data. They needed to be, since I was heavily reliant on these teachers' goodwill and willingness to assist me in my data collection efforts. I deal further with the observer's paradox and reflect on the likely extent of my influence on the data collected for this thesis at the end of 3.4.2.2, as well as elsewhere in 3.4.

Finally in this account there is the matter to which Saville-Troike (1982:110) refers, namely, of the advantages of investigating one's *own* culture, as against investigating *some other* one. The relevance of this choice to this chapter is that familiarity or not with the culture or group one investigates will inevitably have methodological consequences. A major advantage according to Saville-Troike (1982:110) of studying one's own culture, is that in trying to make cultural knowledge explicit - which is normally left *implicit* - one can use oneself "as a source(s) of information, and interpretation", i.e., one can use one's intuitive knowledge. Saville-Troike (1982:111) also alleges that, with the ethnographer able to function both as observer and informant in such circumstances, "the ethnographer can plumb the depths and explore the subtle interconnections of meaning in ways that the outsider could attain only with great difficulty, if at all". She notes too, as a consequence, that "some of the problems of verification can be overcome, and a corrective to unbridled speculation provided". Working in other cultures, by contrast, requires extensive background study of the group to be investigated and requires that a deliberate effort be made, partly through the practice of employing multiple field methods, to "minimise imposition of their own (i.e., the researcher's own) cultural categories and perceptions on recording the interpretation of another system" (p. 111). Outsiders, notes Saville-Troike (1982:111), "may notice behaviours that are not readily apparent to natives of the community, for whom they may be unconscious, but conversely no outsider can really understand the meaning of interaction of various types within the community without eliciting the intuitions of its members". Saville-Troike (1982:111-2) concludes by suggesting that: "It is likely that only a researcher who shares, or comes to share, the intuitions of the speech community under study will be able to accurately describe the socially shared base which accounts in large part for the dynamics of communicative interaction".

It was not possible, in my own case, to draw on prior knowledge and intuition when investigating news-time since I had never experienced it before, even though it was

practised in an educational institution which, in some respects, was compatible with those in my past experience. Hence, I have proceeded very much as a cultural outsider, but one assisted considerably by ready recourse to two helpful insiders, my son, and Mrs Higgs, initially, and, latterly, to other key informants in class 2 and at Natal Pre-Primary School, most notably Mrs French and Mrs Byrd. They helped acculturate me, as did my own immersion in the considerable amount of news-time data which I collected/elicited.

3.4.2 Traditional ethnographic methods of data collection

3.4.2.1 Tape recording class 1 and class 2 news sessions

The first method by which I collected data from the class 1 group in 1992 and the class 2 group in 1993 was to tape record their news sessions. Adopting the least intrusive (i.e., least interactive) option in this regard, I arranged with Mrs Higgs that she would do the recording of the class 1 group. The school year began in mid January and she made her first recording at the end of September, by which time news as a classroom practice was well entrenched, the pupils were familiar with one another and were at home in the school and comfortable with their teacher.

Mrs Higgs used the school's tape recorder, a medium-sized, portable machine which she operated off the electricity supply in the classroom. She made no attempt to conceal the recorder, positioning it either next to her chair on the floor, on her lap or else on a table in front of her facing the children on the mat. With few exceptions she did not start recording a couple of minutes before a news session commenced, which is what I had suggested, but tended rather to switch it on shortly (i.e., a minute or so) before scanning the room and nominating the first news-giver of the day.

The recordings are of a very high quality and so are easy to work with. This high quality is a result of the close proximity of all the participants to the recorder, the fact that news-time concentrated them in a small area and also the fact that Mrs Higgs's classroom was away from the street, and some distance from the administrative centre of the school and main thoroughfares, which meant it was quiet. What also needs to be borne in mind is that Mrs Higgs held a news session every day and invited everyone present to share their news with the group each day. Thus, news sessions were concentrated occasions, especially if all 24 children contributed. Given the frequency with which she held news sessions and

the number of children who gave news each day, it seems likely that the recorder's presence did not constrain those giving their news - who, we should note further, did not face the recorder when giving their news. It was the children on the mat who were more likely to see it, though their attention was focused on the news-giver. It is also significant to note in this regard that there is no reference to the tape recorder: either by the teacher or by the children.

Mrs French's approach towards news in class 2 was very different from that of Mrs Higgs. Though she subscribed equally strongly to its usefulness, the following differences were apparent, all of which had an impact on participation at news-time and implications for recording and monitoring what took place at news-time during the course of a week: Mrs French was less deliberate in her scheduling of news sessions. As she pointed out: "Tuesday and Thursday are the usual days but we often use the odd spare minute to squeeze in news". Fewer people gave news at any given time. The average number of children, for example, who shared their news in the twelve sessions I attended, was seven. This meant that considerable time could elapse between one instance of a child's news-giving and the next. Turns tended to be longer, often considerably so, than they were the previous year, which had implications for the children on the mat who were not news-givers. Fewer children participated regularly than did so the previous year and some participation was allowed from those sitting on the mat.

As far as the mechanics of recording news sessions is concerned, i.e., when to start recording and where to place the recorder, I offered suggestions in my first letter to Mrs French (17/3/1995) - see Appendix B-2, which strongly echoed those earlier to Mrs Higgs.

The frequency of recordings of class 2 news sessions dropped for a range of reasons, one of which appeared to be Mrs French's reluctance to do the recording. Though somewhat earlier than I had originally planned, I asked permission on 7/6/1993 to sit in on a news as well as a word problems session, hoping that doing so would give new momentum to news-time and resuscitate recording of news sessions. After the mid-year break (as I mentioned in 3.3.1.2) I restricted my interest to news only, and at the end of July requested permission to sit in on news sessions once a week thereafter.

From the first week in August I arrived at the school (on Thursdays shortly before 8.15 a.m.) and, once the children had returned from Assembly in the school hall, sat in on news-

time for about fifteen minutes. This, I believe, was a particularly advantageous arrangement for everyone: News-time took place early in the day, while the children were fresh and eager to share their news; the session was restricted in time, which meant that it was not onerous for the teacher, and it meant that I, the researcher, did not break into anything, because news was the first classroom activity of the day. I was thus less obtrusive than I would have been had I for instance arrived in the middle of the morning. I was routinely greeted by the class, and sat among the children at the back of the mat in much the same position as I did the previous year in Mrs Higgs's classroom.

Various different sources of information suggest that participants were more conscious of the tape-recorder than the class 1 children had been the previous year. This, though, is perhaps not surprising, since recording took place more frequently than in 1992.

Mrs French notes (letter dated 1/7/1993) that she listened to the first few recordings only, after which she passed completely recorded tapes on to me without checking on their quality. This, I believe, is a good sign, since it suggests that recording became simply a matter of routine. The tapes did not therefore lead her to reflect self-consciously on news sessions and, for instance, to change her behaviour during such sessions. Unbeknown to me at the time, however, Mrs French occasionally played the children's news back to them at the end of the session. Again, I see this as a good sign, in that it probably 'normalised' the process of recording. Other similar evidence is instances where the children alerted Mrs French either to her not having pressed the record button at the beginning of news sessions, or of not having reactivated it (i.e., not having disengaged the pause button) after an interruption and of a child turning the cassette over when it had come to the end of a side. There is also awareness of the recorder's presence in the drawings of news which some children did after completing their questionnaires, cf. 3.4.3.2, examples of six of which are included in Appendix B-6.

The quality of all the class 2 recordings is remarkably good and has made working with them very comfortable. I speculate on possible negative effects of the recording strategy adopted in the next section (3.4.2.2) when I deal with certain of Mrs French's comments regarding the influence of my presence at news-time on her and on members of the class 2 group.

3.4.2.2 Observing class 1 and class 2 news sessions

It was only in mid November 1992 that I entered Mrs Higgs's classroom and witnessed first hand how a news session unfolded. Prior to then I had deliberately remained out of the picture. Up to that point I had received recordings of 14 news sessions, had listened to them intensively, and had satisfied myself that the circumstances under which the recordings were taking place, as well as the process of recording, were not distorting this literacy event. As confirmation, I had requested Mrs Higgs to listen to randomly selected news sessions and she had confirmed that they were typical. In her words, they were "basically what normally happens at news-time".

The intensive playing and replaying of the recordings also enabled me to build up rough profiles of the children in the group, noting such things as who seemed to be eager and who were reluctant participants; what were favourite topics for news; whose news Mrs Higgs tended to develop and extend and whose news she was inclined to leave. I had also noted exchanges which, for various reasons, appeared to be less synchronous (i.e., in step with the teacher's expectations and, especially, her timing) than appeared to be the norm.

In addition, I had attempted to form a picture of what various children looked like and were like. I did this during the naturally-emerging, casual chats about school which I had with my son and, sometimes, his friends when I gave them lifts or when they visited. Thus, when I entered the classroom it was not as someone stepping totally into the unknown. I was enlightened and "informed" regarding the participants, knew some of their interests, was familiar with the general format of news-time as well as the manner in which this event tended to unfold in Mrs Higgs's classroom.

In electing, essentially, to *observe* rather than engage in *participant observation* I was opting once more for the less interactive (in LeCompte & Goetz's (1984) sense), less obtrusive course of action, hoping thereby to disturb as little as possible the classroom 'reality' which normally characterised news sessions. However, as LeCompte & Goetz (1984:49) remind one, "interaction is impossible to avoid in social situations. Whenever researchers are observing on the scene, they acquire some role and status ... (and) will interact ... even if only non-verbally, and will become, to some extent, participants". Set against the inevitability of interaction and of intrusion, is the fact that by the time I entered the classroom, I was trusted and was far less a stranger, certainly a suspicious one, than I

would have been had I been a complete outsider. I had Mrs Higgs's very clear support and was warmly received by her when I arrived on each occasion, I was the person for whom the children knew the tape recordings were being done, and I was the father of a class member whom the group as a whole accepted and liked. In a sense, therefore, my appearance in the classroom was prepared for, just as I, too, was prepared for these news-time visits from having listened to a number of recordings beforehand.

On the evidence of fieldnotes which I took during each session, it is clear that my observation was characterised largely, using Seliger & Shohamy's (1989) terms, by a *low level of explicitness*. It was guided and informed by my prior familiarity with the tape recordings and by the chats to which I referred earlier. This meant that I did not simply "observe and record everything taking place in the setting without deciding in advance what to focus on", which is how Seliger & Shohamy explain observation behaviour which is truly low in explicitness. Neither, though, did I employ any instruments, such as explicit checklists, to guide my observation so that I focused on particular pre-established behaviours during the news sessions, which is what would typify observation at a high level of explicitness. My aims were simple: (1) to put faces to the names of participants whom I knew until then largely as voices on tape; (2) to look at the non-verbal dimension of news-time behaviour (proxemics, gaze, listenership behaviour, etc.) which is absent from the sound recordings, and (3), to experience first-hand the formation of a news session, its unfolding and its termination, and thereby get a feel for *what* happens at news-time and *how* it happens.

The angle from which I took a photograph towards the end of the last participant's contribution during the second of my visits to Mrs Higgs's classroom, shows that I sat close to but behind the children, and to one side rather than in the middle. From here I got a very clear view of the speaker and his/her interaction with Mrs Higgs. I could also witness the non-verbal behaviour of those on the mat, in very general terms, but I could witness it more closely only on the part of a sector of the children on the mat, namely, those who were sitting in front of me to my right.

The over-riding challenge to me on both occasions I observed news-time was the perennial one associated with ethnographic investigation. As Saville-Troike (1982:124) expresses it:

“The key to successful observation and inference is, again, freeing oneself from one’s own cultural filter”.

Fortunately I was not reliant solely on these two fleeting observation sessions. I had permanent audio recordings and planned to make video recordings too. Repeated listening and viewing, informed by on-going reading, were means by which I attempted to free myself from my own cultural filter.

What distinguishes my observation of news-time sessions in Mrs French’s class is that while still characterised by a generally low level of explicitness, it was influenced by bodies of reading new to me at the time. In particular, my reading of case studies of different literacy ecologies in the collections edited by Street (1993), Mitchell & Weiler (1991), and Lunsford, Moglen & Slevin (1990) prompted me constantly to try to look anew at news, a literacy event which was becoming familiar to me and which I felt I needed to “defamiliarise”. These case studies (as I mentioned earlier) also offered an increasingly rich comparative background against which to place and to try to interpret news-time. My reading of Fairclough (1989) and others such as Baker & Perrot (1988), Christie (1987;1990), Evans (1993); Rockhill (1993) and Sola & Bennett (1991) influenced both what I chose to focus on and the way I interpreted what I observed. For example, I started looking at news-time in a critical way, examining power relations and the role of language in negotiating them and reflected on certain seemingly illogical practices and what their ideological function/s might be.

My fieldnotes on news-time events observed in Mrs French’s classroom also alerted me to the diversity in the literacy practices employed during news-time, some of the formal features which distinguished the contributions of different pupils as well as to aspects of their evaluation by the teacher and pupils. Mimicking the formulations of the news-giver, shows of outrage and disgust, comments like “boring” or animated displays are all revealing of the participants’ reactions to one another’s news, and point to their respect for or rejection of the conventions at news-time. As I will show in chapter 5, ideological struggle surfaces more obviously in the class 2 data than it does in that of the previous year.

Finally, my fieldnotes at the time reflect my growing awareness of the inadequacy of purely *audio* records of news-time behaviour. I frequently attempted to sketch the postural

configurations and gestures of the participants and note the extent, for example, of eye contact and patterns of gaze on the part, especially, of Mrs French and the news-givers. In addition, I noted the forms which touch took and what the effects of that touch appeared to be. I also recorded factual information, such as the identity of objects or the titles of books referred to in news accounts, as well as salient contextual information prevailing at the time, e.g. if a session followed a vacation or school outing or event of note; if “naughty” children were reprimanded and moved; and if special privileges were granted to a child because it was his/her birthday. I also noted interruptions from outside, and the teacher’s and/or pupils’ evaluation of the session as a whole. All of this is detail, in effect, which potentially contributes to a fuller, more holistic understanding of the action and the content at news-time (cf. 3.3 on the ethnographic significance of holistic interpretation).

Having already referred (in 3.4.2.1) to the class 2 group’s greater awareness than the class 1 group’s the previous year of the data collecting which took place, I reproduce transcripts of two exchanges in my interview with Mrs French (cf. 3.4.2.5) about the effects of my presence on the behaviour of participants at news-time. Both, I suggest, indicate conscious awareness of my presence, but, I believe, do not imply that my presence distorted the news-time behaviour which is referred to.

In the context of discussing the behaviour of various pupils, I asked whether Andile’s was any different when I was not present. From here the discussion turns to Siphso, a black pupil like Andile, whose news will figure prominently in the next two chapters of this thesis. It raises the issue of *how* one should tell one’s news at news-time. This is what is said (R = me, the interviewer; T = Mrs French, the teacher):

- R: Is she different when I’m here? Are, are they generally different, would you say?
 T: Um, they enjoy you coming, ‘cos they want to tell, they want to, ah, no, no, not too much, Siphso I think plays up more when you are here.
 R: Mm, mm
 T: But generally the news is pretty much...
 R: Does Siphso play up in the sense of seeing me as another boy there who whose going to like hearing boy - type stories?
 T: Yes, yes. No, I think he feels that, um, when when you here, then he can tell his news the way he wants to tell it.
 R: Oh really?
 T: And when I’m here, when it’s just me?
 R: Mm?
 T: I put a damper on it. He’s, he’s got that across to me. That, I put a damper on.
 R: How did he say it?
 T: And he’s, he’s told me outright.
 R: Mm?
 T: He likes it better when Mr Adendorff’s here with news.

As regards my effect on *Mrs French*, she notes as follows, the immediate context of the talk at this stage being the question which I ask at the beginning of the exchange. The more general issue is that of how one responds to contentious information:

- R: Ah I often wonder to myself as I sit over there now, what, what do you at this moment see, see as the major tasks? Here's Siphon or Zena or whoever, and there they are, now, you know, how much will you allow them to talk?
- T: I must say I've been very aware of you there (*laughing*).
- R: I've tried to melt in, but I'm about ten feet tall (*laughing*).
- T: know, I know, I know (*laughing*) I'm conscious, and when they come out with some of these rather (*laughing*)...I think oh hell how am I going to get around this situation now (*laughing still*). Um, Ja.

3.4.2.3 Tape recording and observing Eager Beaver news sessions

The nine Eager Beaver sessions which I attended on Monday mornings were preceded by an extended period of free play in the playground and other areas of the school, and were followed by "story", i.e., a scheduled time slot from 11.30 to 12.00 when the Eager Beavers returned to their usual teacher for a story and discussion of it. Soon after arriving at the school I would set up my tape recorder in the staff room/library, always placing it on the floor, since this is where everyone sat at news-time, including the teacher. I concealed the recorder by positioning it under the staff room table and used the legs of chairs tucked in against the table to conceal the electric cord. My purpose in doing this was more to protect the recorder and prevent the cord from being played with while taping was in progress than to conceal everything from sight and pretend it was not there. Having taken tea with the teachers, or else taking it with me, I would join the children in the playground for about twenty five minutes before news.

Through contacts built up at the pre-primary school the previous year, particularly as a result, firstly, of having been introduced to the friends of the girl I had driven to school each morning, and, secondly, through having made a concerted effort to remember many of the older children's names, I would soon be called from one small group of children to another with requests and urgings to admire what they were doing or making or were able to do on various pieces of climbing and balancing apparatus in the play area. I would be brought things (e.g. twigs and flowers) and told things - either in deadly earnestness, e.g. how a new pair of shoes was bought, or in wonderful flights of fancy. Sometimes children would hurt themselves in the sandpit, on the climbing apparatus or at the cycling track, and need comforting. On occasion I was called on to mediate between conflicting parties and to prevent possible injury, e.g. when sand or stones were being thrown or stick fights

started up. It was my policy to move around the entire play area - so as not to appear to be favouring anyone or any activity in particular and therefore to seem not to have a specific, and, possibly alienating, agenda - and to respond to as many calls as was reasonable. I was at the same time careful to ensure that I included exchanges with as many of the Eager Beavers as possible, and that I responded to their questions about myself, and why I was there. If the topic of news or my interest in it came up I would respond as openly as seemed appropriate, drawing them into the topic when possible. As a result of the above it is probably fair to categorise the playground dimension of my contact with the children (particularly with the Eager Beavers) as involving a change in my status, i.e., from observer, to participant observer - the insights gained from which feeding into and informing my subsequent observation during news-time.

At about 10.30 Mrs Byrd would signal to the Eager Beavers that it was news-time and would despatch one of the members of the group to call Mr Ralph. From the following it is clear that my identity as Mr Ralph was established at the beginning of the first Eager Beavers news session, which took place on 26/4/1993 (T = Mrs Byrd; Xs = the children as a group; R = me):

T: We've got a visitor today, this is Mister Ralph. He wants to listen to you. Do you want to say hi to Mister Ralph?
 Xs: Hullo [Mister Ralph
 R:[Hello.....hello, can I sit here?
 T: Yes, with pleasure. What's the date today I wonder?
 X: Twenty sixth
 T: Right. Today's the twenty sixth [of April.
 X: [It's a little spider
 R: [Mm...

Other evidence of their acceptance of Mr Ralph is the fact that, when requested by Mrs Byrd, and this was deliberately not a regular feature of news-time, they often handed their drawings in for Mr Ralph to keep. Some, though, would change their mind, indicating that they preferred to take their drawing home for their parents to see, and were allowed to do so. The essence of the choice before them was however no different from what it had been before I showed interest in their news. Previously they either handed their drawings in for the file, or took them home. On 9/6/1993 three of the six Eager Beavers present donated their drawings to "Emily, Mr Ralph's little girl" who, Mrs Byrd told them, "has just had her tonsils removed". These drawings were supplemented by a "get well soon" message written by Mrs Byrd on a sheet as big as the piece the drawings were on as a

frontispiece to the drawings. Moreover, the frontispiece was decorated by the children who wanted to keep their drawings. Another instance of behaviour on the part of the Eager Beavers which attests at least to their *acceptance* of Mr Ralph are the two occasions that they sent their greetings to me on tape on days when I was not able to be present.

While not a fully-fledged *participant* observer during Eager Beaver sessions, my role was certainly *more interactive* in LeCompte & Goetz's (1984) terms than it was, for instance, at news-time in the class 1 and class 2 settings which I described in 3.4.2.2. This greater interactiveness was due, to a significant extent, I believe, to the much smaller size of the Eager Beaver group compared with the class 1 and class 2 groups. Another reason was the children's desire for appreciative reaction *while* they did their drawings of their news (cf. 4.3.2.2 and 5.3.4) or else *once they had completed* those drawings since their drawing also led them to elicit my opinion of their work, or else they simply displayed them to me. The drawing task had a generally calming effect on the children. It cast no-one in a secondary role (as listeners were, for example, when others were telling their news) and I sensed the children felt freer and were allowed by Mrs Byrd to be more interactive, anyway, than they were during the news-telling. During news-telling they were forbidden to talk. A third factor which I believe contributed significantly to the increased interactiveness of the Eager Beaver news sessions was the rapport which I had been able to establish previously with the children on the strength of the shared playground encounters we had had. Mrs Byrd's obvious acceptance of me, the routine calling of Mr Ralph for news and the fact that I had a history (they had seen me at their school throughout the previous year and I had attended two of their members' birthday rings) made me less of a stranger and perhaps therefore worth interacting with. More than this, in the case of the two birthday rings, I had, on receiving a blank tape from the two children's mothers, and with the agreement of Mrs Byrd, made copies of each birthday ring which the family would since have listened to. I was possibly also trustworthy and approachable, in their eyes, because I not only had a history, I also had an identity which they could relate to, namely, a father with one child slightly older than they were and one slightly younger, both of whom shared interests in toys and games which they as Eager Beavers enjoyed. For reasons such as these, it is probably inevitable that I became more involved in the news-time action than before. The fact that Mrs Byrd asked me to deputise

for her on two occasions towards the end of news sessions - i.e., by drawing the session to a close, collecting the kokis and drawings and dismissing them in time so that they could participate in story - further illustrates the interactive dimension of my role. However, since I only fulfilled those functions twice, and since they came towards the end of the period of my data collecting and at the end of each day's news session, it is unlikely that this more institutional identity could have influenced the data collected during those or subsequent sessions.

3.4.2.4 Video recording class 1 news sessions

In the account that follows, I document the rationale for and practical details associated with video-recording two sessions (on 24/11/92 and 1/12/92) with Mrs Higgs's class 1 group in 1992. I also explain why I did not employ video-taping more extensively with this group or at all with the other groups of children.

I deliberately scheduled the video recording of the two class 1 news sessions after Mrs Higgs had tape recorded a substantial number of news sessions for me and after I had observed two news sessions *without* the technological apparatus (video-camera, tripod stand and electrical cords) which video recording relies on. In other words, I used more obtrusive methods *after* the less obtrusive ones, in the process indirectly building tolerance and acceptance on the participants' parts of my need to gather data.

LeCompte & Goetz (1984:40) warn that the degree to which one's proposed methods of recording data are obtrusive is but one criterion to be borne in mind when choosing from the available options. How complicated the recording instrument is, is another important consideration, as is the strength of reaction which an instrument can induce on the part of subjects and the degree to which it is able to register relevant features of the social context in which behaviour takes place.

Video recording using the equipment available to me, while holding out the promise of my understanding "events whose structure is too complex to be apprehended all at once" Erickson (1982:216) proved to be obtrusive and complicated and, as I discovered on studying the tapes, to a surprising degree, partial. I operated the camera myself, not wanting to introduce potentially distracting outsiders in the classroom, but was limited both by my inexperience with the camera and the fact that it was fixed to one spot, which meant that I could not explore the full range of interactions (i.e., in addition to the focal

ones) which take place during news-time. Moreover, time constraints did not allow me to return with the camera for additional footage since very soon after the date of the second recording, the school year ended.

I set up the camera directly behind and in the middle of the back-most ring of children as they sat facing the teacher. In other words, the news-giver looked directly at the mounted camera and me when s/he looked straight ahead. The quality of the visual recording is very good when the camera is close up, otherwise, because of background light from the windows behind where Mrs Higgs and the children sat, the image is reduced and dark. The sound quality throughout, however, is good.

Mrs Higgs had told the children in advance that I would be filming their news session. By the time that I did so, they were used to having news recorded by their teacher, and were familiar with me too, since I had twice before sat in on news sessions. I also knew a number of the class members independently. In addition, the class as a whole were notably cohesive, supportive of one another, and very co-operative as a group and had gained the reputation among the staff of being the “best” class in the school. In addition, Mrs Higgs had a very high regard for them and wanted them to co-operate with me.

Mrs Higgs (T) opened the session as follows:

T: Oh, we are all so over-excited this morning. (*T here is commenting on the children's non-verbal behaviour.*)...Now remember when you telling your news you must talk to Mr Adendorff and look that way, okay, don't talk to me.

Immediately following this she asked me the following important question (relevant to the issue of trust) to which I answer as indicated:

T: Mr Adendorff, is it possible for us to see the tape afterwards?

R: With pleasure.

T: Thank you, because I've said to them they will see themselves on TV, this is just great stuff. Okay. Right, let's see, who is sitting very, very nicely?

I passed the recording on immediately to Mrs Higgs, which means that she and the pupils saw it before I did. Because of their presumably favourable reaction to it, it was easy for me to return for a further video-recording session. Before doing so, though, I was careful to elicit Mrs Higgs's sense of how *typical* the recorded session was and whether the camera had had a distorting effect on proceedings. She wrote as follows (25/11/1992): “It was fairly typical, but the teacher!! She was so nervous”.

My own sense was that Mrs Higgs was a little self-conscious during the session. She looked up at me frequently during the first session, especially during the transitions between one news-giver and the next. At times the children did likewise, but not to any marked extent. Their natural inclination is to concentrate on whom they perceive to be their principal interlocutor, namely, the teacher, which means that they looked to their right most of the time.

For the second video-recording session I asked Mrs Higgs to make the background darker than on the previous occasion, which she did by positioning a mobile green chalkboard in front of the window. The camera was positioned exactly as it was previously, but, because there was less pressure on me this time to stay in close in order to have a clear, lit picture, I was able to include some of the non-speaking children. I do not however capture much of their behaviour. What I did capture is the children bidding by means of raising their hands, and I am able to follow movements by the news-giver for a short distance e.g. if they demonstrate how a toy car moves. This restricted focus is a very clear limitation of the video-recorded data.

In spite of evidence that the teacher was slightly anxious during the first recording, the video recordings usefully supplement the tape recorded data. Their value lies in the fact that they capture and allow one to trace the constellation of surface behaviours or “gestalten” (Erickson 1982:219-225) that occur at junctures throughout the event. Along with the sound recordings, they also facilitate the discovery of the participants’ underlying rules of appropriateness - the participants’ emic categories, in other words - if one uses the evidentiary principles described by Erickson (1982:226-8) and McDermott et al (1978), which I explain later in this chapter, in 3.5. Though I did establish from Mrs Higgs that the two video recorded sessions were “fairly typical”, I did not use these recordings as a basis for “indefinite triangulation of evidence” (Erickson 1982:229), a process by which one plays the recording to the participants and/or to those with similar backgrounds and elicits their impressions, since time constraints mitigated against this. I might however have arranged for Mrs Higgs to tape record the pupils’ reactions when they viewed the tape as a group, or else might have done so myself. These, unfortunately, were opportunities which I overlooked, perhaps because my immediate thoughts at the time were on administering the speech bubble elicitation task which I did immediately after the second video-recording. The sheer effort involved, not only in installing and manipulating

the recording equipment, but also in fitting in with Mrs French's schedule (cf. 3.4.2.1) and persisting with the recording until everyone had been recorded at least once, and, in the case of the Eager Beavers, of recording at floor level, coupled with the relatively limited rewards, led to my relying on other forms of data collection instead.

3.4.2.5 Interviewing the three teachers

Interviews, in broad terms, can either be open and rely on the interviewer asking broad, general questions, or else be more structured, based on pre-determined questions, sometimes even requiring that responses take a prescribed form. The broad category first mentioned clearly has a *low* degree of explicitness, while the second has a much *higher* degree of explicitness. My interview with all three teachers fell somewhere between these two categories. In terms of Seliger & Shohamy's (1989:167) more extensive outline of sub-categories of interviews, namely, open, semi-open, semi-structured and structured interviews, I would locate the three interviews between the first and the second, i.e., it was somewhere between open and semi-open. In the case of *open* interviews, according to Seliger & Shohamy (1989:167), "there is usually a topic for the interview but, by allowing the respondent maximum freedom of expression, ample and often unexpected information emerges". In the case, by contrast, of *semi-open* interviews, "there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds, and allowing elaboration, within limits".

Saville-Troike (1982:124-5) notes some further general features of ethnographic interviews which are consistent with my thinking and my conduct during the interviews. The first is central in her observation that "while an interview setting is often formal and contrived, it need not be". The second is implicit in her recommendation that one imposes as little structure on an interview as possible and that one "insert questions at natural points in the flow rather than having a rigid schedule". Finally, my experience leads me to endorse her encouragement to would-be ethnographers to "be open to new ideas, information, and patterns which may emerge in the course of interviewing, and to differences between 'ideal' and 'real' culture as reflected in statements of belief or values and in actions respectively". Seliger & Shohamy (1989:166) enthusiastically promote

interviewing because of the following characteristics: it is personalised, permits in-depth data collection and free responses, and allows for flexibility.

My interviews exhibited all of these characteristics, and did so, I believe, largely because I scheduled them to come at the very end of my data collection efforts. As such, they could build on all of my prior interactions with the teachers and the goodwill that those interactions had generated. Interviewing after the teaching term was over also meant that my questions did not influence the teachers' news-time behaviour in any obvious way. Psychologically, too, they were "off the hook" by the time I interviewed them. The year's teaching was over and nothing of consequence was therefore really at stake. I did of course have ample data against which to verify what teachers said about news-time and about how they conducted news sessions.

My interview with *Mrs Higgs* took place in her empty classroom for just over an hour on 11/12/92, having earlier been set up by letter. The spirit which prevailed was informal, we had a short break during which we had a cool drink, and included periodic exchanges with Mrs Higgs's daughters who were assembling and counting stock for their mother. Mrs Higgs brought intensity to the interview which suggested her commitment to the issues that were raised. We touched on a lot of "classified" information - which I again interpreted as a sign of trust on her part - and I was able to return to topics which I wanted further elaboration on. At no stage did my questions offend her and she did not seem to me to withhold relevant information.

I opened proceedings by urging as follows, to which she responded light-heartedly in the manner shown (T = Mrs Higgs; R = me):

R: If you don't like a question, just say you don't like the question

T: Mm hmm

R: I mean

T: Will do!

R: feel at ease

T: (*Laughs.*)

I had produced a set of questions not to use as an interview schedule, but to act as a rough guide only. I also tape-recorded the interview, with Mrs Higgs's permission. I indicated to Mrs Higgs at the beginning of the interview that I had three goals:

- (1) to find out more about the members of the class 1 group so as to be able to make better sense of the interactional data when I came to analyse it;

- (2) to clarify certain issues triggered by my having looked through the children's skills books (I had photocopies of some of these with me during the interview); and
- (3) to seek her assistance in interpreting certain of the children's responses to the elicitation task which they had completed for me earlier (cf. 3.4.3.1).

My main aims, in fact, were to gain more contextual information about the children - 1. above - and to tap Mrs Higgs's emic definition of news-time, and what guided her conduct at news-time. Thus, items (2) and (3) above were indirect means, different angles, from which I intended getting at her emic categories. I deliberately left (2) and (3) to the end of the interview.

Mrs Higgs's willingness to speak openly and candidly about the children and to provide particulars about their backgrounds both surprised me and was extremely useful, and rendered my needing to gain permission to consult the school's files for information unnecessary. I gained special insights into all but four of the children in the class. I also gained an insight into a number of the external pressures (i.e., contextual forces in the greater society) which are exerted on (a) the children, and (b) the school, the specifics of which I have incorporated in chapter 1, chapter 5 and elsewhere in the thesis.

My interview with *Mrs French* (requested in a letter on 22/11/93) took place on 7/12/93 and lasted for an hour and a quarter. My principal concern in it, as in my interview a year previously with Mrs Higgs, was to gain a richer insight than I had from my observations, recordings and transcriptions, of the emic categories which shaped this teacher's conception of news-time and her response to the news of her pupils. Allied concerns were: to gain some sense of where Mrs French believed news comes from as a practice; of what its institutional status is within education; of what, for her, constituted "good" news and whether her criteria had changed over the course of the year. I also wanted to explore what relation there was, if any, between news-time expectations in class 1 as compared with hers in class 2 and those in subsequent years, i.e., when the children were in standard 1 and later. A second major concern was the background and literacy behaviour at news-time of selected members of the class 2 group. I was curious to find out more about the home circumstances of these children, how Mrs French characterised their news-time behaviour and their literacy products and what her response was to each of them. The essence, thus, of my second major concern was Mrs French's perceptions of what was

emically salient for certain *pupils*. Concurrently (my third concern) I wanted to elicit contextual information, i.e., triggered by discussing the pupils, which would give me a more holistic appreciation of news-time in her classroom at that particular time. My fourth and final major concern was to establish what influence, if any, my presence had had on the children's news-telling, i.e., whether *in Mrs French's mind* it had, for instance, induced a different kind of news from when I was absent. Such discussion (cf. the excerpts in 3.4.2.2) would, once again, offer insight, albeit indirect, into Mrs French's own emic categories at news-time.

The setting in which I interviewed Mrs French - her classroom - was similar to that the previous year when I interviewed Mrs Higgs: deserted, and stripped of most of the colourful charts, art work and other items which filled the room during term time. We sat at a pupil's table, not at Mrs French's desk, on small, low chairs which the children used. I positioned my tape-recorder on a table opposite us, after first getting her permission to record, and had my questions on a pad in front of me, for reference.

I again found the interview remarkably revealing, and was struck by Mrs French's openness and trust in me and the wealth of information she shared. Mrs French was reflective, her responses more measured, perhaps, than Mrs Higgs's had been. What I also found significant was her appreciation of her need to adapt to the changing pupil body at the school, by, for example, learning more about Indian traditions, and so on. Mrs Higgs, a year previously, did not do this, but did draw attention to the fears of some white parents stemming from the increasing Indian presence and influence at the school.

My interview with *Mrs Byrd* took place across the desk in her office on 16/11/1993 for an hour and, with her permission once again, I tape-recorded what we said. My goals were again (a) to identify the definitions and categories which were emically salient for Mrs Byrd; and (b) to elicit contextual information so that I could place my analysis and interpretation of the participants' news-time conduct in a broader, more holistic perspective, thereby increasing its validity. I took nine of the class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task (cf. 3.4.3.1) to the interview, with the aim of getting Mrs Byrd's reaction to them, in the absence of Eager Beaver responses to an equivalent task. Her reaction, I reasoned, would offer insight into the categories which underlie her own emic interpretation of news and its purposes. I chose the nine responses (reproduced in

Appendix B-7) and used them to bounce the spectrum of opinion they represent off Mrs Byrd and see how she reacted to them: was it with curiosity, partial or else full endorsement, or did she reject them, etc.? As I did in my interview with Mrs Higgs, I introduced the pupils' speech bubble responses into the discussion at the *end* of the interview, i.e., after already having attempted to elicit Mrs Byrd's own (teacher's) emic interpretation of news. I did not want the children's formulations and conceptualisations to influence Mrs Byrd's own articulation of the character and function of news beforehand.

In practice, we dealt with the following during the interview, her responses to which, as readers will see, I have weaved into the accounts I provide at various points in the next two chapters: Where news comes from; how she as a teacher got to know about news; what made her decide to try news; whether there was deliberate instruction in how to carry out news at the pre-primary level; whether news is in the syllabus; why teachers believe in news; whether (and if so how) news enters into her evaluation of children; what news is a barometer of; what she tells her pupils at the beginning of the year regarding news sessions; what guidance she would give to new teachers wanting to include news as a part of their teaching repertoire; whether she changes at any point in the children's development in regard to her expectations of their news-time behaviour; who the Eager Beavers are; whether Eager Beaver sessions weren't a luxury; whether they will continue the following year; whether news will figure as prominently; what the function is of Mrs Byrd's opening formula when identifying news-givers; how she would label (i.e., describe) the school (cf. 1.3); whether it is 'typical' in any sense; what changes she envisaged to the school in terms of the pupil body; whether she sensed that playground discourse was changing in any way.

Distinctive features of this interview were the reduced amount of information provided by Mrs Byrd in relation to the children's families and the fact that I was given information which I was requested not to quote (cf. 3.3).

3.4.3 Innovative methods of data collection

As explained earlier, the focus in 3.4.3 shifts away from the traditional ethnographic methods - which is how I labelled those in 3.4.2 - to those whose design required me to innovate. All are attempts to elicit the *children's* emic conceptualisation of news-time and, as I indicated in 3.4, are presented chronologically, i.e., in the sequence in which I

devised them. Hence, I first explain the speech bubble elicitation task which Mrs Higgs and I administered to the class 1 group, then I detail the class 2 pupil questionnaire which Mrs French administered (for the most part), and, finally, I explain how I interviewed the Eager Beavers and, immediately afterwards, Mrs Byrd co-ordinated a drawing task with them.

3.4.3.1 The speech bubble elicitation task

My aim in constructing this task (see Appendix B-8) was to elicit the class 1 children's perspective on the function/s of news as efficiently and in as pragmatically valid (i.e., naturally-occurring) a way as possible. I was also concerned that the elicitation should take place a couple of days before my interview with Mrs Higgs (cf. 3.4.2.5), since I envisaged using the children's responses as a prompt, if necessary, during that interview with her.

Questions which I asked while devising the speech bubble elicitation task included the following: How can I elicit the children's views quickly, bearing in mind their attention span? How can I establish what the children's views are of the function/s of news without being so indirect that I confuse the children, so that they wonder, for example, what speech event I am trying to engage them in? How can I engage the children *meaningfully*, bearing in mind that I do not want to confront them directly regarding news-time, since evidence gathered informally earlier on showed me that this was unproductive? Should I build some kind of exchange into the task, so that the children profit in some way, and, if so, what form should that exchange take? How can I get Mrs Higgs's input regarding the appropriacy of what I decide to do, as well as her co-operation, without overly informing her of my goals, since such information might influence her own thoughts about news-time?

I decided as follows:

- (1) to administer the task immediately after my last observation session with the class (i.e., on 1/12/92). By this time the children were familiar with me and, I judged, would not be unduly unsettled by my presence. It was very near to the end of the school year, and stop-gap type worksheets and other kinds of activities were becoming more and more the norm. Hence, my elicitation task would not seem odd.

Written answers, which is what I wanted from the children, were possible, because the children's writing ability had progressed sufficiently by then for their responses to be interpretable;

- (2) to use a uniform task for all the children to complete concurrently as opposed to an interview-type task. This was because I wanted to get the children's responses quickly, be as unobtrusive as possible and avoid undue power asymmetry which interviewing, for example, would have entailed;
- (3) that the elicitation task itself needed to be as contextualised as possible. The idea of a big girl (an initiated junior primary child) passing on her knowledge and experience to the little girl (an uninitiated new-comer) seemed pragmatically valid to me inasmuch as the pupils were themselves at the end of their first year of junior primary schooling, were in a position to identify both with the little girl, since they had been in a similar position less than a year previously, and with the big girl, since they now knew what news was all about. Moreover, they were themselves at a point of transition, being at the end of class 1 and anticipating the year ahead, where they would have a different teacher;
- (4) that the teacher and I would both be present to help the children spell words that they wanted to use. This is because I did not want the mode in which I was requiring them to respond (i.e., writing) to be a barrier to their expression. I judged, moreover, that writing, given its slowness for them, would oblige them to decide what was centrally important and would lead them to record this first. This, were they to do so, was potentially very valuable for my purposes, because it would ensure that the pupils' responses were nicely focused; and
- (5) to consult with Mrs Higgs telephonically and in writing (letter dated 25/11/1992 - cf. the excerpt in 3.3.1.1.) in order to get her sense of whether the task I had in mind was appropriate and in tune with things that they had done before.

On the day of its administration, I introduced the task to the children and Mrs Higgs reiterated what they were to do. Once launched, however, the task was interrupted by an intercom announcement that the children should go to the school hall for singing practice. This meant that the children completed the task after I had gone, and handed in their

responses to Mrs Higgs who returned them to me. The fact that they handed them into her and not to me I felt gave the task additional authenticity not originally planned, since the children usually handed worksheets in to her.

I have asked myself a number of questions stemming from the experience of administering the task. They include the following list:

- (1) Did the requirement that they should *write* their responses in fact constrain what the children said (rather than help to shape and focus it)? Did they say what they *wanted* to say or were they led, through being required to write, to say something else, e.g. what they *could* write?
- (2) Was my assumption that pupils would say what was most central because they were *writing* their responses, a valid one? Is this not an overly academic assumption? Might they not simply have written down the first thing that came to mind? In response to these misgivings one can look at the responses of the children, and, firstly, notice that there is a restricted number of perceptions that recur in their responses, and then, secondly, match these against (a) their behaviour, and (b) what Mrs Higgs says to them about news-time, since it is possible that she influences what they say. In these ways one will get closer than otherwise to the emic categories of the children.
- (3) Was the form of the big girl's response an 'enabling' one, i.e., from a syntactic point of view? In other words, should the frame which I provided for the children's responses rather have been "We give news because...", rather than "We give news so that... ? I originally rejected this alternative because I particularly wanted to avoid simplistic responses like "because the teacher tells us to". The relatively few instances of syntactic asynchrony, such as "We give news so that because you can tell them where you have been" does however appear to suggest that the answer format was less problematic than I imagined.
- (4) Were the figures, i.e., the big and the little girl perceived of at all negatively, e.g. as being culturally biased, and did this have any effect on the children's responses? The children's colouring in of the two girls appears to provide counter-evidence, since most coloured in the big and little girl in colours which we do not normally associate with human skin tones, e.g. purple!

- (5) What does the task ultimately elicit? Is it merely the children's formulatable thoughts? Is it what the teacher tells the pupils news is all about, which they simply echo? Fortunately, the behavioural data recorded on audio and video tape and then transcribed and analysed (in chapter 4), offers additional information with which to triangulate the evidence from the speech bubble elicitation task. It, interestingly, suggests (as I show in chapter 4) that there is a mismatch between what the pupils say the function of news-time is, and what actually takes place.

I conclude this account of the speech bubble elicitation task with Mrs Higgs's initial reaction to the children's responses. Written as a covering note, it accompanied the responses and reads as follows: "I have not corrected them at all. I'm sure you can work out what they were trying to say! Some are really sweet. It is quite interesting to see what they see!" Implicit in this reaction, it would seem, is surprise at the children's interpretation of news-time. That surprise derives as much, I believe, from the mere fact of people articulating functions which they perceive news as serving, as it does from anything else. Mrs Higgs, certainly, had never articulated the purpose/s of news-time prior to her contact with me, and the same applies to all the other teachers with whom I had contact.

3.4.3.2 The class 2 pupil questionnaire

My aim in devising the pupil questionnaire (see Appendix B-9), as with the speech bubble elicitation the previous year, was to elicit the *children's* emic perspective on news-time and its function/s. Again, I wanted to elicit this information efficiently and in as pragmatically valid a way as possible, and to take advantage of the contextual circumstances at the time, namely, that, since the end of the school year was approaching, teachers were not adhering as closely to the timetable as before. Increasingly, therefore, they were giving their pupils 'fun' and 'filler-type' activities to do. These circumstances, I believed, would make the children more tolerant of accepting my questionnaire than they might have been at other times in the year, since it was no less school-like than some of the other filler activities were which I noticed they had completed. As before, I was also careful to schedule administering the questionnaire in late November, knowing that by then their questionnaire responses could not influence their news-time behaviour in any way. In what follows I briefly explain what the questionnaire task consisted of and outline the

underlying rationale for it. Thereafter I draw attention to its design features, particularly the steps I took to make it appear authentic, and user-friendly. Readers should bear in mind, as I pointed out in 3.3.1.2 (see excerpts from my letter to Mrs French dated 22/11/1993), that the construction and administration of the questionnaire benefited from Mrs French's collaboration.

The questionnaire task consisted of two parts: answering four questions in writing and, thereafter, drawing news-time on the reverse side of the last page of the questionnaire. "What", I asked them as a prompt to their drawing, "does it look like in this room on a day when there is news-time and someone is giving his/her news?" (Six responses are included in Appendix B-6).

I envisaged both the written responses and the drawings to be means by which I might elicit or infer the *pupils' emic* perspectives on news. I hoped that indirectly I might elicit aspects of the teacher's perspective as well. The questions asked the pupils to indicate whether they (the children) like news and why; what they like talking about at news-time and what constraints they feel the teacher places on them in this regard; as well as what, more generally, they believe the function of news to be. I thought asking the children to draw might lead them to depict detail from which I might infer information and attitudes not captured otherwise. If necessary, I could pursue issues raised by their drawings further with them and/or with Mrs French, later.

Turning now to a closer consideration of the questions which constitute the questionnaire, readers will note the following:

- (a) Question 1(a): "Do you like telling news?" deliberately does not offer a straight two-way choice between YES and NO. By avoiding this, I hoped to problematise news-telling. Question 1(b): "Tell me why?", in turn, is intended to elicit reasons open-endedly, i.e., not through obliging respondents to choose from fixed, pre-established categories.
- (b) Questions 2 and 3 were intended to open the possibility of different preferences on the part of "YOU" (the child) and MRS FRENCH (the teacher). The question in each case: "What do YOU like to talk about at news-time?" (question 2) and "What does MRS FRENCH like you to talk about at news-time?" (question 3) are intentionally ambiguous as regards whether they seek open or closed responses.

- (c) Question 4: “What things does Mrs French NOT like you to do at news-time?” is a further attempt, as is question 3, to elicit the pupils’ sense of categories which are emically salient for their *teacher*.
- (d) Question 5: “Why do we tell news at school?” is deliberately open-ended and *follows* rather than precedes the other questions in the hope, firstly, that it would elicit considered responses from the pupils (hence its open-ended format) and, secondly, that it might be informed by (rather than itself inform) answers to the other questions.

My aim as regards the appearance of the questionnaire was twofold: to make it *authentic looking*, in the hope that this would encourage the children to take it seriously, and to make it *user-friendly*, i.e., not intimidate the children. In regard, first, to its authenticity, I incorporated the following features, which are typical of *real* questionnaires: numbered questions, one of which entails making a choice from among options in different boxes and then signalling a response within their chosen box; demarcated, lined spaces for longer answers; and formal thanks to respondents at the foot of the final page. Moreover, it is typed and stapled and so is official-looking rather than personal.

In my attempts to render it *reader-friendly* (i.e., to make it appropriate for the envisaged audience and not intimidating) I deliberately ensured that: (a) the syntax is not complex, thereby making the questions easy to decode; (b) the print is large, large spaces are provided for the children’s responses and there are larger than normal spaces between lines, thereby facilitating the children’s writing, which at their age was inclined to be big; (c) the questionnaire is restricted to three pages only, thereby making the task a manageable one; (d) the words “you”, “me”, “we” and “Mrs French” are used in order to personalise the interaction between the children and me, the researcher, and render, *as familiar*, the world of reference of the questionnaire; and (e) the drawing task was optional, depending on whether pupils had sufficient time after completing the questionnaire. By opting to include it I hoped to capitalise on the positive associations which drawing and other forms of art had for these children, stimulated by Mrs French’s interests and talents.

Mrs French’s contribution to the design of the questionnaire was important, since it secured her commitment to the overall enterprise, but was not extensive. She was happy

with the questions and how I had formulated them, felt that the questionnaire should be typed rather than printed by hand, as my draft was, and actively assisted me in administering the questionnaires and facilitating the children's efforts in completing them. She collected the questionnaires once the children had completed them and also arranged for them to be returned to me. Of interest, because the data conflict with the opinion expressed in it, is the final comment Mrs French wrote on the draft of the questionnaire when returning it to me: "I'm not sure if you will get the answers you want but you can try".

Twenty seven children completed questionnaires on the day it was administered, and the remaining three who were absent that day completed theirs four days later. Twenty two children provided drawings, though, for reasons I was not able to establish, none of those absent on the first day did.

3.4.3.3 The Eager Beaver interviews and drawing task

The approach which I adopted in an effort to elicit the Eager Beavers' emic perspectives on news (i.e., other than inferring them from their verbal performance at news-time) was essentially two-pronged. Conceived of and clarified collaboratively with Mrs Byrd before being jointly administered with her, it consisted of individual interviews which I held with the six Eager Beavers who were present on 18/11/1993, followed by a drawing task which they carried out as usual in the group setting.

Arriving outside the staff room at the usual time for Eager Beaver news, Mrs Byrd reminded the children - having first alerted them the week before - that that day was special. What made it special was that it was the last time Mr Ralph would be listening to their news. Because of this, news would be done slightly differently. Instead of them giving their news to Mrs Byrd, with the rest of the group listening, they would be giving it to Mr Ralph, individually. This change in routine was intended to ensure that news-telling remained the focal concern, and it gave me the opportunity to interact with each child on his/her own. But the content of our exchange was really of secondary concern to me. Far more important was what immediately *followed*, namely, discussion between us of news-telling and why they thought Eager Beavers told news. I therefore prefaced the period each Eager Beaver spent with me as follows, with very minor variations in formulation:

“Today is a special day because you are going to give me your news all on your own, remember, and then we are going to talk about news”.

The discussion which followed their news-telling centred largely on their meta-level understanding of news. I asked the following questions (cf. the transcribed data included in Appendix B-10). Do you like giving news to the Eager Beavers? (However the question was answered, I sought elaboration.) Do the other children like listening to yours? (Again, I sought elaboration.) Do you like listening to their news? Alternatively, whose news do you like listening to most of all? (I sought clarification/explanation for their choice.) What does Mrs Byrd like you to talk about (and do) at news-time? What does she say to you at news-time? What are the things Mrs Byrd does *not* like you to do (or talk about) when you (and, also, when others) are giving news? (Here I sought the child’s explanation of Mrs Byrd’s likely reasons.) And why, in general, then, do you think we give news at Natal Pre-Primary School?

I abbreviated the list of questions in the case of two of the children, who appeared ill at ease, one of whom battled to find answers. He did no more than shrug at the questions I asked, regardless of how I reformulated them.

The children’s drawing task followed, and, like the news-telling, also differed somewhat from its usual form. Previously the children’s news-giving was followed by their each receiving a large piece of drawing paper on which Mrs Byrd had written their name and summarised their news in a sentence or two, and were asked to illustrate that news. On this ‘special’ occasion Mrs Byrd again officiated and handed them their drawing paper, but without any summary on it to guide their drawing. Instead, as the following exchange indicates, she asked the children to draw a picture of themselves telling their news:

T: Ok, so that you know what we going to do today, I’m going to ask you to draw your picture with only one colour.

M: (*Indistinct.*)

T: Now, listen, Mustafa you not listening...you’ve had a turn to tell Mr Ralph news, now I don’t want a news picture today, ‘cos you’ve had a turn to tell news. You know what you going to do this time, you going to draw a picture of the Eager Beavers when they busy telling news.

M: (*Sound effects.*)

T: Okay? What you going to do for me, Mustafa?

M: Draw (*indistinct - and spoken very softly*).

T: You not going to draw you news, you not going to draw your doggies or your kitties or when you went to the beach, I want you to draw a picture of...you and me sitting in this room doing news-time, ok?

.....

- T: On Monday's the day when we write the news down, today's not Monday, it's different...There we are Saxony (*T passes her a large sheet of paper for her drawing*)...don't start yet
- T: You can start. What you going to draw?
- M: Ah ah ah what we doing now.
- T: Yes, you going to draw Eager Beavers...[you going to draw
- S: [I'm just tracing my name again.
- T: No, I don't want you to draw your name again, I want you to draw a picture of the children telling Eager Beavers.
- Se: Here's ring, here's the big circle where you sitting.
- T: Ok, look, he's doing the right thing, but your picture doesn't have to look like his. You do your own way...I want a picture of [you.
- G: [you
- T: telling news to me with the Eager Beavers, so draw your friends, draw me, draw me with [my
- X: [I'm
drawing
- T: koki
- S: I'm drawing the floor.
- T: Ok, draw a picture of Eager Beaver time.

More extensive excerpts featuring Mrs Byrd's interaction with the Eager Beavers while they completed their drawings are included as Appendix B-11.

By way of clarification, the children received black koki pens simply to facilitate the reproduction of their drawings (as in Appendix B-12). The rationale behind the task as a whole was to extend discussion with the children on news beyond the session I had just had with them. As she always did, Mrs Byrd queried and required the children to justify and explain the details in their drawings. Also, she broadened the topic of discussion so that it went beyond the immediate specifics of what a child had chosen to draw (or was able to draw). In these ways I hoped that the task and the ensuing talk surrounding the act of drawing would elicit further facets not only of the *children's* emic conceptualisation of news-time, but also *Mrs Byrd's*, since her questioning of the details of their drawings as well as her "broader" questions were inevitably reflections of her own news-time schema. The advantage of the task, therefore, is the fact that while what they drew was different from what they normally did, it was nevertheless pragmatically valid for Mrs Byrd to be questioning the children as they drew and for her to broaden the thematic focus of what they spoke about. As such the task elicited emic information indirectly where I, shortly beforehand, had done so more directly. Furthermore, in what is effectively a double-take, the task also allowed me to elicit emic information from Mrs Byrd, indirectly. As two brief illustrations, consider the following:

- T: I see Shivani's people are all happy. Do they like coming to news-time?
- Sh: (*Nods.*)

An inference we can draw here is that news is/should be a happy, enjoyable time.

- T: Grayson?
 G: Mm?
 T: How does your heart feel when Mommy and Daddy read your news?
 G: Happy.
 T: Why?
 G: Because I like it when they tell my news.
 T: And do you think their heart's happy when they read your news?
 G: Yes...

One can infer here that an important function of news, from Mrs Byrd's point of view, is the positive psychological effects it has, namely, of making the child's as well as the parents' hearts "feel happy".

3.5 Criteria for inferring norms from transcripts of news-time interaction

The principal concern of chapter 4 is the pupils' as well as the teachers' emic definitions of news-time. To establish that the putative norms for news-time in the three settings I investigated - and which I report on in chapter 4 - are indeed the *participants'* (teachers' and pupils') emic categories and not merely *analyst's* ones, I used criteria suggested by McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978) and Erickson (1982) for inferring participants' norms from their actual behaviour. In addition, I consulted with my informants as a means of verifying the interpretations that I provide. In the account that follows, I explain these criteria, after which I make three observations about the application of these criteria to my data.

3.5.1 McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron's criteria for inferring behavioural norms

McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978) provide five criteria by which to infer both the emic categories of participants engaged in social interaction (such as at news-time) and to assess the adequacy of analysts' claims (such as my own) about those emic categories. The criteria also provide a useful independent check (i.e., a form of triangulation) on claims made on the basis of information elicited by all of the data elicitation procedures outlined elsewhere in this chapter. The power, ultimately, of McDermott et al's (1978) criteria is that they are largely those that participants rely on in their everyday interactions with one another. As the authors explain (1978:249):

In making their sense of what they are doing together visible to each other, participants to an interaction make their behaviour available to the close scrutiny of

an analyst. Thus, we should be able to use members' formulating and positioning work as a warrant for saying precisely what they are up to.

McDermott et al make these same basic points later (1978:251) when they note that "people manage to organise environments for each other in terms of which they can know for sure what it is that they are doing with each other; together, they manage to do the social order" and continue: "because this is how face-to-face behaviour is organised, we have a great resource for judging the adequacy of our descriptions of concerted behaviour. When people identify the contexts for their behaviour, they exhibit how they have organised it". The 'formulating' and 'positioning' work that constitutes the environments people organise for one another - or, put differently - the general cues, signals and moments which McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978:247-252) draw attention to as criteria are:

- (1) The labels and other means which participants use in order to name what they are doing;
- (2) the indications participants give, explicitly or more cryptically, of what is expected behaviour. According to McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978:248) participants often provide this information when the behaviour that is expected, is absent, or when inappropriate behaviour occurs in its place. Such indications are more common at "the beginning of a behavioural context or when something goes awry" than elsewhere;
- (3) the postures which participants take on in concert with one another, also often signal what is emically salient;
- (4) the behaviour of participants at "special moments", such as (a) at transition points, i.e., when the context changes, and (b) when breaches of the formulated order take place and order-preserving activities take place;
- (5) the ways in which participants hold one another accountable for behaving in certain (contextually appropriate) ways. As McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978:251) explain, "there are only certain kinds of behaviour which are acceptable at certain moments, and the members call upon those who misbehave to change their behaviour to fit the dominant version of what that positioning should look like".

3.5.2 Erickson's criteria for inferring behavioural norms

Erickson (1982) is also concerned with inferring from the behaviour of participants what the underlying norms, rules or what he calls "principles of appropriateness" (p. 226) are which govern their interaction and give it its meaning. He outlines four "rules of evidence" or "evidentiary principles" (1982:226-30) by which to infer the principles of appropriateness (or emic categories) which guide people's behaviour. The principles are as follows:

(1) Principle 1: consistency of occurrence

When behaviours (verbal and/or non-verbal) regularly co-occur we can infer that their co-occurrence is appropriate.

(2) Principle 2: accountability of absence

Erickson (1982:226) explains this principle as follows: "When participants in interaction consistently hold one another accountable for having failed to do something we can infer that there is a sociocultural rule prescribing the appropriateness of the absent action". This principle is thus very close to item 5 in McDermott et al's (1978) list.

(3) Principle 3: consistency of positive and negative sanctions

Erickson (1982:227) expresses the essence of this principle as follows: "By reacting to others' actions with positive or negative sanctions, participants may be invoking the underlying rules of appropriateness by which the interaction is organised". He notes that invocations of the rules are often quite explicit.

(4) Principle 4: normalisation of ambiguous forms

The analyst infers appropriateness, according to this principle, by focusing on how participants respond to and, if necessary, repair one another's interactional stumbles and mistakes brought about by ambiguity and missed implicit assumptions in what is said. One focuses, according to Erickson (1982:227), on "the direction toward which they (i.e., the repair moves) tend; identifying the presupposition of the repair move that points to an interpretation of what the preceding ambiguous form should have been".

3.5.3 Some preliminary observations

Three preliminary points of information are worth making before I report on my analysis of the behavioural evidence of the literacy practices promoted by the teachers at news-time in chapter 4 and in the early part of chapter 5. The first is a reminder (cf. 1.1.2), namely, that rather than offer an exhaustive ethnography of news-time, I shall focus on aspects that relate most centrally to literacy acquisition, i.e., to the pupils' and the teachers' decisions regarding the content and the form of news-time contributions.

Secondly, I rely for the most part on behavioural evidence which is largely verbal in form, since this is what my recording techniques emphasised (cf. section 3.4.2 and 3.4.2.4 in particular). As I explained earlier, my record of participants' non-verbal, and particularly their postural behaviour, is, consequently, incomplete.

Thirdly, I draw illustrative evidence from all three of the classes I investigated rather than doing so more selectively. My reason for doing this is to emphasise a particularly salient feature of the teachers' news-time expectations, namely, their high level of uniformity.

3.6 The methods of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as mentioned in 1.1.4, is an approach to discourse analysis developed within Critical Linguistics. As Lockett & Chick (1988:82) point out, and as the interpretations of various of the scenarios in chapter 2 confirm, critical linguists subscribe to a conflictual view of society and of social change. According to such a view, groups are seen as "constantly in conflict, with dominant groups seeking to build and maintain their hegemony and subordinate groups seeking to wrest power from them, and (social change) as the outcome of the struggle". Fairclough (1992:10-12), who subscribes to such a view of society and social change, provides guidelines for "doing critical discourse analysis". As he explains, every "discoursal (or literacy) instance", has three dimensions: it is concurrently *text*, i.e., a material object, *interaction*, i.e., between news-givers, their peers and the teachers in the case of news-time, and *a form of social action* within a particular context - e.g. early formal education in pre-democratic South Africa, in the case of the news data in this thesis.

CDA itself also has three inter-related dimensions: "*description* of the text; *interpretation* of the interaction processes, and their relationship to the text; and *explanation* of how the

interaction process relates to the social action” (Fairclough 1992:11). When *describing* news-time as *texts*, I do so on the basis of my analysis of the formal features of selected extracts from the transcribed recordings of news-time sessions mentioned earlier in this chapter (in 3.3). Where the texts are so lengthy that they might have interfered with the coherence of my analysis, I have reproduced them in full in the appendix. I concentrate largely on pupils’ lexico-semantic, syntactic and textual choices, as well, though in considerably less detail, as on salient supra-segmental phonological features such as intonation, length and emphasis. As my transcription conventions reveal, cf. Appendix A-2, I seek also to incorporate relevant paralinguistic non-verbal dimensions, such as pause length, laughter, etc. My *interpretation of the interaction process* (i.e., the second dimension of any CDA) attempts, as Fairclough suggests it should (p. 11), to specify what conventions are drawn upon by the participants and how. In doing so I rely on the criteria and principles suggested by Erickson (1982) and McDermott, et al (1978) - which I describe in 3.5 - for identifying the participants’ news-time norms and establishing their emic salience. Doing this highlights a very clear division between two distinct sets of norms: those of the teachers (whose news-time norms are dominant in the situation) and those of the majority of the pupils (whose norms are oppositional or, at least, are alternatives to those of the teachers). Much like Lockett & Chick (1998:83), I found it impossible to keep the description and interpretation dimensions of my analysis distinct. This, in part, is because one’s analytic focus in each case is so similar - as indeed a ‘product’ and a ‘process’ description of the same phenomenon should be. As readers will see, like Lockett & Chick I, too, report on these two dimensions of my CDA together, in chapter 4.

Consistent with Fairclough’s guidelines regarding the third or *explanatory* dimension of a CDA, I seek to accomplish three things, all of which I report on in chapter 5. Firstly, I attempt to explain the properties of the news-time interaction just mentioned by “placing the interaction within the matrix of the social action it is a part of” (Fairclough 1992:11). This I attempt to do in two ways: by explaining the distinctive nature of each set of news-time norms through a consideration of the likely impact of the prevailing ideological milieu on them (cf. 1.3-1.4); and by establishing the likely influence on the teachers’ news-time norms, and conduct generally, of the apartheid education system - since this system prevailed when I collected my data, and did so when the teachers underwent their teacher-

training. Pertinent in this regard too (cf. 1.2-1.4) is the state of flux in the country at the time, which is also partly reflected in the attitudes and assumptions held then by teachers, pupils and others. These in turn impinge on the contributions made to news-time. The second thing I seek to accomplish in regard to the explanatory dimension of my CDA is to assess what Fairclough refers to (on p. 11) as the contribution of the discourse (i.e., news-time literacy) to the social action, “in particular how it constitutes or helps to reconstitute such dimensions of the social as knowledge, social relations and social identities”. This I do in 5.1-5.5, and an important part of doing so is describing the ideological strategies teachers use to promote the variety of news-time literacy which is consistent with their core norms (cf. 5.3.3). The third and final goal of the explanatory dimension of CDA is “to specify the ideological and political investment of conventions, and the ideological and political import of particular ways of using and combining them” (Fairclough 1992:12). I do this concurrently with the above throughout chapter 5 - again on account of the degree of overlap between the two activities. My overall goal in chapter 5 is to respond to the sixth research question (cf. 1.5), namely, “Whose interests are served by the literacy promoted during news-time?” As I show in “What’s at stake at news-time?” - which is how I title chapter 5 - part of answering this question involves establishing whether during news-time participants wish to confirm or else challenge the status quo, and to explain what that means in South Africa at that time. Central to this activity is establishing what knowledge, social identities, social relations and values (i.e., what ideologies) the teachers and pupils try to promote (cf. 5.3 - 5.5, in particular).

3.7 Collection of pre-democratic contextual information

Guthrie (1992) notes that ethnographically-relevant data collection and good record-keeping are critical to ethnographic research. Such data collection and record-keeping can take many forms, ranging from artefacts to brief non-verbal expressions quickly captured in a fieldnote. During the period of my research I was concerned to gather as much information that I judged might be contextually relevant - about the staff at Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School, about the schools themselves and the ethos associated with each of them, about the pupils, about events in the broader society, and much else. Such contextual information took many forms and emanated both from

within and from beyond the schools, and was indirect as well as direct. Indirect internal evidence that I found significant included such 'site documents' as school newsletters, which I filed; educationally-relevant short articles sometimes sent home to parents, advertising flyers and announcements enthusiastically promoted or at least sanctioned by the schools - all of which I also filed. The textual 'environment' of the school, itself, provided indirect contextual information (as my comments earlier in 2.4.5 suggest in regard to scenario 5) about the values promoted by the schools and changes to their world-views which the schools embraced or else resisted. Official school documents relating for example to enrolment were indirectly revealing, too, for the assumptions they reflected about the pupil constituency and what kinds of financial means their parents had. I also kept the principals' reports and annual financial statements which were provided to those who attended annual general meetings, since it was possible to infer important contextual presuppositions from what information these included, what was emphasised, and what was absent. They also allowed one to detect changes in emphases in school attitudes from one year to the next.

I made fieldnotes based on informal spoken interactions with participants whenever these revealed their assumptions about the pre-democratic context of the school, including comments linked to their frustrations, uncertainties and hopes. Direct sources, both written and spoken, took the form of written policy statements or verbal responses in the interviews I had with staff. As I have already mentioned (in 3.4.2.5), the end of year interviews I held with staff were remarkable for the teachers' frankness and willingness to divulge 'classified' information. Some of this information bears directly on the contextual circumstances of the schools and indicates the stresses and strains that arose, some of which detail I have included in chapter 1. Contact with children and their parents through being a member of a lift club, was also valuable for the contextual information it brought to light, and so too were the children's news-time presentations. As readers will see when they read the extracts in chapters 4 and 6, these often reflect the contextual realities of the time, cf. the reference, for instance, to Peace Day in extract 24 (4.3.4), and the pre-occupation with racial classification of W already provided in 1.3.

An immensely important further source of contextual information - emanating from outside the school environment - was, of course, my first-hand "lived experience" of being in South Africa during the run-up to the democratic elections, and since then. The

chronology provided in 1.3 reflects some only of what were momentous events in the political history of this country. Such first-hand knowledge I augment with historical accounts of the transition period, including cartoon collections (such as *Madam & Eve*, cf., Appendix A-1) newspaper cuttings and supplements, which I kept. Interestingly, some of this contextual information is thus post hoc - and constitutes a form of data not normally mentioned in ethnographies.

3.8 Summary

I open this chapter by defining “critical ethnography” (cf., also, 1.1.2 and 1.1.4), “ethnography” and “ethnographic research”, highlighting the centrality in each of culture and cultural understanding. Thereafter I outline five core underlying principles of all ethnographic research (conventional or critical), each of which I align with my own research, namely, it is holistic, investigates behaviour in its own terms (i.e., seeks emic understanding which is then integrated with etic understanding; employs members’/natives’ descriptive language and aims to capture local meanings), it focuses on group not individual behaviour or cultural patterns, is comparative and, finally, it is inductive, but not radically so.

After outlining the guidance of Erickson (1986) and Corsaro (1985) on negotiating field entry and in regard to ethical issues associated with ethnographic research of the sort I envisaged, I describe the form which my field entry actually took at each school. In doing so I emphasise the high level of trust and rapport I achieved with key figures at each institution and the collaborative nature of my interaction with them, and explain how this was accomplished. I also draw attention to the value of my prior association with each school in securing access to the classrooms I was interested in and the role my son’s homework notebooks played at Natal Junior Primary School in my communication with the two teachers there. As evidence of the teachers’ support I detail the extent of the data collecting that they each assisted me in doing.

In 3.4 I provide an account divided into three sections of the data collection methods I employed. Section 3.4.1 outlines general features of those methods. Drawing on Seliger & Shohamy (1989) and others, I characterise my research as heuristic or synthetic and, therefore, as having a low degree of explicitness, as employing a variety of essentially non-

interactive data collection procedures (interviews being an obvious exception); and as obtaining data from a variety of sources, “tailored to the situation and played off against each other” (Seliger & Shohamy 1989:160). As part of the general characterisation of my research I consider the advantages of investigating one’s own as against some other culture, noting that I had not experienced news-time before I started investigating it and so was forced to proceed much as a cultural outsider would have, except that I was able to draw on the knowledge of two sets of insiders - my son and his friends, and the three teachers I worked with - in addition to immersing myself in considerable quantities of tape-recorded news-time data before ever entering the classrooms.

In 3.4.2 I provide the rationale for and describe the specific features of the more traditional ethnographic methods I used, namely, tape recording, observation and the taking of fieldnotes, interviews and, in the case of Mrs Higgs’s class 1 group, video recording. What is noteworthy about the observation and tape recording I did among the Eager Beavers is the change in status I underwent from observer to participant observer during the pre-news-time contact I had with the children in the playground. I also account for my more interactive engagement (through force of circumstances) during two Eager Beaver news sessions - bearing in mind that news sessions with them were generally more interactive than their equivalents in the junior primary school. As part of my account on the video recording I explain why I restricted myself to the class 1 group only.

In 3.4.3 I describe the innovative methods I devised to elicit the pupils’ emic conceptualisations of news-time. I do so chronologically, first describing the speech bubble elicitation task which Mrs Higgs and I administered to the class 1 group, then detailing the class 2 pupil questionnaire which Mrs French administered (for the most part), and, finally, explaining how I interviewed the Eager Beavers and, immediately afterwards, Mrs Byrd facilitated a drawing task with them.

In 3.5 - 3.7 I turn to analysis, and explain the analytical methods and sources of macro-contextual information I rely on. I start (in 3.5) by outlining two partly overlapping sets of criteria - those of McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978) and Erickson (1982) - which enabled me to establish that the putative norms for news-time which I infer from my analyses of the interactional data I recorded in the three classrooms are the *participants’* norms, i.e., those of the teachers and pupils, and not those, merely, of the analyst, i.e., me.

In 3.6, I outline and clarify Fairclough's (1992:10-12) guidelines for "doing critical discourse analysis" since I based my analysis on his guidelines - and explain where in the thesis I report on each of the three inter-related dimensions which constitute a critical discourse analysis, namely, describing news-time as texts, interpreting the interaction during news-time, and then explaining news-time and the interaction generated during it, as a form of social action. I close chapter 3 by detailing the sources I turned to for macro-contextual information pertinent to the time, place and political ambience of my research, i.e., pre-democratic South Africa in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Such information is crucial to providing a *critical* ethnographic account of news-time. It also very usefully complements the explanatory dimension of the critical discourse analysis I provide. The findings of my various analyses I report on at length in the next two chapters.

4. TEACHERS' AND PUPILS' EMIC DEFINITIONS OF NEWS-TIME

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I report on the first of two phases in my critical discourse analysis of transcribed recordings of news-time (cf. 1.1.4 and 3.6), namely, my description of the textual features of news-time exchanges and my interpretation of the participants' interactional behaviour as they co-construct news-time discourse. In so doing I seek to answer research questions (a), (c), (d) and (e), namely:

- (a) What literacy practices do the teachers promote, i.e., what is their emic definition of news-time (cf. 3.2)?
- (c) What literacy practices do the pupils employ at news-time, i.e., what are their emic categories?
- (d) Is there diversity in the pupils' literacy behaviour at news-time? If so, what forms does that diversity take?
- (e) Is there contact and conflict between different sets of literacy practices in the school setting?

I precede my analysis of the interactional behaviour by reporting in 4.2 on what the *teachers* perceive to be the origins, functions and formal features of news-time, i.e., what they say regarding these issues - information which I elicited largely through interviews of different kinds with the teachers and through drawing inferences based on the teachers' reactions to tasks I set for the pupils.

I then (in 4.3) triangulate the teachers' claims as regards the norms (for the content and structure of news-time presentations) with what I infer are their norms from their actual (tape-recorded) behaviour, using the criteria of McDermott et al (1978) and Erickson (1982). These interpretations I subsequently confirmed with my informants. The outcome of the above analysis is that I detail six core norms which guide the teachers' participation (in particular) during news-time, some of which do indeed coincide with the teacher expectations mentioned in 4.2, others are partially represented in the largely

interview-derived list reported in 4.2, while others are not part of what the teachers claimed. In the course of this account of the core norms I also highlight a number of issues, to be explained in chapter 5.

The account I provide in 4.4 offers insight into the *pupils'* perception of news-time and its functions, and seeks to counterbalance the earlier account on these matters in 4.2 from the teacher's perspective. It is based on responses to the speech bubble task, the class 2 pupils' questionnaire, and from interviewing the Eager Beavers.

In 4.5 I return to a matter first raised in 4.3.1, namely, what counts as interesting - in the pupils' terms - and how compatible it is with what teachers consider interesting. I do so in order to highlight the extent of divergence/degree of disparity between the teachers' and pupils' norms, and the effects of this. Finally, I report on information gained during an interview with Mrs French regarding her assessment of the news-giving style of Zena and Siphon, on the one hand, and her perception, on the other, of the pupils' assessment of Zena and Siphon's news-giving style, supplemented by independent evidence gathered during news-time observation. This, along with behavioural evidence of Wesley's style of news-giving and of the pupils' reaction to it, emphasises teacher-pupil disparities.

4.2 Teacher perceptions of the origins, functions and formal characteristics of news

In this section of the chapter I report on and discuss the origins, functions and formal characteristics of news which emerged from my interviews with the three teachers central to my research. My purpose is to reveal what these participants say and think about news, before I triangulate and so check on the validity of what they say by comparing it with what these same teachers *do* during news-time exchanges.

4.2.1 Teachers' views about the origins and value of news-time

The teachers focal to my study displayed uncertainty when first asked about what they saw as the purpose of news. Mrs French, for example, evades the question in the following response:

- T: You know, funny, we were talking about that in the staff room because Mrs Richards was very interested, and she said to us in the staff room, now why do we actually have news?
 R: Mm, what did you decide?
 T: Um, there wasn't sort of we walked (?) and thought about it and um.....and I think we've actually, till you asked, sort of lost ah track of why we have news.

Later in our interview when speculating where news comes from, Mrs French suggests that the inclusion of news-time in the school programme has never been challenged and the original motivation behind its inclusion has never been held up for scrutiny:

T: Whoever decided to do it, long ago, and put it in the curriculum

R: Mm, mm

T: they must have had their reasons, but I think we have lost sight

R: But it's not in the curriculum

T: Um, no, I, I

R: so, so

T: we must go back and look.

She, as well as the other two teachers central to my study, claimed that they had not been news-givers as children, and that they had not been taught at college how to conduct news sessions nor told why news is as trusted a pre-primary and junior primary activity as it clearly is. Asked where she got the idea from to conduct news sessions, Mrs Higgs replied, after a lengthy pause, and with considerable surprise, that "I actually don't know". Mrs Byrd, by contrast, attributed the origins of news-time and reason for its continuity from teacher to teacher, to four reasons. The first reason she gave was the natural and spontaneous impulses of children to share information, which she claimed news-time simply capitalises on. In her words, children are "so spontaneous from the day they walk into school they want to tell you something: 'I've got a new bike', or 'I went to the beach yesterday'". A second reason, according to Mrs Byrd, is teachers' prior exposure to news in the teaching of other teachers: "I think a lot of our teaching is what you've seen other teachers use. So, I've seen other teachers use it and I've incorporated it myself". In spite of this contention, however, she stated she could not remember sitting in on or being instructed in how to conduct a news session. The third reason she supplied is related to the second one: despite the fact that there is no syllabus at the pre-school level, news-time persists, according to Mrs Byrd, simply because "telling news is just such a part of the pre-primary school", "it's something that you just do". For these teachers as for others, news-telling is thus construed in part as a naturalised, inevitable, commonsense practice within early formal education, something so well entrenched that it no longer requires reflection or justification, and that its origins are unimportant. The fourth reason she gave is psychological. In essence, she claimed news allows the teacher to affirm the teller, to give him/her positive feedback and so increase his/her self-concept and self-esteem: "You want them (the children) to feel good

about themselves, so, if they have something to say about themselves or something that they did, and we consider it valuable, it pushes their self-esteem up”.

Despite the diversity in views, news, on the evidence, firstly, of how often it occurs and secondly, on the evidence of how long teachers reported that it has figured as a part of their teaching, is firmly entrenched in the teaching practice of all three teachers. It is also clearly “believed in” and valued, suggesting that it is part of the dominant ideology of schooling at this level. Mrs Higgs’s commitment is obvious from her attesting that:

...a lot of teachers don’t go into it in such a big way as I do...but I like to do it every single day. To me it’s an important part of education as such for the child. So I would say, you know, that is why I do it.

A second comment reflects her almost “commonsense” interpretation (cf. Fairclough 1989) of the necessity for news-time, something she shares, as I indicated above, with Mrs Byrd. Referring to her class 1 pupils, she asserts that “it’s one of their subjects as such” - which is, of course, not literally the case.

Mrs French is less overtly committed to news-time, acknowledging, for instance, that “news is inclined to get pushed out”, i.e., to play second fiddle to other calls on her, such as mathematics instruction. Nevertheless, as I note in 4.3, the emic categories which determine her conduct at news-time are as well-defined as Mrs Higgs’s are, and the volume of recordings I was able to collect in her class (cf. 3.3.1.2) is further evidence that she values news-time. As far as Mrs Byrd is concerned, it is significant that one of the things that she offered the Eager Beaver group (her “leaders in waiting”) was extra news-time. This decision demonstrates the high value which she, too, intuitively attaches to news-telling. Another possible interpretation is that it demonstrates her belief that pupils value it highly.

4.2.2 Teachers’ views of the functions of news-time

What are the functions which the teachers see news as serving? The interview evidence suggests that they see it as serving three main functions. In broad terms, these are pragmatic, pedagogical and self-expressive. According to Mrs Higgs, news serves an essentially pragmatic function: it is a practical means of coping with and channelling the childrens’ desire to share information. As she explained: “When they come in in the morning they are bubbling...they like to tell you things, and I would rather have it at an organised time, than literally all day”.

She notes further that “it also just gets them to come back to their tables and they have got everything out, they can actually settle down”. This recalls the pragmatic motivation for news that Mrs Byrd mentions as the first of her four explanations for the trust which teachers, generally, have in news-time, namely, that it is a response to childrens’ spontaneous impulse to share information with others (cf. 4.2.1).

The teachers also see news as fulfilling various pedagogical functions: it allows children to “verbalise their feelings”, though Mrs Higgs adds the caveat that “...a lot comes out in their writing (i.e., written news), but they don’t tell you out loud because they don’t want everyone to know”. News also enables the children to “sort their little ideas out”. It helps them “to come out of themselves in front of their peers”, to “speak out”, and helps them “get used to standing up in front of somebody and talking”. It teaches them to “listen to and accept somebody else’s viewpoint and what they’ve done”, and allows teachers “to extend them, through questioning”. According to Mrs Byrd, its pedagogical functions are multiple: “it helps you assess their language level...and ability to express themselves”; it is a way of “getting to listen to their language patterns and correct them”; and it is a barometer of the childrens’ confidence, measured in terms of how much news the children are willing to share in a group setting. Finally, the content conveyed during news-time can sometimes alert staff to family circumstances, providing “an insight into where the child is”, emotionally. Equipped with such knowledge, teachers can respond sensitively to the child and, where necessary, comfort and provide him/her with relevant support.

News is also conceived of as a time when pupils are free, i.e., released from the control of their teachers, and therefore able to “express their feelings” / “express themselves in talk” and “talk about whatever is interesting to them”. This, the self-expression function, is the last of the three main functions teachers consider news-time to serve. In Mrs French’s words, news-time is “the pupils’ time”: a time when the children are “so conscious...of telling what they want to tell”. She contrasts the news-time event with theme which, she contends, “is more teacher-directed, because we discuss a certain theme or area or something, and they give their input...on that particular theme”. Mrs Byrd also contrasts news-time with a related literacy event which children participate in at the pre-primary level, namely, discussion or, as she also refers to it, discussion rings. She explains that news constrains the children considerably less than discussion does:

“news is free topic”; “news is free choice”; “news is what I (the child) want to talk about”; “I the child want to say something that is important to me and is valuable”. In discussion, by contrast, the children “learn to stay on one topic”. “A discussion ring is the teacher’s topic and everybody must contribute on that topic”. By way of illustration, Mrs Byrd provided the following account: “We’re talking about rabbits. If he wants to tell you about his bicycle, we say ‘Please tell me about that later, we’re now talking about bunnies’”.

4.2.3 Teachers’ expectations of the shape, form and content of news contributions

My analysis of the teachers’ responses to interview questions about the shape, form and content of news contributions reveals that the teachers do not see news as the open-ended, at times almost agenda-less, pupil-driven event that some of the above comments (4.2.2) suggest. Nor is choice of topic free, and the manner in which topics are to be developed is certainly not free. In fact, one can infer from the teachers’ responses that news contributions are expected to meet the following criteria:

- (a) They should be interesting;
- (b) they should be focused;
- (c) they should be sustained/elaborated;
- (d) they should exhibit a high degree of verbalised detail; and
- (e) there should be evidence of syntactic complexity.

These findings suggest that these teachers appear to envisage news-time contributions as early approximations to expository literacy, just as Michaels (1981); Michaels & Collins (1984) and Michaels & Cazden (1986) do, cf. 2.6.2. The interview-derived data which follow and, particularly the transcribed interactional data which I comment on in 4.3, bear this out with considerable force.

In Mrs Higgs’s words: “a good news contribution must have some meat to it”, “a good news contribution must have some kind of interest level”. She illustrates her beliefs in her comments about hypothetical news contributions:

It mustn’t just be “I went to Mitchell Park”. “I went to Mitchell Park” doesn’t mean a thing, to me. “I went to Mitchell Park and I saw the beautiful flowers planted in rows or clumps of whatever, and then I went to see the birds”, or, “I went to the beach and I swam really deep, and then I caught a wave in”, or “My

dad took me out on his board”, you know, that, not just “I went to the beach”.
‘Cos you also get that.

In the next exchange Mrs Higgs explains what a “bad news contribution” looks like and after backtracking in response to a question I ask, once more endorses her preference for elaborated discourse at news-time rather than more restricted discourse:

- T: “I play with my friend” is a bad one, or, “I bought my next gun”, is also a bad one.
R: Is it bad because they (news-givers) don’t go beyond that, or what?
T: Look, it it’s not bad. It isn’t bad, I’m glad they’ve at least given me something, so I don’t mind if they bring their gun, the same gun week after week or “I played with my friend” every single day, at least they are contributing. But I’m also looking to see if they are, you know, enquiring, or have they learned something that they can share with us. Not just, “I played with my friend”.

Elaboration is also emically salient for Mrs French. I asked her to imagine that a pupil had offered “Tomorrow is my birthday” for her news, and asked her how she would respond to that news. This is her reply:

- T: I’d try to draw (the child) out...but a lot of them, it’s difficult to draw them out, they can just answer in those um...not practical but um...just what they see...: “I’m going to have a birthday cake”, um, wouldn’t describe the birthday cake or um “What what are you going to do at your party?” “Oh we’ll play games”. “What sort of games?” “Um, um, I don’t know”, sort of thing. Some of them it’s difficult to...draw them out like that.
R: Mm
T: But
R: So when you -
T: I do I do try if they just say “Well it’s my birthday tomorrow”. “Are you going to have a party?”, or “What are you going to do, anything special?”. Um... “What, are you going to get a present?” Oh they’re all going to get a present. “What sort of present would you like?” I try to do that with them. But it’s, it’s not always easy...some, some of them just bubble out, and they, they will tell you, but those that don’t, are reluctant to talk and I do try to get them to express themselves more.

Finally, I turn to the expectations which Mrs Byrd overtly expresses regarding the formal characteristics which she prefers in news-time contributions. They are linked to rough developmental stages which Mrs Byrd sees pre-primary children as passing through as well as to developmental stages in the formation of the Eager Beaver’s group identity:

Initially, any contribution is valid and valuable, so nothing is inadequate, initially. Once you’ve built up the relationship and you’ve got a working group as we now have, we’ve got a working relationship, em, I would prompt for more or cut short.

It seems clear once again from what Mrs Byrd says that she expects news accounts to be shaped, i.e., they should have a coherent structure and a point. Such shaping might involve “prompting for more”, i.e., calling for greater verbal elaboration, and “cutting

short”, i.e., focusing the account, through ensuring that topically-unrelated information is not included.

The information just provided is usefully complemented by an inspection of actual news which an Eager Beaver pupil called on Mrs Byrd to provide towards the end of one of their Eager Beaver news sessions. This data is included for the reader’s interest in Appendix C-1.

4.3 Behavioural evidence of the literacy practices promoted by the teachers at news-time

Whereas in the previous section I reported on what teachers *say* their expectations are of the form and content at news-time, in this section I report on what those same teachers *do*, recognising that there is often a mismatch between the two in peoples’ conduct generally. After listing these core expectations, I describe and illustrate them, individually, except in the case of (2), (3) and (4), which I treat together. Readers will see that expectations (2), (3) and (4) coincide with some of those represented in the list I inferred from my interviews with teachers (cf. 4.2.2). Others though - (5) and (6) - are absent from or else partially represented - (1) and (3) - in what teachers say in the interviews. I interpret the significance of this partial triangulation in chapter 5.

On the evidence of their actual conduct at news-time, derived from transcribed recordings of news-time sessions, teachers subscribe to and promote six common or core expectations regarding the content and structure of news accounts. These expectations are as follows:

- (1) News-time contributions should be interesting, reflect pupil commitment and be original;
- (2) they should be clearly focused. In Michaels’s (1981) terms, they should be topic-centred;
- (3) they should be sustained, through explicit elaboration of detail and clearly marked links between ideas;
- (4) they should reflect pupils’ use of complex syntactic choices;
- (5) they should be cast in grammatically correct English;

- (6) they should be analytical, restrained, factually correct, and give prominence to what is “nice”, “happy”, and “moral”.

4.3.1 Pupils’ news-time contributions should be interesting, reflect pupil commitment and be original

A criterion Mrs Higgs consistently employs when encouraging pupils to bid for turns to share news, is whether the news proffered is likely to be exciting or not. This is particularly the case early on in a news session, when competition is greatest among those wanting to contribute. This criterion, consistent with Erickson’s (1982) first principle (‘consistency of occurrence’: cf. 3.5.2), is evident in the following exchange (T = teacher; Xs = children):

Extract 1

- 1 T: Did you all have a lovely weekend?
- 2 Xs: Ye:s (*responding in chorus*).
- 3 T: Did you? Whose got something really exciting to tell us about what they did on the
- 4 weekend?

In the next extract we again see a number of pupils vying with one another to speak first and basing their claim to do so on the fact that they have “very exciting news”. Evidence that the excitement criterion is emic includes the pupils’ labelling of what they have to offer as “very exciting”; their overtly indicating as they do so of what counts as expected behaviour; and the timing of this labelling, namely, at a transition point - since it occurs at the point where a teacher-led preamble gives way to the pupils assuming a more active role in what takes place. These further criteria match three of the criteria listed by McDermott et al (1978), cf. 3.5.1, namely, the labelling criterion (criterion 1), the marking of what is expected behaviour (criterion 2), and the timing of expected behaviour at a transition point (criterion 4a). In the extract T designates the teacher; X an unidentified child/children; S, Shamitha; and M, Matthew:

Extract 2

- 1 T: Right, now, let’s sit nicely...Who has got some news for me?
- 2 X: Me.
- 3 T: Well you all look so happy to be back at school today.
- 4 M: I’ve got very exciting news.
- 5 T: Have you? You’ve got very exciting news, Matthew, you come first.
- 6 S: Me too.
- 7 T: Have you Sithabeli?
- 8 X: Me too.
- 9 M: On Saturday my friend Jeffrey came and we had supper.
- 10 T: Did you darling, what did you have?
- 11 M: Ah...we had I think potato chips and chicken rolls

- 12(*M continues his account of what they had for supper.*)
 13 T: Oh, spoilt thing, and what did you do?
 14 M: We had supper in the tent.
 15 T: Did you?
 16 M: with a torch.
 17 T: Ah Matthew, how exciting. Did you sleep in the tent or not? (*The exchange continues,*
 18 *with Matthew detailing what they did.*)

“Exciting” topics on this and much other evidence in my corpus are highly valued by the teacher. Such topics, or, to be more precise, topical treatments of news which are “exciting”, have emic salience for the teachers and for those children, like Matthew and Shamitha, who contribute news accounts which they conceive of in this way.

Attributing excitement to a topic of course begs the question ‘What counts as exciting’? Both Matthew and his teacher are happy to label having supper in a tent with a friend in the above extract as exciting. Elsewhere in the data we see that as diverse a range of topics as the following are also labelled exciting, if not beforehand by the pupil, then certainly afterwards by the teacher: having an ice-cream with a cherry on top, a lemon in the middle, and a peach on the bottom; possessing a sticker book which is filling up; going on an outing to Springvale Farm; eating the roll at home that you baked at school; going to a ballet lesson; playing at a friend’s house; having a birthday; playing with a favourite old gun. This suggests that excitement need not be an inherent attribute of the thing or experience which a child talks about. Nor need an object or event focal to news-telling be new, out of the ordinary, expensive or extravagant in some way, though some in the list just given clearly are. More important, it seems, is how the telling is approached and managed, i.e., what literacy practices the teller employs.

In essence, on the evidence of my data, exciting news, interesting news, or whatever other epithet is used, is news which both engages the audience and, very importantly, has a particular content and structure. The implicit effect of the label given by the teacher to the news before the telling is that it predisposes the news-teller to select a specific topic and to elaborate on that topic in a highly focused manner, justifying it as exciting, interesting or whatever. Alternatively, the teacher applies the label after the news-telling has taken place, confirming, retrospectively, that the news met the content and formal requirements which render it interesting and exciting. In extract 2 the topic of the news is Matthew’s friend’s visit for supper. The elaboration of that topic is what they ate, and what they did and it is this which both parties label as “exciting”. Exciting or interesting

news, on this and considerable other evidence elsewhere in my corpus of data, is topically constrained, i.e., it relates to a single, well-defined, central topic or theme. The manner in which elaboration of that topic is accomplished is presumably what renders it exciting or, more neutrally, interesting. News-givers, in effect, are encouraged to promote their news, successful news-giving being judged in terms of whether they are able to “sell” it as exciting, interesting or otherwise (cf. Scollon & Scollon 1983).

Further evidence that the criterion that news should be exciting and sold as such to the audience is Mrs Higgs’s exhortation to pupils to bring valued objects into the classroom and share them, their features, how they work, etc., with the children on the mat. The objects stimulate interest on the part of the audience while for the news-givers they are prompts to their verbalisation of what makes the objects worthy news topics.

Mrs French’s orientation to news-telling among her class 2 children is fundamentally the same as that of Mrs Higgs. She persistently urges her pupils (cf. Erickson’s (1982) principle 1 - consistency of occurrence: 3.5.2) to focus their news accounts on what is unique or noteworthy. These are apparently the emically-salient categories which underlie her assessment of what gives rise to interesting news. As evidence, we see in extract 3 below that she asks Vanitha to concentrate on what is special about the pencils which she has brought with her to news:

Extract 3

- 1 T: Right, come Vanitha.
- 2 V: When my Mom came back from Jo’burg, she brought me this set of pencils.
- 3 T: What’s special about them? Tell...the children, because they can’t see too well from the
- 4 back.

In the following exchange Mrs French encourages a different child, Jacqui, to select a specific gift from the many her parents brought her, namely, the best (i.e., the most noteworthy) one:

Extract 4

- 1 J: On Friday when were going to break up my Mom and Dad came home that night.
- 2 T: Can you tell the class where they went to?
- 3 J: They went to Turkey.
- 4 T: Turkey, yes! Alright, Sh. Yes, tell us some more.
- 5 J: They brought lots of things.
- 6 T: Alright! Tell me one thing that they brought you. The best.
- 7 J: (*Long pause.*) Umm, a floating crocodile called Timsa.

While Mrs Byrd does not overtly encourage interesting, exciting, or otherwise noteworthy news accounts, she nevertheless does so implicitly. Consider the following data:

Extract 5

- 1 T: Jennifer, what would you like to tell me today?
- 2 J: Um...yesterday my -um my mom took us to the beach.
- 3 T: You lucky girl, who else went with (*using a more hushed tone than before*)?
- 4 J: My daddy.
- 5 T: ...That's nice, and?
- 6 J: My sister.
- 7 T: Your sister, and what did you do at the beach?
- 8 J: Um, we played on the sand.
- 9 T: That's lovely, tell me about it.

While at first glance it appears that Mrs Byrd is simply coaxing Jennifer along, the labels “lucky”, “nice” and “lovely” suggest that she is also evaluating the content of this four year old’s news as she produces it. She also encourages Jennifer to elaborate on her news in ways which are consistent with those labels (see “and”; “tell me about it”). For example, by the end of extract 5, Jennifer is really being encouraged to elaborate on the loveliness of playing in the sand. The teacher, in other words, is steering Jennifer’s news-telling at this very early age along lines which make it interesting, and ensure that it remains on topic.

Originality is the second characteristic which is apparently emically salient for teachers at news-time and perceived as contributing towards the interest level of a news account. To illustrate this, I direct the reader’s attention to a recurrent set of strategies which pre-school children employ. These strategies lead the children, in Mrs Byrd’s words, “to pick up on somebody else’s story, make it three times better and report it as their own news”. She rejects (i.e., negatively sanctions) what she considers not original - Erickson’s (1982) principle 3: 3.2.2 - and suggests that her response would be something along the lines of: “No, I now want proper news from you’, or, ‘I know that that didn’t really happen but what did you do when it was Sunday and I saw you had a burnt face on Monday. Where did you go?’”

Asked what she intended the child to understand her as saying, she answered: “Be independent, have your own ideas. Be individual. Don’t go with the crowd. What *you*

have is worth something. Don't just jump on the bandwagon. Because that's going to reinforce him positively".

Mrs Higgs, while claiming: "I don't mind if they bring their gun, the same gun week after week or "I played with my friend" every single day, (because) at least they are contributing" also asserts "but I'm also looking to see if they are, you know, enquiring, or have they learned something that they can share with us. Not just, 'I played with my friend'".

What she is apparently saying in effect is that she is tolerant of pupils repeating the same news many times over, but prefers new or original topics. From the following extract we can infer that at least some of the pupils share the expectation that news topics should be original. Andile is the news giver:

Extract 6

- 1 A: My Dad said er um tomorrow afternoon after school we are going to Wild Coast Sun.
- 2 T: Are you?
- 3 Xs: Not again.
- 4 T: You always go to Wild Coast Sun, Andile, you are very lucky. Have you been, what do
- 5 you do there?
- 6 A: Um, we play.
- 7 T: Do you play there? And do you stay in the hotel?
- 8 A: Yes.

What we see is fellow class members holding Andile accountable (cf. McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 5, Erickson's (1982) principle 2) for having violated an implicit working consensus among them that *different* topics should be explored at news-time and that they will not repeat previous ones. Mrs Higgs's response in this instance echoes that of the children but is more face-saving than theirs is. While the pupils express disapproval baldly, the teacher offsets face loss associated with not having one's topic appreciated by expressing solidarity with Andile through identifying with Andile's good fortune. Significantly, though, she finds difficulty in building on Andile's topic.

A topic with very high interest potential (i.e., if one shares the teacher's predisposition for interesting topics and what constitutes them) is Anton's holiday to the Comores, which he reports on in extract 7. What is notable is not just his story, but the pupils' and teacher's response to it, as was the case with extract 6. In informing Anton what is inappropriate, they inform us what they consider appropriate, i.e., what is emic - in the manner suggested in McDermott et al's (1978) second criterion. Erickson's (1982)

second principle (accountability of absence) and fourth one (normalisation of ambiguous forms) apply equally. In essence, the teacher and pupils expect him to back up his account with enthusiasm for his topic, but he does not do so. Here is an excerpt from this exchange:

Extract 7

- 1 T: Right, very still while Anton tell his news. Fortunate, come on. Yes. Anton?
 2 A: Um.
 3 T: Don't tell me you haven't got anything (*gentle, teasing tone*).
 4 A: We went, we went to the Comores.
 5 T: To the Comores! Tell these children where the Comores are!
 6 Xs: I know, I know.
 7 T: Are they down the road here in Durban?
 8 X: No! (*Considerable hubbub in the room.*)
 9 T: So, what are the Comores? (*Hubbub continues.*)
 10 A: Ah, then we went to Johannesburg...and then we went (*spoken indistinctly*).
 11 T: How did you get to the Comores?
 12 A: (*Indistinct.*)
 13 T: By plane? Could you have gone to the Comores by car?
 14 A: No.
 15 T: Could you have gone by train?
 16 A: No.
 17 T: Do you know why you couldn't have gone by car or train?
 18 X: There's most probably a sea or something.
 19 T: Ah...that's right. The Comores are islands in the middle of the sea so you couldn't get
 20 there by train or car so that's [why -
 21 X: [or boat
 22 T: or boat. Right, when you got there, what did you do?

A visit to the Comores differs from the news topics listed earlier as exciting because in terms of its scope it is considerably out of the ordinary and so contrasts with most other topics elicited in my news-time data. I suggested earlier that out of the ordinary-ness is not a prerequisite for presenting exciting news but, as we see from the enthusiastic involvement of the teacher and a number of Anton's classmates, it should greatly facilitate news-telling and make "selling" it comparatively easy.

Mrs French, as I recorded in my fieldnotes, has prior knowledge of Anton's visit. It enables her as a result to "set the stage", as it were, for Anton. Thus, her "Yes. Anton?" (line 1) does more than nominate him as the next speaker. Through her choice of intonation pattern, she invites him, as she later confirmed in an interview, to "dazzle" his audience with his news. When he responds diffidently and hesitantly in line 2, she follows it up with "Don't tell me you haven't got anything" which she expresses in a tone of ironic disbelief, again implicitly inviting him to share his secret with them. All that Anton does though in response is hesitantly to announce in line 4 that "We went, we

went to the Comores”, a flat statement of fact, unembellished and not in any way backed up with any expression of personal enthusiasm. From this point the teacher continues to exhort him to sell his news - always implicitly - and to signal overt enthusiasm for his topic. Her questions, and how they are cast prosodically, are all directed to this end. She herself expresses excitement, itself an implicit cue to Anton to what is required, but appears to succeed more in whipping up enthusiasm and involvement on the part of those on the mat, than in getting through to Anton. As evidence one need only consider the nature, frequency and effect of her exclamations, instructions and questions in lines 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17. They result in her getting the answer she desired from X, not Anton, after which she wraps up the discussion on the locality of the Comores with: “Ah... that’s right. The Comores are islands in the middle of the sea so you couldn’t get there by train or car”. My field notes on the exchange up to line 22 indicate that Anton and certain others on the mat were impassive and detached, which contrasted with the seemingly more central and much more enthusiastic behaviour of the teacher and remaining children. (See as further evidence of this the children’s responses in lines 6, 8 and 9). The significance of this extract appears, therefore, to be that it reveals that what is emically salient is not that something is original, but that it is *presented* as original. What is crucial is not *what* Anton has chosen to say, an issue of schematic knowledge (Widdowson 1983, Carrell & Eisterhold 1983), but *how* he has done so. In Widdowson’s terms, his choice of rhetorical routine is inappropriate.

Anton, interestingly, since he apparently either does not command or recognise the need for the literacy practices Mrs French is calling on him to use, does not contribute in lines 5-9 and, when he does respond to the teacher’s “So what are the Comores?” (line 10) apparently misinterprets the question and answers obliquely, detailing the route from Durban by which they reached the Comores rather than identifying its locality away from South Africa in the sea.

In the remainder of this news exchange (see Appendix C-2) Mrs French offers Anton three more opportunities to assume responsibility for his news-telling by inviting him to elaborate on facets of his trip other than the locality of the islands, cf. her question about what he did there (in lines 31, 33 and 34) and her open-ended question in line 42: “Do you want to tell us some more?”, which elicits information regarding the friend he made.

4.3.2 Pupils' news-time contributions should be focused, elaborated and employ complex syntactic resources

The next cluster of literacy practices which, on the evidence of my recorded data, teachers promote during news-time are that: news accounts should be focused, they should be elaborated and should be characterised by complex syntactic devices that facilitate focus and elaboration. These, generally, are practices which I inferred were valued from what the teachers told me during my interviews with them (see 4.2.3). What is not apparent from the interviews is the concertedness with which the teachers promote these criteria. This concertedness is most apparent when news sessions falter or go wrong (in the teachers' terms), as happens in the exchanges in extracts 11, 12 and 13 discussed below in 4.3.2.2. The news exchanges numbered 8, 9 and 10, by contrast, exhibit interactions in which pupils conform to the teacher's norms and are rewarded for doing so.

4.3.2.1 News contributions in which pupils meet their teachers' formal expectations

A prototypical instance of a news contribution which exhibits the expectations listed earlier, is that of Zena. In terms of Erickson's (1982) principle 3: 3.5.2, the special significance of her exchange lies in the positive sanctions her teacher applies - as indeed she does during most of her news-time exchanges with Zena - compared with the lack of affirmation, for instance, which Anton received, cf. extract 7. This is how Zena presents her news:

Extract 8

- 1 Z: Last night I went to Noddy Land after we went to the hospital to see my...uncle...and
 2 then after Noddy Land we ah went on three rides: first the jet, then the ah...little cars
 3 then the a a a cars the other big cars that goes through the tunnels and my cousin when
 4 he went through the tunnel cars she was screaming her guts out.
 5 T: Was she (*laughing*)?
 6 Z: And then we we a fourth ride we went on these kinds of cars .. and um my cousin, he's
 7 a...he's quite small and he went on this...a...this a...kind of thing that he goes round and
 8 round and it goes extra and it goes speeding like a car. And then, ah, but ah, then ah,
 9 my mommy told my aunty that ah once a kid fell out of that a...poacher (?)...he was
 10 quite young, she fell through the pole and ah um if her shirt have broke then, then her
 11 neck would be gone... 'cos her sisters were holding her ne...ah...shirt.
 12 T: Goodness! So it just goes to show you have to sit very very well and nicely on those
 13 things, you mustn't go and fiddle around on them.

The following characteristics of Zena's account are particularly noteworthy:

- (a) She provides detailed temporal grounding for her account, thereby focusing it in terms of when her visit and the activities she engaged in took place: “Last night I went to Noddy Land after we went to the hospital to see my...uncle...and then after Noddy Land we ah went on three rides” (lines 1-2);
- (b) she provides an explicit topic statement/statement of theme around which her account coheres, namely, “We went on three rides” (line 2), after which she elaborates on each ride;
- (c) she employs explicit sequence markers: “first”, “then”, “then”, (in lines 2 and 3) “and then...fourth ride” (line 6), thereby deliberately signalling the coherence of her account; and
- (d) she relies on complex syntactic and rhetorical devices to incorporate detail in her account. Examples include her use of the following: (i) subordinate and co-ordinate constructions, e.g. “the other big cars *that* (subordinate) goes through the tunnels *and* (co-ordinate) *when* (subordinate) he went through the tunnel cars she was...” (lines 3-4); (ii) parenthetic descriptive detail, e.g. “my cousin, *he’s...quite small*” (lines 6 and 7); and (iii) descriptive detail provided in the form of a simile: “it goes speeding *like a car*” (line 8).

Features like (a) to (d) above are typical of schooled literacy (see, for example, Cook-Gumperz 1986), a form of decontextualised literacy which Zena is clearly well on her way to acquiring.

If we now consider the teacher’s reaction more closely, we notice first that she hardly intervenes in Zena’s news-telling, i.e., she does not dictate how Zena should present what she says. In terms of the criteria of McDermott, Gospodinoff & Aron (1978) and Erickson (1982), there are no negative sanctions, no holding Zena accountable for behaviour she has failed to supply, nor explicit indications to her of what is expected. The absence of this kind of feedback contrasts starkly, as I will show later, with the considerable amount of teacher intervention which takes place during many other pupils’ news exchanges. Secondly, both the teacher’s laughter (line 5) and her interjection, “Goodness!” (line 12) are expressions of solidarity (Brown & Levinson 1987) with Zena. They, along with the third feature of the teacher’s contribution to Zena’s news-telling,

namely, her summarising comment in the last two lines (12-13), which rounds off Zena's contribution, serve to affirm, or, positively sanction Zena. They do so, I suggest, because Zena's literacy behaviour meets the teacher's expectations, i.e., those of schooled literacy.

As confirmation that the pre-school and class 2 teachers also reward (i.e., positively sanction) focused, elaborated, linguistically complex accounts such as Zena's, I turn now to the news contributions of Grayson (a pre-schooler, extract 9) and Warwick (in class 2, extract 10) to highlight the presence of those features in their accounts and the teachers' positive reaction to them. I do so, in addition, to suggest the pervasiveness of teachers' expectations in this regard.

Extract 9

- 1 G: My dog always sleeps and he eats and also he plays with my toys and he takes one
 2 bone away from me but it is a toy bone
 3 T: A toy bone? Is it your toy bone or is it his toy bone?
 4 G: My toy bone. And he's got a ball, when I throw his ball, he goes and fetches it, even if I
 5 throw a stick for him he will go and fetch it
 6 T: That's a kind dog! So you've got him well trained. What else can he do, can he do
 7 tricks?
 8 G: When I do a trick my dog stands on two feet on his leg.
 9 T: Ah: that's very cute!...
 10
 11 G: Even if I sleep then my dogs sleep in my bedroom because that is where they beds are
 12 ...The little dog sleeps under my bed, that's where I put his bed, and the two other dogs,
 13 the Dad sleeps on the floor outside the bed, the Mom sleeps under the bed with the
 14 baby.
 15 T: That's very nice.

The two passages which make up extract 9 are excerpted from the lengthiest news contribution in my Eager Beavers corpus - the complete transcript is included in Appendix C-3. The news-giver, Grayson, is a boy whom Mrs Byrd considered to be among the "brightest" of the Eager Beavers, and frequently told me so. This assessment of him, coupled with her willingness to allow Grayson to talk for as long as she did, is, I believe, external evidence of her approval of the strategies which he employs during his news presentation. Examination reveals that both extracts, the first drawn from early on in his news-telling, the second occurring much later, are topically-constrained. They both deal with Grayson's dogs.

Both extracts are also characterised by elaboration and specificity: Grayson does not simply announce that he owns a dog. Instead, he lists his dog's habits: sleeping, eating,

playing with his (Grayson's) toys, and then develops the last of these into a sub-theme, i.e., the dog's playfulness, and, in particular, its behaviour in relation to a toy bone, ball and stick.

In the second extract he does likewise, i.e., he illustrates his attachment to his dogs through the details he provides of the dogs' sleeping arrangements. Again, he avoids simply saying that they sleep in his room. Instead, he meticulously specifies that the mother and little dog sleep under his bed, while the Dad dog sleeps on the floor next to them (?), but not under the bed (lines 11-14).

Both accounts include very high levels of descriptive detail and precision, none more so, perhaps, than when Mrs Byrd questions Grayson in line 3. The context of that question is his dog's playfulness. He first mentions that his dog plays with his, i.e., Grayson's toys. He notes, further, that the dog plays with a bone, a toy bone - which, I assume, belongs to Grayson. Mrs Byrd, however, calls for clarification on this point, asking: "Is it your toy bone or is it his toy bone?" This drive for maximum clarification through requiring pupils to provide very close specification of points of detail is a feature of the discourse teachers value at news-time. It is something I discuss more closely in extract 13, when I also refer to certain negative consequences which are associated with it.

Given the high level of detail he provides, it is perhaps not surprising that Grayson also makes use of complex syntactic structures in both passages in order to convey his "elaborated" message. For instance, he employs sentential conjunction on a number of occasions in the first passage:

My dog always sleeps *and* (sentential conjunction) he eats *and also* (sentential conjunction) he plays with my toys *and* (sentential conjunction) he takes one bone away from me *but* (adversative sentential conjunction) it's a toy bone.

Additional linguistic features of note in this sentence include: Grayson consistently using the simple present tense, which is appropriate for signalling habitual activity; employing anaphoric proforms which have a significant effect on the cohesion of his account, i.e., he substitutes "he" for "my dog" three times (line 1), while "it" (line 2) functions both anaphorically, referring back to "one" (line 1), and cataphorically, in that it anticipates the lexically more explicit formulation "toy bone" (line 2). Grayson uses it contrastively

as well, i.e., enabling him to distinguish his dog's bone, which is not a real bone, from real bones which he perhaps anticipates his interlocutor is more likely to be thinking of.

Grayson also makes considerable use, too, of subordination, which, moreover, is explicitly marked by means of overt markers (italicised in what follows). This is apparent in Grayson's second and third turns in the first passage: "*when* I throw his ball, he goes and fetches it" (line 4); "*even if* I throw a stick for him he will go and fetch it" (lines 4 and 5); "*When* I do a trick my dog stands on two feet on his leg" (line 8). Embedding of subordinate clauses - which by its nature is a process which entails reliance on grammatical signalling of different logical and other relations between the subordinate and matrix clauses and is therefore cognitively demanding - is also employed in the second passage. There its use is more sustained than in the first passage and its effect very impressive:

Even if (first part of the marker of a subordinate adverbial clause of time) I sleep (main clause) *then* (second part of the marker of the subordinate adverbial clause of time) my dogs sleep in my bedroom *because* (marker of subordinate adverbial clause of reason) that is where they beds are.

In addition to the linguistic features mentioned so far in the sentence just quoted, we notice that Grayson alternates between "I" and "my" (line 11); between "my dogs" and "they" (line 11) and between "in my bedroom" (line 11) and, first, "that", and then, "where" (also line 11), all of which establish anaphoric ties between prior and subsequent references to his dogs and his bedroom and contribute, once more, to the cohesion and focused-ness of what is said.

Turning to the second sentence in the second passage of Grayson's account, i.e.,

The little dog sleeps under my bed, that's where I put his bed, and the two other dogs, the Dad sleeps on the floor outside the bed, the Mom sleeps under the bed with the baby.

we notice the following:

- (a) his use of sentential conjunction with the conjunctive marker "and" deleted before "the Mom" (line 13), presumably on the assumption that his listener can retrieve it or else does not need the conjunctive relationship to be marked overtly;
- (b) the embedded adverbial clause "that's where I put his bed" (line 12) which, as an appositional construction, anaphorically clarifies the content of the matrix sentence which precedes it ("The little dog sleeps under my bed") and

- (c) the cataphoric, almost topicalising effect of “and the two other dogs,” (line 12) whose effect is to alert the listener to the fact that what is upcoming is specification of the sleeping arrangements of the remaining two dogs, namely, the Mom and the Dad.

Apart from the teacher’s positive sanctions which I have already mentioned, i.e., her frequent description of Grayson as “bright” and her willingness to allow him a much longer turn than usual, there is additional evidence that Grayson’s news meets his teacher’s expectations. It is, I believe, significant to note the degree to which the teacher involves herself in Grayson’s news-telling (as Zena’s teacher did too): “That’s a kind dog! So you’ve got him well trained?” (line 6) is evidence towards the end of passage 1. As can be seen from what follows this comment in Appendix C-3 (lines 37-40), Mrs Byrd offers a personal anecdote. In Brown & Levinson’s (1987) terms, this is a sign of distance-reducing, solidarity behaviour. Moreover, the teacher’s overt commendation, “That’s very nice”, at the end of the second passage (line 15) functions both as a comment on Grayson’s thoughtfulness for his dogs and on the quality of his account. As in Zena’s case, Grayson, although a much younger child, has employed many of the literacy practices associated with schooled literacy - and is rewarded for doing so. I turn now to the third and final illustration of an account which the teacher received favourably. This is one by Warwick, a boy in class 2. The teacher is Mrs French.

Warwick’s account in extract 10 (which follows) has two distinguishing features. It has the characteristics that determine that the teacher perceives it as “interesting”, i.e., in the terms described earlier in 4.3.1, and so contrasts starkly with Anton’s. It is also one which shares many of the formal characteristics which define Zena’s and Grayson’s accounts. I provide it in order to provide further compelling evidence of the emic salience of these features of news-telling for the teachers as well as to emphasise the pervasiveness of such criteria across the teachers. Here is Warwick’s news:

Extract 10

- 1 W: In the holidays I went to The Oaks. It takes one hour to get there and when we got
 2 there our friends were there, had got there before us, because my friend, Andy, had a
 3 tennis tournament on the day we were leaving, so they came early and we came at tea
 4 time, in the afternoon.
 5 T: Now tell us a bit about The Oaks. What was it like there? What did you do?
 6 W: Um, we go, we do [horse rides.
 7 T: [Danny!
 8 W: I went on three horse rides.

- 9 T: Mm?
- 10 W: My first horse ride was quite nice, my second horse ride was also quite nice, and my
11 third horse-ride was very nice.
- 12 T: By that time you were used to it, weren't you?
- 13 W: Yes, I went on Talker, Flanagan, and then Flanagan again. First Flanagan, then
14 Talker, then Flanagan again. The second time I went on Flanagan, I said, I went like
15 that to the reins (*W demonstrates*) and he, he started trotting. He trotted and then he
16 did another (*indistinct*) and it goes like this (*again demonstrating*).
- 17 T: Wow! Had you ever been on a horse before this time?
- 18 W: I went last year.
- 19 T: So you're getting quite good.
- 20 W: Mm...and there's a trampoline, it's got a split in the middle.
- 21 T: A split in the middle?
- 22 W: Ja. (*A lengthy account follows. Because W speaks very softly, it is indistinct.*) There are
23 tennis courts, you can ride, there are oranges, and then, and then, my Mom and Dad
24 had a heated bed.
- 25 T: Oh, how nice and cosy! Did it get quite cold at The Oaks?
- 26 W: It was very cold in the morning and at night.
- 27 T: Mm, so it's nice and cosy to have an electric blanket.
- 28 W: The ice-cream at The Oaks tastes just like bubblegum.
- 29 T: Does it? Oh! that must be yummy. Right, thanks Warwick, that was lovely.

Warwick conveys his enthusiasm for his topic through his choice of literacy practices. Most prominent among them is the way he immediately elaborates on his topic or sub-topic. Here I refer, for example, to the instant, unprompted manner in which he elaborates on the holiday to The Oaks in his second utterance. In this utterance he develops his topic statement "In the holidays I went to The Oaks" (line 1) by outlining how long it takes to reach The Oaks, who shared the holiday with his family and why it was that that family arrived at The Oaks before his did. Encouraged by Mrs French to "tell us a bit about The Oaks" (line 5), a general question which she refines by breaking it into two questions: "What was it like there?" and "What did you do?" (also in line 5), Warwick chooses horse-riding as his sub-theme and develops it without further prompt, detailing first the number of rides he went on and, secondly, evaluating each one: "I went on three horse rides" (line 8). "My first horse ride was quite nice, my second horse ride was also quite nice, and my third horse-ride was very nice" (lines 10-11). The teacher's empathetic comment/yes-no question in line 12: "By that time you were used to it, weren't you?" elicits a short response followed immediately, again, by elaboration: Warwick provides the names of the horses he rode, details the sequence in which he did so, and describes what he did to get one of the horses to trot, etc. Again in lines 13, and 22 (which I won't analyse here) Warwick responds fully to his teacher's questions and queries, on each occasion offering considerably more than most other pupils do under similar circumstances. Finally, he volunteers information once Mrs French has started to

draw his account together, namely, “The ice-cream at The Oaks tastes just like bubblegum” (line 28). In doing so he foregrounds a detail he perceives likely to be interesting to the seven year-olds who make up his audience - precisely the sort of thing that Anton did not do in extract 7.

In addition, and as a consequence of his decision to expand on what he says, Warwick’s account relies on elaborate syntax and a variety of means for ensuring that the cohesiveness and focus of what he says is not lost. For example, in lines 1-4 Warwick employs the following devices:

- (a) sentential conjunction: for example, “they came early and we came at tea time in the afternoon”;
- (b) subordinate adverbial clauses of *time*: e.g. “when we got there our friends were there; *reason*: e.g. “because my friend, Andy, had a tennis tournament on the day we were leaving...”; and *result*: e.g. “so they came early”;
- (c) a reduced relative clause: “on the day (that) we were leaving”;
- (d) prepositional phrases with a time-adverbial function: “we came at tea time in the morning”; and
- (e) anaphoric reference, e.g. “there” referring back to “The Oaks”.

Significantly, Mrs French’s evaluation of Warwick’s contribution is very favourable. As mentioned earlier, she is empathetic in her interpretation of Warwick’s progressively greater enjoyment of successive rides, i.e., “By that time you were used to it, weren’t you?” (line 12). Also, through her use of “Wow” in line 17 she expresses involvement in his news and solidarity with him, cf. Brown & Levinson (1987). She seeks clarification on the matter of the trampoline, but at no stage does she direct him, as she does, by contrast, in extract 13 where a different pupil does not meet her news-time expectations. She expresses solidarity through personal identification with what he says in a number of other places, e.g. “Oh, how nice and cosy!” (line 25), “Mm, so it’s nice and cosy to have an electric blanket” (line 27) and “Oh! that must be yummy” (line 29). The strongest overt confirmation that she approved of Warwick’s news-telling comes, however, at the end of his contribution. Not only does she thank him, she also provides a meta-comment

on the quality of his news - “that was lovely” (line 29). Her non-verbal behaviour - patting and smiling at him - is additional evidence of her appreciation of what he offered.

4.3.2.2 News contributions in which pupils apparently struggle to meet their teachers’ formal expectations

Elaborated, grammatically complex, topic-centred literacy, as I show in the three extracts which follow, does not come easily to most pupils, whether they be four years old or nearly eight. As I illustrate below, teachers have developed a number of strategies for channelling the pupils’ literacy behaviour in the direction of topic-centredness and elaboration they seek. Except where children share the norms for topic-centred literacy, and can produce it unaided, as we saw in extracts 8 to 10, teachers participate closely and persistently in the shaping of the children’s news. I argue that, in the process, the teachers head off alternative/rival literacies, as well as practices which they construe as facilitating those alternative literacies. I argue, further, that a price is paid by those for whom the alternative practices are meaningful.

Extract 11 is the first of the three extracts that illustrate these strategies. In it we observe Mrs Byrd coaxing and shaping the news of four year old Jennifer in ways which ensure that the end product is topic-centred and elaborated news. I show that the practices she employs as part of her general news-time routine encourage topic-centredness and elaboration, as do the strategies she employs in her moment-to-moment interaction with Jennifer. Finally, using the same piece of data, I show what practices she disapproves of at news-time and how she discourages them. Here is Mrs Byrd opening Jennifer’s news session:

Extract 11

- 1 T: Now we go to somebody who’s got a sister - leave it, Grayson please...Thank you...This
- 2 little girl’s got a sister who’s older than her...
- 3 X: Jennifer.
- 4 B: Do you know what her sister’s name is?
- 5 X: Moira.
- 6 J: Moira.
- 7 T: Moira. Jennifer, what would you like to tell me today?
- 8 J: Um...yesterday my -um my mom took us to the beach.
- 9 T: You lucky girl, who else went with (*speaking with a tone more hushed than before*)?
- 10 J: My daddy.
- 11 T: ...That’s nice, and?
- 12 J: My sister.
- 13 T: Your sister, and what did you do at the beach?
- 14 J: Um, we played on the sand.
- 15 T: That’s lovely, tell me about it.

- 16 J: Um um we made a sand castle.
 17 T: Ah, was it big?
 18 J: *(Nods.)*
 19 T: Did Moira help you?
 20 J: Mm.
 21 T: Did the waves wash it away or did it stay there all day?
 22 J: *(Indistinct, brief response.)*
 23 T: That's fun. What costume did you wear at the beach?
 24 J: Um, my white one.
 25 T: Your white one? And Moira?
 26 J: *(Indistinct.)*
 27 T: Right, Jennifer's ne:ws *(T starts writing)*: I WENT
 28 Tr: Mrs Byrd?
 29 T: ...TO, just wait please, Travis, THE BEACH.....*(Sound of a helicopter going*
 30 *overhead)*. Can anybody hear anything different?.....What can you hear?
 31 S: Helicopter
 32 T: Yes, it's a helicopter sound. Jennifer says: I WENT TO THE BEACH. I MADE...
 33 Tr: Mrs Byrd
 34 T: A - SAND CASTLE. Yes Travis?
 35 Tr: Um our doctor's got a thing you put in your ear.
 36 T: That's called a stethoscope. But Travis, you have had your turn, let's listen to
 37 Jennifer's news: I WENT TO THE BEACH. I MADE A SAND CASTLE.

There are five practices which Mrs Byrd employs here as part of her general news-time routine. These, I argue, not only alert Jennifer to the fact that she is entering a specific literacy event which has its own norms, namely, news-time, but actually encourage consciousness on her part of those norms. Consider the following five practices and the literacy-related effects they have:

- (1) Instead of simply nominating Jennifer by name, Mrs Byrd does so by using a combination of two general formulas, expressed through a range of different surface forms. These formulas are more indirect methods of nominating the speaker. The two general formulas are "This is for a little boy (or girl) who" and "Now we go to someone who ...". In Jennifer's case it is first expressed as "Now we go to somebody who's got a sister", and then, after an interruption, as "This little girl's got a sister who's older than her".

The formulas, I argue, function as a syntactic channel through which news-givers like Jennifer have to pass. They involve both focusing and elaboration (i.e., it is Jennifer, and no one else whose turn it now is (focusing), and Jennifer is a girl who has an older sister (elaboration). As such, the formula offers the children a model for introducing individuals in their news. Syntactically the formula to which Jennifer reacts, namely, "This little girl's got a sister who's older than her ..." comprises an expanded object noun phrase including an embedded relative clause.

Significantly, it is a linguistically complex formulation which, as we have already seen, is a feature of news which teachers promote.

- (2) Mrs Byrd then invites Jennifer to contribute her news, asking the seemingly open-ended question: "What would you like to tell me today?" Only the teacher and nominated pupils participate in the dialogue that follows and only the teacher asks questions. Unless it is explicitly sought, participation from other members of the group is unwelcome. This set of rules also promotes focused and elaborated talk. It does so, in essence, because it leads to the news-giver nominating his/her topic and the teacher developing and otherwise shaping it through the questions she asks - without outside interference.
- (3) Focusing and development, as I indicated, is accomplished largely as a result of the kinds and number of questions the teacher asks. I will elaborate on the effect of these on the news separately, below.
- (4) Towards the end of the news-giver's turn, the teacher writes the child's news on a large piece of drawing paper with a koki pen. She prefaces what she writes with the speaker's name and the word "says", hence, "Jennifer says", and follows this with her (i.e., the teacher's) summary of the child's news. As we see towards the end of the transcript of Jennifer's news in extract 11, she articulates the words which make up the summary, as she writes them, and, having finished the summary, reads it out in full, before putting the sheet at the bottom of her pile. (She then nominates the next child as in stage 1 above and continues through stages 2 to 4). This convention of writing the children's news is another means by which the discourse is focused. Its effect, as I have suggested, is to summarise what the news-giver has said, thereby both confirming, retrospectively, what the "theme" was of the preceding talk, and entrenching, if only implicitly, the idea that school talk and writing coheres around a central idea. Jennifer's summary: "I WENT TO THE BEACH. I MADE A SAND CASTLE" comprises simple sentences only, though this is not true of all of the summaries in my corpus. Other summaries model better the teacher's general preference for syntactic elaboration. Nevertheless, if we compare Jennifer's news as she states it in line 8 and the form in

which Mrs Byrd reports it here (i.e., line 37), we still see that it is more elaborate than before, having been expanded from one proposition to two.

Apart from the summarising function which it fulfils, the writing has the further discourse-level function of signalling the end of the news-giver's turn.

- (5) Additional stages in Mrs Byrd's usual news-time routine are not captured in extract 11. They are the following: After all the children have given their news, the teacher distributes their written summaries, reading those summaries once more before giving them to their originators and asking the children to illustrate their news. While they do so, the teacher asks additional questions and the children contribute additional information. This usually relates either to the technicalities of their drawing or to the news they gave earlier. Hereafter the kokis are put away, drawings collected (sometimes, not always), goodbyes are said, and the children leave.

The significance of the written news summary is that it also focuses and constrains the children's drawing activities and is the prompt often for requests to develop their drawings further cf. Appendix C-4 and C-5 for Grayson and Jennifer's summaries and drawings. Most significantly, I believe, the written summary thematises the talk that surrounds the drawing, because it acts as the starting point for reiteration, elaboration or clarification of the news which the child gave earlier, or features of the drawing they are currently engaged with.

At this point I return to the interactional data, in order to demonstrate how Mrs Byrd further encourages focusing and elaboration in the give-and-take of news-time. I start first with her strategies for establishing and maintaining focus.

In response to Mrs Byrd's "What would you like to tell me today?" (line 7), Jennifer says "yesterday my -um my mom took us to the beach" (line 8). This is an utterance which Mrs Byrd treats from then on as the general theme of Jennifer's news. In their ensuing interaction she helps Jennifer to develop three sub-themes:

- (a) the identity of those who accompanied Jennifer and her mother to the beach;
- (b) the sand castle which they made while there; and
- (c) a description of the costume she and her sister wore.

Mrs Byrd ensures that key words or their substitutes echo throughout the account, this being one way in which topic-centredness/thematic consistency is maintained. Thus, the word “beach” recurs consistently throughout the news account (cf. lines 8, 13, 23 and then 29, 32 and 37). Mrs Byrd uses the anaphoric form “there” (line 21) or else she and Jennifer rely on ellipsis, e.g. line 9: “who else went with?” (implied: to the beach); line 11: “That’s nice, and?” (implied: who else in addition to your Daddy went to the beach?); line 15: “tell me about it” (implied: tell me about your playing on the sand at the beach), etc. The other concepts which are central to her account, namely, the sand castle and the girls’ costumes, are also referred to anaphorically (“it” for sand castle in lines 17 and 21; “one” for costume in lines 24 and 25), or else reference to them is elided, on the assumption that they are sufficiently in the forefront of discussion not to need deliberate reference. Examples of elided reference to the sand castle is the teacher’s “Did Moira help you?” (implied: to build the sand castle) in line 19 and Jennifer’s response, “Mm”, in line 20, by which she implies something like “Yes, Moira did help me make the sand castle”. Lastly, the teacher’s “And Moira?” (line 25) elliptically asks “And what costume did Moira wear?”

Mrs Byrd relies on two main strategies to encourage Jennifer to elaborate on her topic statement in line 8. The first of these is her recurrent but largely implicit invitations to Jennifer to develop what she has said. In line 7 she asks “What would you like to tell me today?” She possibly intends Jennifer to respond by drawing on her prior knowledge of preferred norms at news-time, including the norm that elaboration is valued (as Zena, Grayson and Warwick did in extracts 8, 9 and 10). Otherwise Mrs Byrd intends Jennifer simply to provide a topic/theme for her news contribution. If so, the question has nothing yet to do with elaboration. However, Mrs Byrd follows up her initial question with the much more overt “who else went with?” in line 9, which clearly calls for elaboration. Two lines later (line 11) she responds “That’s nice” to what Jennifer says and follows it with “and?” which, with rising intonation, calls for more information. Finally, in line 15 she requests Jennifer to “tell me about it”. All urge Jennifer to take what she would intuitively offer, a bit further.

The second strategy which Mrs Byrd apparently hopes will encourage elaboration, is repeated questioning, a strategy which models for Jennifer the kind of internal dialogue which Widdowson (1978:62-63), for instance, alerts one to as an important element in

the hidden dialogue with one's reader that a writer of coherent expository prose engages in. The mere frequency of her questions, or, cast in the terms of Erickson's principle 1 (section 3.5.2), the "consistency of their occurrence" is what Mrs Byrd presumably intends to signal the purpose of such questions. She could also be construed as developing Jennifer's awareness of the appropriacy of such questioning. Whatever the case, once having nominated her theme, Jennifer is asked eleven questions. Of these, five are Wh-questions which, traditionally, are seen as evoking extended responses. They are:

Who else went with?	line 9
and (who else)?	line 11
what did you do at the beach?	line 13
what costume did you wear at the beach?	line 23
And Moira (which costume did she wear)?	line 25

The remaining six questions are Yes/No questions, i.e., of the sort considered to evoke a simple yes or no response. Those which Mrs Byrd asks are:

Was it big?	line 17
Did Moira help you?	line 19
Did the waves wash it away?	line 21
did it stay there all day?	line 21
Your white one? (i.e., Did you wear your white one?)	line 25

It is particularly significant that Jennifer's responses are minimal and unelaborated, whether in response to Wh- or Yes/No questions. How to respond (e.g. as Warwick does in extract 10) is an important piece of literacy learning that she still has to do. In effect, Mrs Byrd is apparently offering Jennifer a template which she will do well to place over her news-time conduct in the future for, as we will see in extracts 11 and 12, teachers are determined in their demand for elaborated discourse from here onwards in the schooling process.

Before leaving extract 11, I want, as indicated earlier, to refer to practices other than those employed by Jennifer, which Mrs Byrd considers incompatible with the ones she is promoting. From an analytical point of view, these alternative practices throw the ones Mrs Byrd does promote into clearer relief.

The key to these is Travis's participation. We see that he attempts to contribute in line 28, but is discouraged by Mrs Byrd who uses the mild negative sanction (Erickson's principle 3: 3.5.2) "just wait please, Travis". He then tries again in line 33. By now Mrs

Byrd has technically finished with Jennifer, since she has completed her written summary of Jennifer's news. While she listens to what Travis asks, and in fact answers him, Mrs Byrd nevertheless sanctions him negatively (Erickson's principle 3: 3.5.2), and, in the process also calls attention to what she regards as expected (i.e., preferable) behaviour in the circumstances (i.e., Erickson's principle 2: 3.5.2):

Tr: Um our doctor's got a thing you put in your ear.

T: That's called a stethoscope. But Travis, you have had your turn, let's listen to Jennifer's news: I WENT TO THE BEACH. I MADE A SAND CASTLE.

Cross-reference to similar instances in my corpus where non-news-givers are negatively sanctioned, reveals that Mrs Byrd behaves as she does because Travis is attempting to do two things which are hostile to her agenda, namely, (a) redefine news-giving as a three-person activity, which, as I suggested earlier, would have the effect of challenging Mrs Byrd's hold over the shaping of the news giver's discourse; and (b) introduce topically unrelated information into Jennifer's account. Because stethoscopes are not normally associated with visits to the beach, this new content poses a particular threat to topic-centredness. It is for these two reasons, at least, therefore, that Mrs Byrd closes Travis down so quickly.

The value of extract 12, which I analyse next, is that it emphasises the teacher's persistence in encouraging the literacy she desires when things go wrong. Because things go wrong and repair is necessary, it highlights further for us underlying emic assumptions about news-time and what counts as desirable behaviour during it. In extract 12, Mervyn, the news-giver, is a boy three quarters of his way through class 1. In other words, he is not new to news-telling as Jennifer was in extract 11. As comparison with Appendix C-6 shows, his style of news-telling has not changed over the year and this may well explain Mrs Higgs's frustration and impatience with him, bearing in mind particularly that a major feature of Mrs Higgs's approach to news-time is that she made her pupils give news often. Present, too, in this account are touches of sarcasm on the teacher's part which are incompatible with the tolerance she claimed for restricted discourse and the seemingly generous and largely pupil-centred motives which the teachers claimed for holding news. Such reactions point us ahead to chapter 5, where I deal with ideological issues associated with news-time.

Here is Mervyn's interaction with Mrs Higgs:

Extract 12

- 1 T: Right Mervyn, come please.
 2 M: I ran with Kadar.
 3 T: Now what's "I ran with Kadar"? Tell us a little bit more, Mervyn...When did you run
 4 with Kadar?
 5 M: Ah...
 6 T: On Saturday, at the fun run.
 7 M: On Saturday at the fun run I...
 8 T: ran
 9 M: ran with Kadar.
 10 T: Good, and, what else did you do, when you were finished?
 11 M: Ah...
 12 T: Did you just run in and then go home?
 13 M: Uhuh.
 14 T: What did you do?
 15 M: I played some other games.
 16 T: Which games?
 17 M: Aaah, foefie slide.
 18 T: Yes?
 19 M: and er, clown one.
 20 T: The what?
 21 M: The clown game.
 22 T: Yes. Did you win anything?
 23 M: Uhuh.
 24 T: No.
 25 M: Only once I won.
 26 T: What did you win?
 27 M: Sweet. Orange sweetie.
 28 T: Sweet, good.

Mervyn's opening line "I ran with Kadar" (line 2) is immediately unacceptable to Mrs Higgs. This, as she indicated in a follow-up interview, is because its propositional content is too limited. Mrs Higgs objectifies it, apparently holding it up as an object of ridicule, rather than treating it as the stimulus for interacting with Mervyn over something important to him: "Now what's 'I ran with Kadar'?" (line 3). If we track how Mervyn's utterance is repaired and his news ultimately developed, we see that it is steadily in the direction of increased explicitness, accomplished through the teacher's consistent urging that he elaborate in a context-independent manner, i.e., by not assuming that those listening to his news are familiar with what he is talking about, even though they all participated in the event his news is all about, namely, the school's fun run.

By the time Mrs Higgs terminates Mervyn's turn, his news has taken the following form:

On Saturday at the fun run I ran with Kadar. After I was finished I played some (other) games, specifically, foefie slide and the clown game. I won an orange sweet.

Mrs Higgs shepherds the news into this form by asking Mervyn: "When did you run with Kadar?" (line 3). When he hesitates (in line 5) she herself supplies two prepositional phrases which convey this information, adverbially. Her manner in doing so, as she later confirmed, conveys slight impatience: She deliberately emphasises "Saturday", "fun" and "run", placing extra stress on the vowel in the first syllable of "Saturday" as well as the vowels in "fun" and "run". She does likewise with the vowel in "ran" in line 8. Her pronunciation of "Good" in line 10 - which involves elongating the vowel - meanwhile was intended, she said subsequently, to convey the implicit message that 'We've been through this before', meaning 'I've signalled already that you have to elaborate - come on!' Hereafter, in line 10, Mrs Higgs offers Mervyn the chance to elaborate further, asking: "what else did you do?" (emphasising "else"), which she follows up quickly with "when you were finished?" (line 10), again strongly emphasising the first syllable of "finished", the emphasis, as she confirmed, once again conveying slight impatience. When Mervyn fails to reply as quickly as she hoped, Mrs Higgs partly paraphrases her question (line 12), but does so with what she conceded is a slightly facetious edge: "Did you just run in and then go home?". I interpreted it in this way, because Mrs Higgs knows (and Mervyn knows she knows) that nobody participated in the fun run only, and then left, because there was so much else to do. Again, Mrs Higgs confirmed this analyst's interpretation of mine. When Mervyn again responds hesitantly, Mrs Higgs repeats the first half of her original question in line 10, namely, "what did you do?". Up to this point Mervyn has not contributed anything to the development of what he said originally in his opening utterance.

From line 15 to the end of his turn Mrs Higgs ascertains that he played games after completing the fun run - which she gets him to specify and clarify in lines 16-22 - and then, in the face of much confusion, establishes that he won a sweet. As she later explained, her intonation on "Yes" in lines 18 and 22 was intended to convey implicitly what she expressed more overtly and through lexical means at various stages in lines 3-14, i.e., it calls for more information. "Yes", spoken with fall-rise intonation, translates as "Yes, tell me more".

Many of Mrs Higgs's utterances, thus, are either general calls for elaboration or else are attempts to cue Mervyn regarding more specific elaboration. The former category includes the following:

“Now what's “I ran with Kadar”?” (line 3);
 “Tell us a little bit more, Mervyn” (line 3);
 “and, what else did you do?” (line 10);
 “What did you do?” (line 14);
 “Yes” (line 18) and
 “Yes” (line 22).

The second category comprises the following:

“When did you run with Kadar?” (lines 3 and 4);
 “when you were finished?” (line 10);
 “Did you just run in and then go home?” (line 12);
 “Which games?” (line 16);
 “The what?” (line 20);
 “Did you win anything?” (line 22) and
 “What did you win?” (line 26).

For the rest, Mrs Higgs twice uses the word “good”: confirming in line 10 that he has completed the elaboration of his opening utterance that she expected, and, in line 28, using it to terminate Mervyn's turn. Other than this, she corrects Mervyn in line 24, preferring “No” to his “Uhuh” in what I interpret from discussion with her to be a purist preference (cf. 4.3.3).

It is abundantly clear from this analysis that it is Mrs Higgs who dictates the form and content of this news presentation. It is a news session which, in her terms, was “like drawing teeth” and leads to Mrs Higgs engaging in many order-preserving activities (cf. McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 4(b): 3.5.1). All are directed ultimately at alerting Mervyn to responsibilities which she apparently feels he should meet during news-time, namely, produce elaborated, topic-centred discourse. Unlike earlier accounts where pupils produce the literacy which their teachers desire and are rewarded in various ways, Mervyn goes unrewarded. Mrs Higgs does not express solidarity with him nor affirm him in any other way.

Somewhat like extract 12, extract 13 highlights the systematic involvement of the teacher in news-telling when she apparently believes things are not going as she would like them to and repair is necessary. In this instance we observe Mrs French, the class 2 teacher, directing the selection, recasting and presentation of information during the news

presentation of eight year old Danny, once again so that his presentation achieves the kind of focus and elaboration she desires. The extract also reveals an important effect of the teacher's promotion of her preferred literacy practices. I suggest that in essence in this case her intervention is alienating. In dictating what he should focus on and how he should do so, this teacher seems to overwhelm Danny and alienate him from the feelings which led him to want to contribute his news in the first place. Extract 13 also alerts us to contradictions and illogicalities which are part of news-giving and which pupils like Danny and, before him, Mervyn, conform to less readily than do Zena, Grayson and Warwick. Danny and those like him stumble over these norms and conventions, they violate them, or else are unaware of them, as Jennifer is. In their behaviour they draw attention to those norms. This is convenient for the analyst. It is presumably however not welcome to Danny or many others like him, because it means that, as the extracts show, they do not enjoy the teachers' affirmation and approval. Instead, in these extracts news-time apparently generates alienation and self-doubt. Here is Danny's news session:

Extract 13

- 1 T: Alright, what have you got to tell us?
 2 D: I've brought these stickers (*showing a double page of his stamp album to the children as he speaks*).
 3
 4 T: You tell us about this stamp before we look at it.
 5 D: It's Christopher Columbus stamp, and I got it from um am my Dad's friend, and she comes from America.
 6
 7 T: Right, so it's a stamp coming from America. But now these children can't see this stamp. You tell them exactly what's on the stamp.
 8
 9 D: It's Christopher Columbus's boat, a big ship, with the sails.
 10 T: How many sails can you see, or how many masts can you see?
 11 D: (*Sniffs.*)
 12 T: The masts are those upright (things?)
 13 D: Three
 14 T: Three masts...You [know
 15 D: [*(Sniffs.)*
 16 T: up in one corner is the head of a person
 17 D: a
 18 T: Do you know what queen that is a-a-sorry, of which person that is?
 19 D: The queen
 20 T: The queen of which country
 21 D: America (*sniffing*).
 22 X: Of England
 23 T: If there's a queen
 24 X: England
 25 T: Ah, right, the queen of England
 26 Xs: (*Indistinct, concurrent talk.*)
 27 D: They've got most of them with all these heads. These shell (*Indistinct.*)
 28 T: Right, you go and put your book on the table, and then they can look later on and see if
 29 they can find that stamp.

Teacher-intervention and the single-mindedness with which she promotes focused, elaborated literacy as well as the strategies she employs to accomplish this dominate this exchange. I noted in my fieldnotes that Danny responded very enthusiastically to Mrs French's invitation to give his news (line 1) and was smiling as he walked to the front of the room with his album. However, I noted also that his enthusiasm disappeared almost immediately, the moment, in fact, that she sanctioned him negatively (Erickson (1978) principle 3: 3.5.2) for deciding to display rather than tell about his stamps (lines 4). Danny, we see, wants to share his stamp collection with his audience by providing, as a start, a visual display of the stamps. By doing so he would be contextualising his account and could either have focused on individual stamps in the collection or dealt with the collection as a whole. It is a logical enough strategy, and one which presumably would have been considered appropriate and been rewarded in other group circumstances. In Mrs French's classroom in the second half of the year, however, it clearly is not. My fieldnotes show that by this point in the year she actively discouraged pupils from basing their news on objects which they brought along. In extract 13 she rules that nobody may see the stamps (line 4), instructing Danny to "... tell us about this stamp before we look at it" - thereby placing the full burden in his news account on what he is able to verbalise. In fact, she prevents the children from seeing the stamps throughout the news session, instructing Danny at the end of his news to: "go and put your book on the table, and then they (the rest of the class) can look later on and see if they can find that stamp" (lines 28-29).

Mrs French directs Danny's literacy behaviour in at least two other important ways, both of which ensure that his news account is narrowly focused but prevent him from expressing his feelings. First, she requires him to concentrate on a single stamp (line 4 again), not a double page full. The effect of this is that she restricts what will become "public" knowledge, and also determines what will remain in the background or be ignored. The second way in which she directs and dictates his literacy behaviour, follows immediately afterwards. Having adjusted to the teacher's demands (lines 5-6), Danny is halted in his tracks once more because the teacher again decides to divide what he says into two: a part which she judges worthy of building on, and a part which she judges is not:

D: It's Christopher Columbus stamp, and I got it from um am my Dad's friend, and she comes from America.

T: Right, so it's a stamp coming from America.

The effect of this division is that it requires Danny to ignore who gave him the stamp and where she comes from, which is apparently his interest, and, instead, requires him to scrutinise the details on the stamp more closely, which Mrs French considers more important: "You tell them exactly what's on the stamp" (line 8). Thereafter she continues directing Danny's investigation and description of the stamp, requiring him to articulate even more of the small descriptive detail on it. First she asks: "How many sails can you see, or how many masts can you see?" (line 10), and later, "up in one corner is the head of a person ... Do you know ... of which person that is?" (lines 16 to 18).

It is the teacher's agenda (and her preferences for highly focused, impersonal literacy) which are pursued almost exclusively in this exchange. Little regard is shown for Danny's wishes, feelings or literacy conventions - all of which are side-lined. The process is striking. Let me reiterate it: Danny goes from first wanting to display a double page of his stamp collection to his classmates, because his collection means so much to him, to then wanting to explain how and from whom he acquired a given stamp, because the donor is special to him, to closer and closer description of the small pictorial detail on a solitary stamp, which the teacher has decided on, and with strict instructions not to display that stamp to the audience. One is struck by certain illogicalities and contradictions. None is more profound than the mismatch between the teachers' claims early on in this chapter that news-time is a pupil-driven event, and the evidence of this pupil being systematically dominated in his news-giving by his teacher. I explore this and other related matters further in chapter 5.

4.3.3 Pupils' news-time presentations should be grammatically correct

Although in the interviews teachers did not identify promoting the grammaticality of pupils' accounts as a key purpose of news-time - though one of them did note that news is an occasion for "getting to listen to their language patterns and correct them" - the data suggests that they use news-time to focus concertedly on English grammar. Two strong inferences which I am able to draw from the evidence of the teachers' monitoring of their pupils' linguistic behaviour are:

- (a) They prefer pupils to employ grammatically correct English and be lexically precise in what they say; and
- (b) the model which teachers employ for judging such correctness is essentially prescriptive.

Using the seven exchanges which follow, I intend demonstrating four additional features of the teachers' concern for grammatical matters. The first of these is that the teachers are vigilant regarding their pupils' use of English. By this I mean that they usually intervene in order to correct their pupils as soon as possible after they have made errors. We see this in the course of my discussions of the other features which I outline below. This monitoring is not confined to any particular level of grammatical organisation, but extends across all of them, and is the second feature of the teachers' concern. To demonstrate this, I present data which illustrates their concern for correctness and precision at all the major levels of grammatical structure. Thus, pronunciation is central in extract 14. Lexical choices are focal in extract 15. The demand for semantic precision is highlighted in extracts 16 and 17, while issues relating to correct sentence structure are at issue in extracts 18-20. The third and fourth features of the teachers' concern for grammatical matters relate to the effects this concern has on the momentum, fluency and continuation of pupils' accounts. I demonstrate that teachers' intervention in fact usually obstructs rather than encourages the flow of pupils' accounts. Transmission of the child's message is usually suspended while repair work takes place to a grammatical component. The ultimate effect in a great many instances is that the teacher's intervention and the activity surrounding the repair ends the encounter, i.e., the news-giver's turn ends very shortly afterwards.

Extract 14 highlights the class 1 teacher's stand on correct pronunciation. Anwaar is the news giver, and X and M, two children on the mat, are important contributors:

Extract 14

- 1 A: Yesterday my father brought a big book...yesterday my father brought...my dad brought
 2 a big book...a...a and its called "Its a Big Big World" but its real its real name is called
 3 attis, its a big word
 4 T: an atlas
 5 A: attis
 6 T: an atlas
 7 A: It's a big book
 8 T: A very big book?
 9 X: Anwaar, I've also got one.
 10 A: A very big book

- 11 M: its not that big, Anwaar...
 12 T: And what does it have inside it?
 13 A: All different places in the world...the first page
 14 T: Oh, then it is an atlas, yes I know what you're talking about, good. (*The teacher then*
 15 *nominates next news-giver.*)

Early on in his news, Anwaar moves self-consciously between two stylistic alternatives, “my father” and “my dad” (line 1), and opts for the second. With the introduction of his topic, the focus falls on two issues, one, pronunciation, which the teacher pursues, the other a matter of factual accuracy which a co-pupil holds Anwaar accountable for (cf. Erickson’s (1978) principle 2: 3.5.2; McDermott et al’s (1982) criterion 5: 3.5.1). From her intervention we can infer that while Mrs Higgs appears to know what Anwaar is referring to (“big book”, “world” and the phonetic similarity of “attiss” to “atlas” are strong lexical cues in this regard), she expects him to pronounce “atlas” in a non-Indian way, before he can proceed with his news-telling. In fact, she suppresses Anwaar’s telling them more about his atlas and the circumstances surrounding his getting it, until he conforms to her wishes (an instance, it would seem, of negative sanctioning: Erickson’s (1978) principle 3: 3.5.2 - or, perhaps, of principle 1 “Consistency of occurrence”, or principle 2 “Accountability of absence”). She thus places correctness ahead of Anwaar’s free expression of his news in her list of priorities. M, a fellow pupil, also holds Anwaar accountable. He too knows what Anwaar is referring to when he uses the word “attiss” but is more concerned that Anwaar should not misrepresent the size of the atlas. M wants Anwaar to acknowledge that it is “big”, not “very big” (line 11). On such evidence we can conclude that precision is highly valued at news-time: both in respect of pronunciation and factual accuracy. We see how quickly the teacher intervenes in Anwaar’s telling, how extensive that repair is and how, coupled with M’s objections, it dominates A’s turn.

Extract 15 suggests that teachers monitor lexical precision as closely as they do pronunciation. The news exchange is part of a longer contribution by Siphon, a class 2 pupil. It deals with experiences while cattle-herding which the children enjoyed considerably. The extract again reveals the teacher’s willingness to interrupt and suspend news-telling until a microlinguistic matter has been corrected to her satisfaction. At issue in this exchange are two lexical choices: a synonym for “baby cow” and a synonym for “stones you go on to cross a river”.

Extract 15

- 1 S: In the morning we went to see some cows down at the um what is it called?
 2 T: Like a kraal?
 3 S: Ja, and we took the cows and we went to-
 4 T: How many cows were there?
 5 S: There were only two cows-
 6 T: That's (*Indistinct.*)
 7 S: Ja, 'cause the other one was red and the other one died so we took two of them out there
 8 and you know, this big red one went after um the baby, the baby cow
 9 T: What is a baby cow?
 10 X: A calf.
 11 S: And the calf was running and his tail goes up like this (*demonstrating*).
 12 Xs: (*General laughter.*)
 13 S: And then he um the red cow he/we (?) had to go somewhere else um 'cause there's a
 14 river under there and they go right to the river and they drink water and go over to the
 15 other side and one, one day we were looking for (a cows) (?) and they were over there
 16 on the other side of the river so we had to go over the other side of the river.
 17 T: How did you cross the river?
 18 S: Um, there's stones, you go on the stones and the cows go in the water.
 19 T: What do you call those stones that cross a river?
 20 X: Stepping-
 21 T: Hold it! What do you do on the stones as you go across (*speaking to Siph*)?
 22 S: Um, you jump on them. You go-
 23 T: Right, you jump on them. What's another word for...Hey!, putting your feet on the
 24 stones.
 25 S: Walking on them.
 26 T: Walking on them? Can you think of another word? You ... Right. Move forward.
 27 What are you doing?
 28 S: Walking on them.
 29 T: Another word. Move forward again. What are you doing? You're taking a...?
 30 S: A step
 31 T: A step. So what do you think we could call these stones?
 32 X: I know.
 33 S: Steps.
 34 T: Steps, or? Stepping?
 35 Xs: Stones! (*The whole class answers.*)
 36 T: Stones, yes. So, you went across...Cows are so lucky they can just walk in the water.
 37 Why couldn't you walk in the water?
 38 S: Because the water, the water um goes up to here and like one time I wanted to see
 39 where the water goes up to and I got all wet and got all pushed in the water. The cows,
 40 um, the cow, the river's like this, goes like this, across like that, and, um, the cows
 41 moves this way. You have to get them to go this way and then it tries to go that way.
 42 (*Siph* demonstrates throughout.)
 43 T: And how do you get them to go that way?
 44 S: Um, you, you, um, my friend went, um, he, he had a stick and he went out of the river
 45 to the other side, and um I, I, I rushed in front of them so they could turn that way, and
 46 that way, and they went back home and the other day, um, this red cow, this red cow
 47 was running after me and so, and so I was running, running and I jumped on the stone
 48 and I tripped and, um, it nearly caught me 'cause, um, I tripped and I couldn't get up
 49 so quickly and I fell in the water and got out and I ran (*Siph* laughs, the class echoes)
 50 very hard. My friend was waiting and waiting for me and then my baby cow, we left it
 51 at home because, um, we couldn't take it because the red cow always goes after her all
 52 the time.
 53 T: That's not fair is it?
 54 S: No, so we, we left the mother cow, um, over the river so we could put the baby cow to
 55 the (?) place and the baby cow was eating with our friend's cow and after that we took

- 56 the mother cow and the baby cow and we moved their kraal and next day we watched
 57 the cows till tea time and so we got a sucker (?)
 58 T: (*Softly.*) What's a baby cow's name again?
 59 S: A calf.
 60 T: Right. Let's um, last girl.

Sipho first refers to calves as “baby cows” in line 8 and we see that he is immediately interrupted by Mrs French who asks “What is a baby cow?” (line 9). A class member quickly responds, providing the form “calf” (line 10) and allowing Sipho to continue, without the momentum of his narrative being disrupted. Shortly hereafter (line 17), as the matter of crossing the river becomes central to his account, the baby cow recedes into the background. At this point Mrs French in effect suspends Sipho’s account and, along with it, probably the enjoyment he has brought his audience. She first suppresses (in line 21) what she was not able to prevent earlier, namely, class members providing Sipho with the required lexical item. Then, from lines 21 to 36 she recontextualises the activity they are engaged in by requiring Sipho to deduce the required label (“stepping stones”) by getting him to act out the process of stepping. Since he did not know the word to start with, and indeed may not have actually stepped from stone to stone, it is not surprising that Mrs French is unsuccessful. Three times she asks him in different ways to lexicalise what he is doing as he moves from one imaginary stone to the next in the front of the classroom, cf. lines 21, 26-27 and 29. As a result of her questions she elicits the following related but not anticipated verbs: “jump”, “walk” (twice) and “take a step”. Four times, using various formulations, she asks for “another word”, i.e., an alternative to each of the verbs he provides (see lines 19, 23-24, 26 and 31), in this way implicitly negatively sanctioning him. Eventually, it is the class as a whole who provide the correct answer - with Sipho still not able to do so.

Having had his narrative suspended, his relationship to his peers significantly altered, and his ignorance exposed (lines 19-36), Sipho is permitted to proceed with his news. By line 49 it is clear from the way the class echoes his laughter that Sipho has restored the teller-audience relationship which prevailed before the stepping stones interlude. Shortly afterwards (in line 50 and then again in quick succession in lines 54, 55 and 56) he falls back on “baby cow” rather than “calf”, partly in order to keep the momentum of his account going. The teacher this time does not at first correct Sipho. She does not thank him, though, either for sharing his news nor refer to the enjoyment his news has brought those on the mat. Instead, she terminates his contribution by softly asking “What’s a

baby cow's name again?", once again negatively sanctioning him. By asking this she is emphasising the priority of grammatical correctness over fluency and audience contact. Erickson's (1982) principle 1: Consistency of occurrence (3.5.2) applies here, as possibly also does criterion 4 of McDermott et al (1978), since the teacher's return to the matter of the baby cow takes place at something of a transition point, a "special moment", namely, at the end of Siphos's turn, as the context is changing.

I noted earlier that news-givers are apparently also expected to be precise at a semantic level. The importance of this to the teacher is evident in the speed with which the next two narrations are interrupted, the important effect of which is that the news-givers in each case are denied the opportunity to clarify what they mean through their own elaboration of their news. Jacqui is the news giver in extract 16 and Hanif, in extract 17. Both are interacting with Mrs Higgs:

Extract 16

- 1 J: On Saturday morning I broke my neck.
- 2 T: You broke your neck on Saturday morning! My darling, how did you do that?
- 3 J: I slept badly.
- 4 T: Ah, no, so you didn't break it, did you just get a crick in your neck? Oh dear me, and is
- 5 it better today?
- 6 J: *(Nods.)*
- 7 T: Oh good I'm glad about that, I don't want you with a stiff neck in the classroom.
- 8 *(Nominates next news-giver.)*

and

Extract 17

- 1 H: On Friday we left Newcastle and my cousin he he was there.
- 2 T: No not on Friday, you didn't leave Newcastle didn't you go to Newcastle on Friday?
- 3 Yes you went to Newcastle on Friday?
- 4 H: And then my cousin was doing his homework.

At issue in extract 16 is the semantic relationship between "breaking" and "cricking" one's neck. Mrs Higgs's concern that Jacqui correctly characterises her condition once again impedes Jacqui's free expression of her message, and, we see, leads very quickly to closure of her news. The same issues apply in extract 17, except that this time it is the semantic relationship between "leave" and "go" that Mrs Higgs requires the speaker to clarify before he is allowed to develop his theme. Again it is, I believe, significant to note how quickly Mrs Higgs intervenes, as well as to note the manner in which she does so. Her style of correction is overt and immediate. She does not, for example, allow Hanif to develop his news and in the process of his doing so, or else afterwards, make implicit corrections to what he has said, which are other possible strategies.

From this evidence (i.e., both the speed with which she intervenes and the nature of that intervention, not to mention the overall frequency of such behaviour), it seems clear that matters of form (e.g. precision of expression, choice of accent, etc.) are important emic expectations for teachers like Mrs Higgs at news-time. It is equally clear that the effect of her correction is to suppress rather than promote what the child intended to convey.

The final body of evidence which I wish to refer to, again demonstrates teachers' concerns for grammatical correctness, this time in relation to sentence structure. I selected extracts 18-20 for three main reasons. The first is that they demonstrate that all three teachers monitor correctness at this level of grammatical organisation. Secondly, the specific grammatical points at issue in each case reflect the teacher's ultimately purist model. The forms they promote are consonant with a purist's dialect of English, and are more usually associated with formal, written interaction than spoken interaction among peers in a classroom setting, as the news setting ostensibly is. This variety of English is value laden (as all varieties are) rather than value-free, which is what the teachers might believe. All three of the choices which the pupils make in these extracts reflect dialects which the teachers disapprove of. My third and last reason for selecting extracts 18-20 from the many which appear in my data, is that the teacher intervention varies in terms of the degree of teacher intrusion which takes place.

Consider, first, extract 18. It involves four year old Mustafa and Mrs Byrd. She is articulating her summary of his news as she writes it down:

Extract 18

- 1 T: Let's write that down, you're going to have to help me, I might get confused...MY,
 2 FRIEND, IKRAM
 3 M: He got two sisters
 4 T: HAS, TWO, SISTERS
 5 M: And one brother
 6 G: One brother
 7 T: AND, ONE, BROTHER
 8
 9 T: Mustafa's news: MY FRIEND IKRAM HAS TWO SISTERS AND ONE BROTHER.

Correction here hinges on whether "got" is an acceptable past participle verb form. Mesthrie (1992:68 and 207) shows that it is a feature of one dialectal variety of South African Indian English, and Mustafa draws intuitively on the conventions of this variety. Mrs Byrd, by contrast, probably prefers to use "has got" or, as in lines 4 and 9, "has". Correction in this case is seemingly unobtrusive and without confrontation. It comes

though at the very end of the news account which is a position which in McDermott et al's (1978) terms (3.5.1, criterion 4) is a "special moment". Its placement, thus, is significant because the end of the news account is a transition point. Since she is translating relatively informal spoken discourse into a more formal, written discourse variety, there are in any case pragmatic forces in the context which justify the teacher's use of "has" over "got".

Extract 19 follows. It features Faith interacting with Mrs Higgs.

Extract 19

- 1 F: Today me and Charmaine made a card for Mrs Higgs.
 2 T: Oh you did, you made it for me?
 3 Xs: (*Laugh.*)
 4 T: Ah, look at that, all the hearts and they love me so much, aren't I lucky. [Thank you
 5 X: [Upside
 6 down
 7 T: Ah thank you my darling, and a big hug. (*Hugs her.*) Thank you. I see. Now also I want
 8 to tell you children something. Every single day I hear children coming up here and
 9 saying "My friend and me", "Cheryl and me", "Anwaar and me", alright, you talk about
 10 yourself
 11 W: I
 12 T: and you mentioning someone else, yes, Warwick, well done, you say "My Mom and I",
 13 "my Dad and I", "my friend and I", you don't say "and me". Alright, we must try and
 14 remember that every single day so that you say "Charmaine and I made you a card",
 15 "my mom and I went to the shop", not my mom and me went to the shop. Will you all
 16 try and remember that?
 17 Xs: Yes
 18 T: After news we'll each make up a sentence where you have to say something and you
 19 going to say "somebody and I". We'll all do that and we'll all practice then next time
 20 we'll remember. Okay?

What is interesting about this exchange is that Mrs Higgs does not react immediately to the phrase "me and Charmaine" in Faith's utterance, as she does elsewhere, perhaps because this would be an extremely face-threatening way of responding to the act of giving. Instead, she responds appreciatively and warmly to Faith and Charmaine's generosity. Having thanked them, however, she changes the context, i.e., relabels what they are doing (cf. McDermott et al's (1978) first criterion: Using a label to name what they are doing: 3.5.1): "Now also I want to tell you children something" (lines 7 and 8). She then deals globally with the issue to start with ("Every single day I hear children coming up here and saying 'My friend and me'") and then focuses in greater detail on Faith's grammar, adopting a teaching posture as she does so (cf. McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 3: "the postures which participants take on in concert with one another...signals what is emically salient").

The fact that Mrs Higgs commits the time that she does to when the subject and when the object form of the first person singular personal pronoun form is appropriate - itself a small and universally contested grammatical distinction - emphasises the emic salience of grammatical correctness for her. It also reveals very clearly that her reference variety of English grammar is a prescriptive one. A further point of some significance is the fact that news-time, ostensibly pupil time, has become the occasion for a lesson of the sort we see demonstrated here. Lastly, we again notice how fuller exploration - in this instance of the card Faith and Charmaine have made for Mrs Higgs - does not take place after the grammar-related intervention.

I come, finally, to extract 20. It centres on the status of “what” as a relative pronoun, which is a function in which Colin employs it. Mrs French rejects this usage, twice breaking up the flow of Colin’s narrative in order to signal her preference for “that” (in lines 4 and 14). On each occasion she places heavy stress on “that”, contrasting it with “what”, and thereby also foregrounding what is inadequate about Colin’s news, rather than facilitating it.

Extract 20

- 1 C: [In the holiday I went to my father’s friend, Steven
 2 T: [Face them
 3 C: and he um had a pool what was [broken-
 4 T: [that was broken
 5 C: Ja, and there was a monster in because
 6 T: How do you play it?
 7 C: You have, what’s it, a cube or something?
 8 T: Cue.
 9 C: Ja, and then you have, you do this (*demonstrating*).
 10 T: A long pole?
 11 C: Ja, a long pole, and then you hit the ball, a white ball-
 12 T: and you’ve got to get the white ball...
 13 C: What you have to hit with
 14 T: Ball that you have to -
 15 C: Ja.

In summary, grammatical form - specifically correctness of that form - is, on the evidence of these extracts, emically salient for teachers and is something they promote with determination. Its importance to them and their commitment to promoting it is revealed most typically in the speed with which teachers correct their pupils’ usage. This practice, however, has the added effect of suppressing the news-giver’s flow of ideas and breaking contact with his/her audience. But for the briefest reference to it in my interviews with the teachers, it is a dimension of news-time behaviour which they appear unaware of,

since it is not prominent in the interview responses I reported in 4.2. Concern by teachers for how pupils speak is recognised more overtly in the pupils' responses which I report on later in 4.4. The ideological relevance of these disparities, the teachers' manner and the effects of their correction, along with related matters, are again issues I deal with more fully in chapter 5.

4.3.4 Pupils' news-time accounts should be analytical, "restrained", factually correct, and give prominence to what is "nice", "happy" and "moral"

As the above heading suggests, I will be dealing with a number of issues in this section. Those listed relate to what, from a teacher's point of view, counts as an acceptable news-time topic. Otherwise they are relevant because they reflect preferred orientations to/treatments of topics - considered, again, from the point of view of the teachers. All of the issues complement the more formal ones which I have outlined in the previous three sections of this chapter, namely, that news accounts should be topic-centred, be verbally elaborated, employ complex syntax and employ correct English. They also have clear affinities with the core norms dealt with in 4.3.1. There, readers may recall, I pointed to the emic salience of pupil commitment, originality and selling one's news as "interesting". Both in that section of the chapter (4.3.1) and here, the emphasis falls on teacher preferences which incorporate certain values which are promoted during news-time.

None of the issues which I shall be exploring below were referred to by any of the teachers during my interviews with them. Like so much else in 4.3, therefore, they are promoted by the teachers largely without their being aware of doing so, and would probably be viewed by teachers as hidden effects of news-giving.

I will be basing my account on four new extracts. I open by referring, in extract 21, to the major part of a news presentation by Shamitha, who reports on a family death. This extract is particularly rich, highlighting the teacher's analytical, unemotional and therefore "restrained" response to this news. It also emphasises her preference for "happy" news. Extracts 22 and 23 reflect the high standing which analytic restraint and factual correctness have for teachers who, in these two instances, are confronted by accounts which they find insufficiently tied to the real world. The teachers construe them as overly fanciful and reckless in various ways. The topic in the remaining extract (i.e., extract 24) is revenge. The exchange highlights what the teacher considers to be not a

“nice” topic as well, subsequently, as a “nice” topic and, in raising moral issues (as extract 23 does too), reflects the moral standards which this teacher (and others) promotes. Those standards, I shall argue, are predominantly those by which white, urban, middle-class South Africans live.

Extract 21 follows. It features Shamitha, a class 2 pupil in Mrs French’s class:

Extract 21

- 1 T: Let’s see, who is the next girl? Ah, Shamitha. Where’s Shamitha?
 2 S: I’ve got sad news.
 3 T: Have you got sad news! Oh I’m sorry to hear that.
 4 S: Yesterday my aunty died.
 5 T: Your aunty died?
 6 S: They had to burn her.
 7 T: Uhum. What do you call it when a person is burnt when they die? Does anybody
 8 know?
 9 X: Cremated.
 10 T: They’re cremated, yes.
 11 X: (*Inaudible.*)
 12 T: Yes. You can either be buried or you can be cremated. Your aunty - whose, is it your
 13 mommy’s sister or your daddy’s sister? Or just a friend?
 14 S: Umm, my granny’s.
 15 T: Your granny’s sister. Was she old already?
 16 S: Umm
 17 T: That’s what happens when people are old.
 18 S: She um, she was, um, she was in the hospital and, um, she tripped over and fell
 19 (*Indistinct*) so um, some, some people came in. They picked her up and put her on the
 20 bed umm (*Indistinct*). The people gave her some water and when they came back she
 21 was dead.
 22 T: Aah. She most probably had a heart attack or something.
 23 S: She did.
 24 T: And that makes them, er, somebody die very quickly. And then, now tell us some nice
 25 and exciting news, some good news. What did you do all holidays? I see your teeth are
 26 growing beautifully. Look when Shamitha smiles, she’s had two gaps in the front for a
 27 long time. Look at that!
 28 S: Everyone teases me.
 29 T: Aha. Now they won’t tease you anymore with the teeth coming, hey? Right, what did
 30 you do in the holidays?
 31 S: (*Inaudible*) -[fixed my bike because it was broken
 32 T: [Face the children
 33 S: [My bike, um, got a puncture -
 34 T: Oh dear.
 35 S: I was at my brother’s house the other day and...(The account continues.)

This news account is immediately noteworthy because of the way Shamitha introduces it. “I’ve got sad news”, she announces. This meta-level comment on the kind of news she will be giving contrasts it very sharply with the overwhelming majority of other news accounts in my corpus. It’s effect, valuably, is to draw attention to the implicit expectation that news accounts will not be sad. I showed much earlier (in 4.3.1) that when indeed they are characterised - whether prospectively or retrospectively - news

accounts are labelled in ways which have favourable associations, e.g. “interesting”, “exciting”, etc. Otherwise, news accounts are not described, presumably because the participants have tacitly agreed on “happy” or neutral topics and this understanding is so well entrenched as a news-time norm that it does not need to be spelled out whenever anyone starts his or her news presentation. It is common knowledge, in other words.

The “sad” news, i.e., Shamitha’s aunt’s death, is pursued from line 2, when she announces it, until line 24. Its treatment, as encouraged by the teacher’s questioning, is factual, analytical and clinical. Mrs French does express sympathy and solidarity, her “Oh I’m sorry to hear that” (in line 3) being a formulaic way of doing so, but quickly thereafter she shifts the exchange onto an analytic level, treating the death matter-of-factly and clarifying issues which emerge in what Shamitha reports about the aunt and the circumstances of her death. Thus, Mrs French elicits “cremate”, the scientifically more precise synonym for “burn” which Shamitha uses in line 6. She explores the genealogical link between the aunt and Shamitha’s family - establishing that she was Shamitha’s granny’s sister (line 15) - and then questions Shamitha on her aunt’s age, ascertaining that she was old. From this she generalises: “That’s what happens when people are old” (line 17). In lines 18-21 Shamitha recounts the events leading up to her aunt’s death, which the teacher reacts to by first offering a diagnosis (line 22) - death by heart attack - which Shamitha confirms, and then extrapolating to the likely speed with which she died: “that (i.e., a heart attack) makes...somebody die very quickly” (line 24). Death is treated clinically and unemotionally and without any exploration, for example, of Shamitha’s feelings or memories of her aunt.

Crucially significant cues follow in lines 24-25. They come, in terms of McDermott et al’s (1978) set of criteria for establishing emic salience - 3.5.1, 4 (a) - at a transition point, involve a change to the context (i.e., the nature of the speech event changes) and, in as much as what takes place here is “behaviour at a special moment”, indicate both to Shamitha and to me, the outside analyst, what the teacher considers appropriate behaviour from this point onwards in the exchange. The teacher’s utterance: “...now tell us some nice and exciting news, some good news. What did you do all holidays?” shifts the topic off the dead aunt and on to “you” (i.e., Shamitha). Just as emphatically, it calls for “exciting” news, confirming my earlier interpretation of the emic salience of exciting

news and the non-emic salience of “sad” news. Moreover, it seeks “nice”, “good” news. Both words have positive associations and appear to be being used here as synonyms for “exciting”. Finally, the focus of the teacher’s request “what did you do” (which she repeats in lines 29-30) falls on doing (rather than, say, feeling or wondering or arguing), a means, once again, possibly, of moving Shamitha away from death and the feelings associated with it.

Two new topics are explored in the remainder of Shamitha’s news: her teeth (in lines 25-29) and repairs to her bicycle (from line 31 onwards). The focus particularly in the first one falls very obviously on Shamitha, and sees the teacher affirming her and expressing solidarity with her. The second topic (repairs to her bicycle) is considerably more neutral in emphasis. Both topics clearly lack the gravity of death. They appear to count as “nice”, “exciting” and “good”, and, as such, satisfy Mrs French more than Shamitha’s first topic did.

Extract 22 follows. It is narrated by Sipho, and deals first with roller skating and then with carting activities he, Patrick and Christo (two friends) enjoyed together.

Extract 22

- 1 S:the other day me and Patrick were playing. We were playing, we were roller
2 skating and my friend was coming past and with this car and, and he was right next to
3 us and Patrick drived into the window.
4 Xs: *(General laughter and sound effects.)*
5 T: Did he get a fright?
6 S: Ja
7 Xs: *(More sound effects.)*
8 S: We were playing skinhead.
9 T: Oh dear
10 S: And afterwards um Christo, we, Christo, um, is our friend. He is/was (?) also in the car
11 and we, when we went on the smooth road me and Patrick were holding on the back
12 and he was taking us around and went so fast that I let go and I landed on my bottom
13 and now it’s so sore. Patrick was still going in the car and went up the hill and Patrick,
14 then Patrick let go and we went right down and then he couldn’t stop so he went right
15 into the bushes-
16 Xs: *(Laughter from the class.)*
17 S: It was a Golf (?) and it went right into the bushes.
18 T: And where, where were you hanging on?
19 S: *(Very animatedly)* I was hanging on right down at the bottom, um...
20 T: What were you hanging on to?
21 S: I was on the road and I got out of the road and Patrick was right (?) and Colin knows-
22 *(addressing Colin)*- “Colin, you know where you go up that hill and you turn that way?”
23 C: Yes. There’s a sharp-
24 S: And Patrick went right down, you know the bushes down there and also there’s this
25 puddle and *(mentions a name indistinctly)* was crying because his bottom was so sore.
26 Xs: *(Raucous laughter.)*
27 T: Um, Haley, have you got anything?

Three features of the interaction reflected in the transcript are, I believe, particularly significant: the teacher's lack of meta-comment; the fact that Siphon ignores Mrs French's calls for specificity; and the pupils' obvious enjoyment of the account, which contrasts with Mrs French's reaction to it. Usually, as we see in exchanges such as Zena's (extract 8) and Warwick's (extract 10), absence of meta-comment by the teacher is a sign of her approval. However, such absence is not total, for while it might apply to the body of the pupil's news account, it usually comes at the end of the news account, confirming that the teacher approved of it, cf. extracts 8 and 10 again in this regard.

In the case we are considering here, the teacher contributes on five occasions only. Two of these occur early on and can be construed, partly, as expressions of solidarity on the teacher's part inasmuch as they show her attempting to involve herself in Siphon's account. However, they each have additional functions. "Did he get a fright?" (line 5) is also an attempt to anchor Siphon's account in the real world where people experience feelings such as fright when involved in the seemingly extreme circumstances which Siphon is describing. Her "Oh dear" (line 9), for its part, conveys an attitudinal response, essentially of disapproval, towards skinheads and what they symbolise. Her next two responses occur in line 18 and then again shortly afterwards in line 20. They, too, seek to anchor Siphon's treatment of his topic. First she asks "Where were you hanging on?" and then, in response to the vagueness and dismissive nature of Siphon's reply, asks "What were you hanging on to?" Throughout, Siphon concentrates on recreating a general impression of what took place, stressing, for his audience's benefit, the comico-dramatic consequences of what they did. It is presumably not Siphon's intention to provide a faithful, restrained, totally accurate reconstruction of what he and his friends did, and it is for this reason that he appears to brush aside his teacher's question in line 18 and does not respond to her follow up question (in line 20). It is presumably because he disregards her call for a literacy which reflects greater accountability and specificity and persists with the literacy strategies he has adopted from the beginning, that she finds herself unable to reward him with affirmation. Thus, in line 27 she simply turns to someone else, Haley, and nominates her, this being her fifth contribution during Siphon's news-telling.

While Mrs French withholds affirmation from Siphoh, his classmates openly affirm him and his story telling. There is abundant evidence which shows that they greatly enjoyed Siphoh's performance and that considerations such as analytic restraint, factual correctness and anchoring of one's news in the real world do not carry the same weight at an emic-level for them, as they appear to for Mrs French. In support of this I draw the reader's attention to the pupils' laughter in lines 4, 16 and 26, the last outburst of which I have labelled in the transcript as "raucous". In addition, some of the children provide sound effects which complement Siphoh's account in lines 4 and 7. In doing so, they again show that they are in tune with Siphoh, collaboratively recreating the atmosphere in which the roller-skating took place. This participation may itself be unacceptable to Mrs French. The weight of evidence in my corpus shows that Mrs French (like Ms S in scenario 6: 2.4.6) prefers single participants rather than collaborative endeavours at news-time, as do the other teachers. Indeed, there seems to be preference for "one-at-a-time talk" in mainstream classrooms in many parts of the world. (See Lemke 1990). Not only do non-news-givers contribute sound effects, Siphoh, as news giver, also appeals to them, as in line 22: "Colin, you know where you go up that hill and you turn that way?". This, when viewed across all my data, is extremely atypical.

Extract 22 is a significant exchange, therefore, because it highlights Mrs French's emic preference for factual correctness and narrative restraint. Some pupils, as we saw earlier in this chapter, share these norms. Others, as we see in extract 22, clearly do not. Those involved in extract 22 delight in the general impression which Siphoh conveys and the comico-dramatic effects which he highlights. They participate actively in his telling and respond with sound effects and laughter (as do all of the pupils in the classrooms described in scenario 6, i.e., in 2.4.6). In playing to them however, Siphoh is forced to ignore his teacher's rather different expectations. The price he pays is that she denies him any demonstration of approval, in effect, sanctioning him negatively (cf. Erickson's principle 3: 3.5.2) and, in the long term, de-valuing the kind of literacy in which he is such a skilful exponent.

Extract 23, which I turn to now, comprises two extracts from Grayson's news which I have drawn from the same Eager Beavers session as I did two earlier ones, which I dealt with in 4.3.2.1, and numbered as extract 9. The context of the present extracts is discussion of the tricks which animals can be taught to do. Grayson shortly beforehand

mentioned the tricks his dog can do and, in the first extract below extends that account to the tricks they purportedly do on his grandfather's boat. Seth, a fellow Eager Beaver, develops this account, in turn, in the second extract:

Extract 23

- 1 G: And also some time when I go in the boat my Grandfather drives the boat and the dog
 2 drives on my head, my little dog and that two other dogs are in the boat doing a
 3 handstand
 4 Se: *(Laughs loudly.)*
 5 T: Not in a boat! I wonder if they really do a handstand *(frowning throughout)?*
 6
 7 T: ...Grayson says: MY DOGS FOLLOW ME AT HOME...[THEY
 8 G: [and they play in the
 9 speedboat
 10 T: SLEEP
 11 Se: and then they speed off the boat
 12 T: IN, MY
 13 Se: then they fall in the water
 14 T: Right
 15 G: They they speed, then my dogs fall in the water and [then I just
 16 Se: [and then they speed off the boat
 17 outside
 18 T: [You've got
 19 Se: [On an island
 20 T: Seth, you've got to listen, you've got to be sure that you're not cruel to your dogs, okay.
 21 You got to make sure that what you doing to your dogs is kind.
 22 G: But, but, I, teach them to not hurt
 23 T: Okay. Grayson says: MY DOGS FOLLOW ME AT MY HOME. THEY SLEEP IN
 24 MY ROOM. THEY ALSO GO IN THE SPEEDBOAT.

The extracts raise two main issues which again point to the teacher's emic conceptualisation of news-time and the norms which she sees as necessarily underpinning it. Factual correctness, the first of these, is salient for Mrs Byrd (as it was in the previous extract for Mrs French) and is shown to contrast with the fanciful accounts which Grayson and Seth provide. Coupled with the absence of restraint which the teacher perceives these accounts as demonstrating, are moral issues which the teacher feels need to be spelled out. These, the second issue raised in this data, relate particularly to Seth's elaboration of Grayson's news.

Thus, according to Grayson, when his dogs accompany him for a ride in his grandfather's boat, one sits (or perhaps stands) on Grayson's head, while the other two do handstands in the boat. Seth, taking matters further, imagines Grayson's dogs speeding off in the boat and falling into the water.

Mrs Byrd's meta-comments in line 5 and then lines 19-21 indicate what her norms are. In line 5, after first appearing to go along with Grayson, she indicates verbally (and non-verbally by means of a frown), that she does not accept what he has told her: "Not in a boat! I wonder if they really do a handstand?" (line 5). Her response, next, to Seth, is verbally more explicit. The opening utterance: "Seth, you've got to listen" recontextualises the interaction, and signals that she is ushering in a new speech event. She follows this with something of a moral lesson to him, by means of which she indirectly sanctions him for inappropriate news-telling: "...you've got to be sure that you're not cruel to your dogs, okay. You got to make sure that what you doing to your dogs is kind" (lines 20-21). On this evidence, Mrs Byrd does not countenance what she considers to be untruthful and irresponsible talk about dogs. She expects children at news-time to demonstrate greater restraint when telling their news.

I have drawn extract 24 from a news session which took place on Peace Day. The exchange deals with a moral issue once more, this time, revenge. It also raises to prominence teachers' preference for "nice" news. Earlier, in extract 21, we saw how "happy" news is valued. This exchange is noteworthy for the graphic detail given by the news-giver as he assumes one persona, a persona which changes noticeably after the teacher's intervention. Their exchange illustrates two very different schematic worlds: the news-giver's and the teacher's. One notes that the pupil remoulds his news to satisfy the teacher's expectations.

Extract 24

- 1 T: Right. Siph.
- 2 S: This Tuesday Reggie's coming to my house and, um, um, we, we've got this worker, I
3 don't like him because he always pulls zap signs at me (?) and he always throws stones
4 at me so I told him when he, when he was painting that I was going to get him one day
5 and I took a stone and I got him and he comes running after me and he kicked me in
6 the face and so I left him. So when Reggie comes he's going to beat him up.
- 7 T: Is that the sort of thing we think about on Peace Day? I hope we're not going to think
8 about things like that.
- 9 Xs: (*Shout out - but what they say is indistinct.*)
- 10 T: What about thinking about something nice to do so you can change him?
- 11 S: We're friends now. I mean, friends we don't fight anymore,
- 12 T: Well, I'm pleased to hear that. I hope that-
- 13 S: and next Tuesday Reggie's coming to my house and we're going to play, um, we're
14 going to play, going to play hide-and-go-seek and when we play hide-and-go-seek I'm
15 going to see if Reggie can find any good hiding places because my friend, he found lots
16 of hiding places and I couldn't find him at all the whole day.
- 17 T: Ooh ooh. You'll have to look hard. Right.

Sipho's account in lines 2-6 describes prior incidents in his dealings with the worker which he believes explains his dislike for him and justifies the revenge which he has in mind when Reggie visits. The detail is as follows: because the worker "pulls zap signs" at him (i.e., directs rude finger gestures at him) and throws stones at him, Sipho retaliated by throwing a stone at the worker while he was painting. In response, the worker ran after Sipho and kicked him in the face. Sipho intends getting Reggie to beat the worker up.

Mrs French's reaction in lines 7-8 and 10 negatively sanctions Sipho for recounting these incidents and for adopting the attitude towards the worker which he does. By doing so, she invokes the underlying rules of appropriateness (Erickson's (1982) principle 4: 3.5.2) which shape her view of acceptable news-time behaviour. Put differently, in the terms of McDermott et al (1978): 4.5.1, she signals in these lines that things have gone awry and indicates what she regards as expected behaviour in order to put his news participation back on track. Thus, "Is that the sort of thing we think about on Peace Day?" (line 7) is intended to highlight a basic irony, namely, that Sipho is discussing violence on a day of peace. Indirectly, of course, she is reprimanding him for doing so. She casts what she says in the form of a rhetorical question, i.e., one to which she assumes the answer is obvious and does not need spelling out. This is what renders her strategy indirect. In her next utterance (lines 7 and 8) she reinforces the basic tenor of her message so far, by issuing a warning/caution: "I hope we're not going to think about things like that". This implies that "things like that" (i.e., beating up the worker) are not appropriate topics this day or any other day (on other evidence in my corpus). In line 10 she indicates to him what she would regard as preferable (or, "more expected") behaviour: "What about thinking about something nice to do so you can change him?" The key word here is "nice". Wrapped up in it as well as in the larger alternative which the teacher is suggesting to Sipho is a different, more restrained and more compassionate moral order, comparable, in general terms, with the attitude towards one's pets which Mrs Byrd promotes in extract 23.

Physical revenge and the morality which supports it gives way dramatically in what Sipho says from line 11 to the end of his turn. He suddenly asserts that "we're friends now" and that "we don't fight anymore" (line 11). Then, he radically alters what previously he

had reported as his agenda for Tuesday's visit from Reggie. Instead of planning to beat up the gardener, they are "going to play...hide-and-go-seek" (lines 13-14) and "see if Reggie can find any good hiding places" (line 15). Mrs French's responses in lines 12 and 17 reflect her approval of the change in heart which Siphon has undergone and the very different value system which he now appears to be embracing. Hide-and-seek is an acceptably middle-class children's activity. In Mrs French's terms it is "nice". The suddenness of Siphon's conversion is, however, cause for scepticism. Does Siphon really intend what he says in lines 11-16, or is he merely demonstrating his ability to conform to the teacher's expectations when he judges this to be his most sensible option? Was his first story not simply for dramatic effect anyway, drawing on the kind of elaboration he uses in the carting story, where he prefers colourfully told fiction to a factual recounting? In each case his audience affirms the newsworthiness of his news, while in each the teacher wants an account kept within the bounds of what actually happened, i.e., restrained, analytical, factually correct and "moral". For other data which reveals comparable moral divergences between what the pupils report and the teachers prefer, see Appendix C-7. For further evidence of the teacher's promoting largely white, middle-class values, see Appendix C-8, and for further news which falls short of the teacher's preference for what is "nice", see Appendix C-9.

4.4 Pupil perceptions of news and its functions

In this section I deal with the pupils' emic perspective. First I report on the insights I gained into the class 1 pupils' assumptions about news, based on their responses to the speech bubble task I administered. I then interpret the evidence supplied by the class 2 pupils when responding to questions 1(a) and 5 of their questionnaire. These questions were designed to elicit their attitude towards news-time and their understanding of its function. Finally, I consider the Eager Beavers' news-time norms based on evidence they supplied during interviews I held with them. In 4.5 I concentrate on evidence of disparities between the norms which pupils apparently subscribe to and those of their teachers. In some instances this involves referring back to interactional data already discussed in 4.3, while in others it entails presenting new data.

The essential findings to which the accounts in 4.4 and 4.5 point are as follows:

- (a) Pupils appear to accept their teachers' characterisation, namely, that news is a 'fun' time, a time for free expression, a time when the pupils' agendas prevail rather than the teachers' ones;
- (b) there is nevertheless a group of pupils who are aware of a focus on language per se during news-time - something which teachers, for the most part, appear not to be consciously aware of;
- (c) a different sub-set of pupils not only accepts the teacher's characterisation of news, but embrace the core norms which underlie news-time interaction. The analysis provided in 4.3.2.1 showed that. Moreover, such pupils attempt to hold their peers accountable to the (teacher's) core norms (extract 6: 4.3.1 and extract 14: 4.3.3 are examples);
- (d) the greater proportion of pupils, however, do not readily conform to the teacher's core norms, even though they might have accepted the teacher's overt characterisation of news as 'fun', etc. As certain of their responses show, some pupils are aware of incongruencies which this entails;
- (e) conflict, or the potential for conflict, arises most in news exchanges involving the children mentioned in (d) above, i.e., those who do not conform to their teacher's expectations. Less frequently conflict occurs between these same pupils and the sub-set referred to above in (b), i.e., pupils who, at an emic level, embrace their teachers' assumptions.

4.4.1. Function of news in class 1: evidence from the speech bubble task

The class 1 pupils provided three broad kinds of response to the little girl featured in the speech bubble task (cf. 3.4.3.1 and Appendix B-8) who asks the bigger girl: "Why do we give news in class 1?" Of these, the first two kinds of response occur with much greater frequency than the third. In what follows I shall paraphrase each kind of broad response and illustrate it with a representative selection of the pupils' responses, using their own words and spelling. All of the pupils' actual responses appear in Appendix C-10:

- (1) We give news in order to report on new, nice or interesting (but never bad) things and events we experience outside school.

"We give news because it is interesting to see what other children ob".

"We give news so the other children can listen ti it so thay can do sum things like it".

"We give news so that we (tell) the children what happen to us in the holiday and if yuo hurt yourself".

- (2) We give news so that we can give ideas to others about what to do and buy.

"We give news so that our frens can lisen to it and they lik our news because it is exciting and so sumtims they go and biye wht we gaiv for our news".

- (3) We give news so that we can learn to "talk properly".

"We give news in class 1 to talk properly and our teacher can no what we have dun at home and to tell the children that we no huw to talk loud".

"We give news so that we can see what sum children do at the weekend(.) we share our news with the class(.) the class like it and we learn how to talk lowd".

"We give news so that we can see how they speak and we can here kliy".

The evidence in (1), (2) and (3) above points to two broad functions which the pupils appear to see news as serving: a pragmatic function, associated with the pleasure of sharing information (responses 1 and 2), and a pedagogical function, associated with talking properly, talking loudly and hearing clearly. It is noteworthy here to mention that these language-related observations come, not from white children, but from black and Indian children. In the light earlier (4.3.1) of their emic salience for the teachers, it is also significant to note how frequently the children refer to news-time as "exciting", and how often they remark that giving news is "fun". I pursue the link between race and the perceived language-related function of news as well as the ideological significance of the childrens' frequent reference to news as "exciting" and "fun", in chapter 5.

4.4.2 Attitudes towards the function of news: the evidence from class 2 questionnaire responses

The responses of Mrs French's class 2 group to the questionnaire (described in 3.4.3.2), correspond closely to those expressed by the class 1 children in Mrs Higgs's class. Nineteen out of twenty seven answered YES to question 1(a): DO YOU LIKE TELLING NEWS? Nobody answered NO, and eight answered SOMETIMES. Reasons in the YES group (which I am paraphrasing here) include the following: we like sharing our news; we know that others like listening to it; we learn from what we are told at news-time; and, we find news-time interesting. Ten pupils indicated that news-telling was "fun", four said it was "exciting" and two indicated that it was "nice", thereby echoing the class 1 responses and those, in turn, of their teachers. In addition, one pupil reported that news made her "happy" and two indicated that news-time made them laugh. Reasons given by those who answered that they like giving news SOMETIMES

varied from: “I don’t always get a turn to say what I want to say” to “Sometimes I get very tired to do news” to “I don’t have much news and I don’t go any where”.

Asked WHY DO WE TELL NEWS AT SCHOOL? (question 5), 11 pupils indicated either that others like to know what they do, and that is why they give news, or that they themselves like sharing what they do or get with others; 5 wrote that telling news is “fun”, 3 used the word “exciting” and 3 said simply that “we like to”. The remaining 3 responses again cited language development or “talking properly” as the reason for news: “I don’t know why, maybe we must learn words”; “because some of us want to improve our language and make others giggle”; and “because we talk properly, that’s why”. All of the pupils’ responses to the above questions are provided in Appendix C-11.

4.4.3 The Eager Beavers’ assessment of news: evidence from interviews

My interviews with individual members of the Eager Beaver group confirmed how challenging it is to interview 4 and 5 year old children and how difficult it is to avoid biasing what they say. With this in mind, I report below on the views of four of the six Eager Beaver children (cf. 3.4.3.3 for why I am unable to report on the views of all six).

One of the children, Mustafa, told me that the reason he gives news is because “it’s nice” and because he likes it, echoing sentiments expressed by older children in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. What makes it “nice”, according to Mustafa, is that news requires him to draw something. He believes the rest of the Eager Beavers like to hear his news and explained that what distinguishes the news of others in the group which he likes listening to most, is that it is funny, a criterion of judgement mentioned earlier by one of the class 2 pupils. This criterion, interestingly, is not one which any of the teachers - Mrs Byrd in particular - appear to subscribe to, cf. her response to the tricks Grayson alleged his dogs did in his grandfather’s speedboat (4.3.4, extract 23). It is possible though to argue that, since humour in general often derives from deliberate violation of restraint and factuality, both of which are emically salient for Mrs Byrd in extract 23, being funny is a criterion that is specifically excluded in terms of the core norm related to factual correctness and restraint in 4.3.4. As far as the function of news is concerned, Mustafa responded that it was:

M: So the teachers know

R: Mm.

M: and then they write it down.

R: So the teachers know your news, and then they can write it down?

M: Yes.

R: Is there any other reason for having news?

M: Uh uh.

What he appears to be highlighting here is, firstly, the centrality in the process of news-giving of the teacher's agenda ("So the teachers know"). Mustafa does not, however, specify what the agenda is. Secondly, he highlights the prominence in Eager Beaver news sessions of the teacher's written summaries of each child's news, which then guides their drawing.

Even though he contributes frequently during news-time, Grayson, the next Eager Beaver whose views I will be reporting, claimed that he did not like giving news. The reason he gave is this: "Cos I like being...doing...dinosaurs...in the sandpit", i.e., he prefers doing other things to giving news. Asked why Eager Beaver children give news, he said it was because they are so eager, drawing his reason from the label given to his group. Travis, in his turn, responded as follows to this same question: "Because, because mm we (are) in the Blue group and we do all kind of stuff". What he is perhaps suggesting, much as the teachers did earlier in 4.2.1, is that he gives news because doing so is a "natural" part of being in Blue group.

According, next, to Shivani, Eager Beaver children give news: "Because we have a holiday...and we go somewhere and then we have to tell where we went". The use here of "have to" suggests compliance with the teacher's wishes, something which Mustafa also highlighted. Finally, for Saxony, the reason Mrs Byrd wants them to give news is "Cos it's nice drawing", echoing another of Mustafa's sentiments. Asked what she would say to a little girl who needed to know what news-telling entailed in order to be considered an Eager Beaver, she replied: "I'd say news is what you colour in and Mrs Byrd writes". Responses such as Saxony's possibly suggest that Grayson is not the only child who does not like news. Some though associate it with activities that they do like (such as drawing) and find significant (such as writing).

In this response Saxony highlights the activities which are contingent upon the oral telling of news and stem from the teacher's mediation between the telling and the colouring in. Transcoding into words (by the teacher) and into graphic form (by the pupils) is thus salient for the Eager Beavers. In contrast to the responses of certain children in class 1 and class 2, the Eager Beaver children do not perceive news to have any language-related functions. This is significant because Mrs Byrd's error correction

strategy was considerably more indirect (cf. discussion of extract 18 in 4.3.3) and less frequent than either of the other teachers' ones were.

4.5 Evidence of disparities between the pupils' news-time preferences and those of their teachers

The investigation of behavioural evidence in 4.3 not only reveals what the teachers' core emic categories are, it also shows that pupil behaviour at news-time takes one of two broad forms: either it conforms to the teachers' expectations, or else it does not. When it coincides with them (e.g. 4.3.2.1) it is rewarded. When it does not, which is more often the case, it goes unrewarded (e.g. 4.3.2.2). In the account which follows, I want to highlight the extent of divergence/degree of disparity between the teachers' norms and those of many of the pupils and then indicate how accommodation, when it does take place, moves in the direction of the teachers' norms. Teachers rarely accommodate to the pupils' norms. So as to give unity to my account I want to explore what the answer is to the following question: What in the pupils' terms counts as interesting news and how compatible is it with what teachers consider interesting?

In response to the question "What news do the pupils find interesting?", I want to refer to three sources of insight. The first source of insight is the class 2 pupils' responses to two questions from their questionnaire which I have not so far referred to. These deal with the range of topics the pupils perceive the teacher as liking them to deal with at news-time and those which the pupils themselves prefer. The second source of insight is information I gained during my interview with Mrs French regarding the pupils' preferences, as well as her own, at news-time. The third source of insight I will draw on is behavioural evidence of the pupils' reactions to three pupils: Zena, Siphon and Wesley, the first of whom, as we have already seen, is a model pupil in the teachers' terms while the second, clearly, is not. Wesley, the third pupil, is someone whose news I will be introducing for the first time.

4.5.1 Implicit pupil-teacher disparities in the questionnaire responses of class 2 pupils

Questions 2 and 3 of the questionnaire administered to Mrs French's class 2 group ask the following:

Question 2: What do YOU like to talk about at news-time?

Question 3: What does MRS FRENCH like you to talk about at news-time?

My purpose in asking these questions was two-fold: to determine the pupils' understanding of their teacher's emic expectations relating to topic choice; and to establish how closely the pupils' stated preferences corresponded with the preferences they perceive their teachers as having.

The elicitation instrument I used, i.e., the questionnaire, has a number of potential limitations. It is not easy, for instance, to know how free the pupils felt to report their true feelings, or how accurately they did so, nor is it possible to know how able they were to reflect on what is essentially a meta-level phenomenon, namely, topic. In spite though of these and other misgivings on my part, it is possible to make a number of generalisations based on the pupils' responses to the two questions.

Firstly, the pupils' responses powerfully endorse earlier findings reported in 4.3 regarding their teacher's emic level preferences with respect to topic choice and topic treatment. Thus, the pupils reported Mrs French as preferring them to talk about the following, the figures in brackets indicating the number of responses in each case: "nice" things (3); "interesting" things (3); "lots of different things"; "exciting news" (3); "what we did yesterday (2) or in the holidays" (3); our "own" news; "fun" news; "happy" things (2); and "not ugly news".

Secondly, the pupils' responses (all are provided in Appendix C-12) suggest that topic choice and the way topics are treated are contested aspects of news-time interaction. Three categories of response emerge. In the first there is overlap in the pupils' responses to questions 2 and 3, suggesting that they share their teacher's preferences. To take two illustrations: we see below that pupil 5's responses to questions 2 and 3 correspond comfortably with one another, while those of P3 overlap sufficiently also to qualify as an instance of pupil-teacher correspondence:

- P5 (q2) *I like telling about what I done on the holidays it is fun.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about what we done on the haldays to.*
- P3 (q2) *I like to talk about wild life and plants and animals and nature and lots and lots of difrent pats of the world.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about lots and lots and lots of difrent things.*

The category of responses referred to above is counter-balanced by cases where there is a disparity between what the pupils indicate they like to talk about, and what they believe Mrs French likes them to talk about. Examples of this, the second category of responses, include the following:

- P8 (q2) *We like to talk about our news.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about things that she tells us to do.*
 P14 (q2) *I like to talk about England because it's exiting.*
 (q3) *She likes us talk diwali and Christotmas.*
 P18 (q2) *I like to tall about my toyse and what they can do.*
 (q3) *Mrs French tall me to talk loud when I am talling my news.*

Within the above category of responses there are three examples where the disparity hinges on the respondents' preferring humorous/funny news, but equivalent interest in such news is not attributed to the teacher. P15 is such an example:

- P15 (q2) *I like to be funny and tel funny things.*
 (q3) *She likes me to tel aboute what We do in the holidays.*

Other similar instances are P4 and P11, see Appendix C-12. I draw particular attention to these responses because other evidence (which I will present shortly, in 4.5.2) suggests that humour is emically salient for many of the pupils, whereas, as we saw earlier in 4.3.4 (extract 23), it appears not to be for the teachers.

The third category of responses is linked to the one just considered. The two responses which comprise it are also instances of a mismatch, but the essence of the mismatch lies in the respondents' claiming that they do not know what their teacher likes them to talk about. Thus, P24 and P25 indicate as follows:

- P24 (q2) *I like talking about guns, knifs, boms, killing, dinimus, blud. It is nice. My friends are Garth, Khalil, Danny.*
 (q3) *I do not now.*
 P25 (q2) *I'd like to talk about anything. I love love love love love to tell happy very very happy news.*
 (q3) *I realy don't know.*

The responses not yet accounted for, share the following: when indicating what they like to talk about (i.e., question 2), respondents are very specific, but when indicating what their teacher likes them to talk about (i.e., question 3), their answers are considerably more general, and, typically, include or echo a key, emically salient concept. Examples are:

- P9 (q2) *I like to talk about my dogs and my paty and my friends and my family and my holidays.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about intersting things.*

- P10 (q2) *I like taking about my holiday news.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to take about nice news.*
- P13 (q2) *about my moms birthday*
 (q3) *nice news not ugly news*
- P22 (q2) *I like talking about new things that I get.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to tell interesting news about what we did.*
- P23 (q2) *I like to talk about old things and new things like my new form changs that I bought yesterday. I have not told eney one and I wo'nt tell eney one untill you see this.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about uxiteing news.*

The responses in the above category are ambiguous. Either they can be interpreted as instances where the pupil's and the teacher's preferences coincide - the answer to question 2 being merely subsumed within the answer to question 3 - or else they point, possibly, to a mismatch in the preferences of the two parties. If this is what the answers signify, then we can perhaps interpret the pupils' responses as identifying a tension between the pupils' own preferences and the more stereotyped, less imaginative expectations which they perceive their teachers as having.

4.5.2 Different pupil-teacher responses to the news-giving styles of Siphon, Zena and Wesley

Two other bodies of information confirm that the pupils' preferences at news-time are different from those of their teachers. In what follows I shall refer, first, to insights which emerged from my interview with Mrs French. They comprise, firstly, Mrs French's perception and assessment of Siphon and Zena, two news-givers in class 2 who enjoyed prominence in my earlier analyses in 4.3. Secondly, they include Mrs French's interpretation of how the class 2 group assesses the news-giving styles of these same two figures. Following this I will supplement Mrs French's observations with independent evidence of how the pupils react to Siphon and Zena's news-giving. I recorded this evidence in the form of fieldnotes. It corroborates Mrs French's perception that the pupils prefer Siphon's style of news-giving to that of Zena and that certain children in fact parody Zena's news-giving. Finally, in 4.5.2.3 I introduce interactional evidence which features the news-giving style of Wesley, a pupil whose popularity among the pupils almost parallels that of Siphon, and whose news-giving shares many features with that of Siphon. My main purpose in introducing this data is to point to a general preference on the part of pupils and to counteract the possible perception that Siphon alone embodies a

style of news-giving which the pupil body as a whole warms to. Put differently, Sipho is not an idiosyncratic case.

4.5.2.1 Pupil-teacher responses to Sipho's news-giving

According to Mrs French, the pupils in class 2 greatly admired Sipho's news-giving style. In her words, "they love him" (spoken with the vowel in "love" elongated). Pinpointing what she believed they responded to in particular, she referred to "his sensationalism", adding, "but they (also) enjoy those (occasions), um, because they chip in" (i.e., Sipho's sessions allow them to participate in his news-telling). This, we saw earlier, takes place in extracts 22 and 24. We also noticed that collaborative news-telling is deliberately discouraged, as Mrs Byrd's treatment of Travis showed in extract 11 (section 4.3.2.2). Mrs French noted that Sipho was "a very difficult little boy in class, and (that) news is his one time when he does excel". As evidence of what she meant by his being "difficult", she mentioned a strategy he often employed of not co-operating with her and, when everyone else was quiet and occupied, of taunting her, by making clearly audible mumbling noises. This, in the terms of 2.3.4, is a form of sub-rosa literacy.

Sipho's news, according to Mrs French, is "very different from the rest", to which she added that "unfortunately sometimes he tends to go over the top at those times and you've got to sort of keep the damper on him". In saying this she is presumably referring to the "unrestrained", factually incorrect, "ugly", "unhappy" and "immoral" characteristics of the two news accounts which I analysed in 4.3.4, i.e., extracts 22 and 24. Elsewhere in the interview she explained why Sipho should not be allowed to "go over the top": "...because you don't know where it's going to lead all the time...and what impression it's going to make on the other children because...they might get the idea that you approve".

To counteract what she finds undesirable about his style of news-telling, including his choice of topic and the treatment he sometimes gives to his topics, she claimed that she tries to "balance out" what he says and to question him, e.g. "What do you think? Do you think that was a good idea?" In general, she said she tried to "make him not think I'm approving of all his actions". Elsewhere she observes: "I side-track him, or question what he's doing, and he doesn't appear quite the hero that perhaps he thinks he is".

As far as the effect which these interactional strategies have on Siphon, Mrs French makes the following, particularly significant observations: "I think he thinks I've got it in for him, that I don't let him have news often enough" and "I put a damper on it (i.e., his news-telling). He's got that across to me: that I put a damper on...And he's told me outright". Finally, she observes as follows in response to a question I asked about the effect she felt my presence might have had on Siphon's news-telling: "I think he feels that, um, when you here, then he can tell his news the way he wants to tell it".

It seems clear from this evidence that deep divisions separate Mrs French and Siphon when it comes to the norms of behaviour which each subscribes to at news-time. The significance in turn of the fact that so many of Siphon's classmates support him and admire his news-time conduct, would seem to emphasise further the disparity between the teachers' core norms - their emic expectations - and those which the pupils follow when they participate in news-time.

4.5.2.2 Pupil-teacher responses to Zena's news-giving

A contrast to Siphon and what he symbolises at news-time, is Zena. She, as the analysis reported on in 4.3.2.1 reveals (which comprises news contributions by pupils which meet the teachers' preferences for focussed, elaborated, syntactically complex discourse) is a prototypical, "ideal" news-giver, someone who, as early as class 1, conformed to the teacher's core norms.

My interview with Mrs French, by which time Zena had completed class 2, revealed that Zena still embodies the behaviours, attitudes and values which teachers have always sought to promote. Mrs French noted that Zena is always enthusiastic: "The moment she arrives in the classroom in the morning, she puts her bag down and she's straight here to come and tell what she's got to say". She is also extremely conscientious and hard working (which Siphon is not):

"...work-wise she's conscientious, hard-working, um, ...she's the one that gets everything done in the time, and does extra, and the quality is always good...Everything she does, she does well".

A further distinguishing feature about Zena is the strong parental support which she is able to rely on. That support, significantly, reveals itself in criticism which Mrs French herself was subjected to by Zena's parents, who felt "that I wasn't perhaps letting her shine enough". Mrs French's dilemma, it appears, is that "it's so hard to stop her (Zena),

because she's always got something to say...so, I've been very aware of not letting her take over too much". Parental support in Siphó's case, by comparison, is apparently lacking, he being the child of a domestic worker, who is not able to supervise him.

What the teacher report revealed further is that though Zena displays behaviours highly valued by teachers and has the backing of ambitious parents, the majority of her peers do not receive her news enthusiastically in the way they clearly do Siphó's. In Mrs French's words, 'I've sometimes got the idea, mm, that they're not that enamoured with her news'. Asked what she felt might explain this, Mrs French first answered "perhaps she's too goody goody", adding "they tune into Siphó...and...they like Wesley". In regard to their preference for Siphó and Wesley, she noted very significantly that: "I think they like those that give a bit of a laugh, a bit of humour to it, and are a bit of...a show off". Asked whether they perceived Zena as being "too academic", she answered "perhaps", but continued: "I think they don't just see her as the person telling the news, then, they see her as the whole, the type of person she is in class, whose always got everything right, always ... um ... perfect, sort of, in everything". As with Siphó, one sees how Zena's literacy preferences correlate with a distinct social identity and value system. In her case, that identity and value system are actively promoted by her teachers. However, many of her classmates appear to reject them.

Independent evidence supports the view that Zena's style of news-telling is rejected by some of her peers. On three separate occasions, both before and after giving her news, I witnessed pupils mimicking either: (1) the rhetorical structure of her news. One child predicted what she was going to say as follows: "This holiday my cousins visited and we did five things: first,...second,...third..."; (2) her intonation, i.e., they imitate the rise-fall pattern on, eg., "This holiday" which matches exactly the pattern which Michaels (1981) describes for non-Black news-givers, cf. Appendix C-13; (3) her overall enthusiasm and commitment when giving her news. Often Zena based her news on topical newspaper stories, and it was this strategy of hers that I heard a fellow pupil mimicking one day to those sitting near to him on the mat.

4.5.2.3 Wesley's news-giving style

What are the characterising features of Wesley's news-telling? In order to describe his news, I refer readers now to the following excerpts which I have drawn from two typical

news contributions of his in my corpus. In both cases Wesley refers to experiences while on holiday at a coastal caravan park.

Extract 25

- 1 T: Right Wesley.
 2 W: When I went to the caravan park I found a friend, he can do magic. Some girls buried
 3 me in the sand.
 4 Xs: *(The rest of the class laugh.)*
 5 W: Me and my friend Lloyd tried to do magic on them.
 6 Xs: *(Laugh.)*
 7 T: On the girls?
 8 W: On the girls.
 9 T: Alright, now tell us, what sort of magic did you try and do on the girls?
 10 W: We tried to do some curses.
 11 Xs: *(The entire class laughs.)*
 12 T: Did they, did they work?
 13 W: They were too far, the girls were too far away.
 14 T: So what did you say?
 15 W: I don't know. Um [ah
 16 T: [Did you go abracadabra
 17 X: Caboom
 18 Xs: *(Laughter.)*
 19 W: No, I've forgotten the words. I did that quite a long time ago, and [um
 20 T: [You others just sit
 21 quiet please.
 22 W: And ah um my friend's got the book so I can't do the tricks.
 23 T: Ah, I see, so you got the tricks out of a book?
 24 W: Ja.
 25 X: *(Excited verbal behaviour.)*
 26 T: Is it your friend's book or is it your book?
 27 W: My friend's.
 28 T: And did the girls try and do something else to you?
 29 W: Nope. You know what I did, um, ah, this one girl, the biggest girl, um, that there was
 30 um and there was another tiny girl um and we said "Hey Horsemad, what you doing?"
 31 X: *(Laughter.)*

Part, clearly, of what renders this account noteworthy is Wesley's choice of topic, as well as the attitude he adopts towards it. His topic, when compared with most others in my recordings, is unpredictable, contrasting therefore with the more predictable topics which are the norm at news-time. His subject matter, moreover, appears to be daring and mischievous and appeals to six to seven year-olds. It also polarises boys (Wesley and Lloyd) and girls, thereby playing to major rivalries within the class 2 group at the time. The manner in which Wesley relates the details of his adventure also contributes to the enthusiastic reception his news gets and, I believe, demonstrates what Mrs French was referring to earlier when she referred to showing off. Features of his style of presentation include the following: dead-pan expression, quicker pace of delivery than usual and staccato enunciation. It is clear, moreover, that, like Siphon in extracts 22 and 24,

Wesley's account permits audience involvement (laughter, sound effects, and other brief verbal additions). It also incorporates reported speech, using the words originally used in the setting described (line 30): "there was another tiny girl um and we said 'Hey Horsemad, what you doing?'". This is an involvement strategy described, for example, by Tannen (1989), its effect being to engage the audience by recreating the immediacy of the original interaction. Like Siphon, Wesley also appears to want to minimise the level of joint collaboration with the teacher in the development of his topic which the teacher seems to want. Put differently, his account does not display the kind and the degree of factual anchoring which Mrs French calls for when she asks: "What sort of magic did you try to do on the girls" (line 9); "did they (the curses) work?" (line 12); "So what did you say?" (line 14); "Ah, I see, so you got the tricks out of a book...Is it your friend's book or is it your book?" (lines 23 and 26), etc.

The topic dealt with in extract 26 is witchdoctors, which, like that in extract 25, is unpredictable, and proves to be as captivating for the children as Wesley and Lloyd's attempts at magic were in the last extract. Here is an excerpt from early on in his account (see Appendix C-14 for the complete transcript):

Extract 26

- 1 W:and then we went to Ocean View to see the witchdoctor.
- 2 X: *(Gasp.)*
- 3 T: ...And - what did the witchdoctor do?
- 4 W: He wasn't there on that day.
- 5 T: Oh.
- 6 W: But then my friend Lloyd, he went, he went there another day without me and he um
- 7 saw the er, the witchdoctor.
- 8 X: *(Says something indistinctly.)*
- 9 W: What?
- 10 X: *(Speaks indistinctly again.)*
- 11 W: What did the witchdoctor look like?
- 12 X: Yes.
- 13 W: It's not a he, it's a she and um she had a cloth around her head -
- 14 Xs: *(Babble.)*
- 15 W: But the, uh, she had lucky charms. She had, she, but when, when we - the part I saw, I
- 16 saw when we were peeping through a window and we saw the - she had this monkey
- 17 hanging up, see -
- 18 T: A real monkey? Alive?
- 19 X: Where?
- 20 W: In a cage. She took it out, we saw her. She took it out. She took the hand off and the
- 21 head off.
- 22 T: While you were watching?
- 23 Xs: *(Murmur.)*
- 24 W: No. She used this for lucky charms.
- 25 Xs: [Yuk, Yeugh!
- 26 T: [Can I just ask...

27 W: There was this arm still hanging up there.

28 Xs: (*Exclamations of disgust.*)

Again, various literacy strategies which are not promoted directly by teachers at news-time secure the pupils' involvement in Wesley's story. One of these relates to Wesley's timing and the way that he delays telling about the witchdoctor until he has built up suspense and anticipation on the part of his listeners: "What did the witchdoctor do?", asks X (line 3). "He wasn't there on that day" (line 4), answers Wesley. Another strategy is the apparently off-hand manner which Wesley adopts towards his subject matter (i.e., he himself expresses no strong emotions towards what he reports.) This makes his audience the principal experiencers of what happened. Thirdly, and crucially, there is Wesley's choice of detail: "It's not a he, it's a she and um she had a cloth around her head" (line 13); "she had this monkey hanging up, see" (lines 16-17); "She took the hand off and the head off" (lines 20 and 21); and "There was this arm still hanging up there" (line 27).

Two further features of particular significance which I need to mention are: (a) the very high level of involvement in Wesley's news on the part of those listening, cf. the gasp early on (line 2), the instances of simultaneous talk, the number of questions from the floor, and the expressions and exclamations of disgust at the end of the extract; and (b) the almost total marginalisation of the teacher in the discourse. As can be seen in Appendix C-14 (the full transcript of this news account), Mrs French re-enters the discourse immediately after the exchange quoted as extract 26 and the tenor of the news changes immediately. It takes on a pedagogical character, and the degree of class participation and involvement drops significantly.

4.6 Summary

To sum up, this chapter largely addresses research questions (a), (c), (d) and (e), the first two of which relate to the teachers' and pupils' emic definitions of news-time, the last two to diversity in the pupils' literacy behaviour and whether there is contact and conflict between different literacy practices in the two school settings. In attending to these issues I carry out, concurrently, the first of two phases of my critical discourse analysis of news-time: first *describing* the textual features of news-time exchanges and then

interpreting the participants' interactional behaviour as they co-construct news-time literacy/discourse. My goal, consistent with critical microethnography, is to capture the *participants'* perspective on news-time, both as they reflect on news-time in general terms, and, more particularly, as they engage in the verbal action that constitutes it.

I precede my analysis of the interactional behaviour by reporting on what the *teachers* perceive to be the origins, functions and formal features of news-time, i.e., what they say regarding these issues. This information I elicited largely through interviews of different kinds with the teachers and through drawing inferences based on the teachers' reactions to tasks I set for the pupils. Of note are three findings. The first is that the teachers are apparently uncertain about the origins of news-time. The second is that they conceive of news-time as having three broad functions: pragmatic, pedagogical and expressive. In terms of the last of these, teachers claim that they release pupils from their control during news-time and encourage them to express themselves as they wish. The third finding of note is that teachers have very clear expectations regarding the shape, form and content of news contributions. These (namely, that news contributions should be: interesting, focused, sustained/elaborated, exhibit a high degree of verbalised detail and be syntactically complex) suggest, as does similar research elsewhere, that the discourse that is targeted is an early approximation to expository or schooled literacy.

In an attempt both to triangulate what the teachers claim are the norms regarding the content and structure of news-time presentation and to ensure that I reflect the *participants'* emic categories - and not simply the analytical categories of an outside analyst - I employed McDermott et al's (1978) and Erickson's (1982) criteria, originally described in 3.5. By means of these I infer the participants' norms from their actual (tape-recorded) behaviour and, subsequently, confirm those interpretations through consulting my informants. The outcome of the above analysis is the detailing I provide of six core norms which guide the teachers' participation (in particular) during news-time. While some of these core norms do indeed coincide with the teacher expectations mentioned earlier, others (namely, core norm 5: news-time contributions should be cast in grammatically correct English; and core norm 6: news-time contributions should be analytical, restrained, factually correct and give prominence to what is "nice", "happy" and "moral") are not. Yet others (core norm 1: news-time contributions should be interesting, reflect pupil commitment and be original; and core norm 3: news-time

contributions should be sustained through explicit elaboration of detail and clearly marked links between ideas) are partially represented in the largely interview-derived list reported earlier. I explain the significance of this partial match in chapter 5.

In the course of my account of the core norms I highlight, in addition, the following issues, also to be explained in chapter 5:

- (1) Various, seemingly culturally-specific values are promoted along with the literacy that is targeted at news-time;
- (2) teachers overtly affirm in different ways (i.e., they positively sanction) pupils whose news-time conduct is consistent with the six core norms. Zena is one such pupil and is presented as a prototypical “good” pupil. Affirmation, by contrast, is denied to those pupils (they are negatively sanctioned) whose conduct is inconsistent with one or more of the core norms, as Siphó’s is. I present him as a prototypical “bad” pupil, and contrast to Zena;
- (3) the teachers’ application of the core norms is pervasive and remarkably uniform, regardless of which school or at what level they teach;
- (4) whether four years old or nearly eight, most pupils find it difficult to meet the teachers’ core norms, i.e., observance of the core norms does not come easily;
- (5) in 4.3.2.2 I show what strategies the teachers have developed for channelling the pupils in the direction of topic-centred literacy. In part the strategies reflect the lengths to which the teachers are willing to go to ensure that their pupils conform to their core norms. The teachers’ strategies, though, have two further effects: they marginalise whatever alternative literacy practices the pupils employ and, because of this, lead in some instances to hurt feelings, self doubt and alienation on the pupils’ part;
- (6) there is little evidence of teachers suspending their demands, of engaging in code- or style-switching, or of engaging in any form of accommodative behaviour in which they draw on the literacy practices of their pupils. Whatever accommodation takes place, comes from the pupils;
- (7) teachers monitor the grammatical correctness of pupils’ news-time contributions very closely. An effect of the teachers’ intervention in this regard is that news-

givers' accounts are suspended so that repair can take place, and, typically, they are terminated shortly afterwards. A consequence is that the children's flow of ideas is halted, and contact with their audience, lost;

- (8) a number of apparent inconsistencies, contradictions and "dumb practices" become apparent when one examines a large corpus of news-time interactions such as this thesis is based on. To take one example, there are inconsistencies between the expressive function and the individual freedom claimed for news-givers at news-time, on the one hand, and what actually transpires in practice, on the other.

The account in 4.4 offers insight into the *pupils'* perception of news and its functions, and seeks to counterbalance the earlier account on these matters in 4.2 from the teacher's perspective. On the evidence of the class 1 pupils' responses to the speech bubble task and of class 2 pupils to a questionnaire, as well as that gleaned from interviewing the Eager Beavers, I conclude as follows:

- (a) Pupils appear to accept their teachers' characterisation of news as a 'fun' time, when the pupils' agendas prevail rather than the teachers' ones;
- (b) unlike their teachers, there is nevertheless a group of pupils who are aware of a focus during news-time on language per se;
- (c) a different sub-set of pupils both accepts the teacher's characterisation of news, and holds their peers accountable to the core norms which underlie news-time interaction;
- (d) as the interactional evidence earlier shows, the greater proportion of pupils, however, do not readily conform to the teacher's core norms, even though they might accept the teacher's overt characterisation of news as 'fun', etc. Some pupils are aware of incongruencies which this entails;
- (e) conflict, or the potential for conflict, arises most in news exchanges involving those children who do not conform to their teacher's expectations. Less frequently, it occurs between these same pupils and those who embrace the teachers' assumptions.

The account in 4.5 returns, finally, to an earlier issue, that of "interest" (cf. core norm 1). What, I ask, counts as interesting - in the pupils' terms - and how compatible is it with

what teachers consider interesting? I do so in order to highlight the extent of divergence/degree of disparity between the teachers' norms and those of many of the pupils and, further, to indicate how accommodation, when it does take place, moves in the direction of the teacher's norms.

Questionnaire responses from class 2 pupils endorse earlier findings reported in 4.3 regarding their teacher's emic level preferences with respect to topic choice and topic treatment, but also suggest that topic choice and the way topics are treated are contested aspects of news-time interaction. The evidence suggests, moreover, that humour is emically salient for the children, but apparently not for their teachers. Information gained during an interview with Mrs French regarding her assessment of the news-giving style of Zena and Sipho, on the one hand, and her perception of the pupils' assessment of Zena and Sipho's news-giving style, supplemented by independent evidence gathered during news-time observation, reveal three things:

- (a) that Mrs French's norms and those of the pupils are clearly different;
- (b) that Mrs French's perception that the pupils prefer Sipho's style of news-giving to that of Zena, is correct; and
- (c) that while the teachers positively sanction Zena's style, certain children parody it.

Finally, behavioural evidence of Wesley's style of news-giving and of the pupils' reaction to it, analysed in 4.5.2, further emphasises teacher-pupil disparities. The data reveals that Wesley and Sipho share a number of rhetorical/presentational strategies, suggesting that Sipho is not an idiosyncratic news-giver. The extent of the pupils' positive endorsement and their enjoyment of Wesley's news matches that which they show towards Sipho. Mrs French, however, is not able to condone the style in either case. What is paradoxical about this is that Sipho and Wesley are negatively sanctioned for doing what they ostensibly are *meant* to do at news-time, namely, "talk about whatever is interesting to them". The purpose of chapter 5 which follows is to *explain* the paradoxes, inconsistencies and textual and interactional preferences of both parties as forms of social action. It represents the second phase (and third dimension) of the critical microethnographic analysis (the first two being descriptive and interpretive). Put differently, we might ask "What's at stake at news-time?" and "Whose interests are served at news-time?"

5. EXPLAINING WHAT IS AT STAKE AT NEWS-TIME

5.1 Overview

A critical discourse analysis of news-time, as I pointed out in 3.6, entails three dimensions: description, interpretation and explanation. In chapter 4 I provided accounts of the first two dimensions, namely, describing the recurrent textual features of the discourse and then interpreting the interactive behaviour of the participants. Readers will recall my concern when interpreting that behaviour to uncover the participants' perceptions of news-time norms. These, following McDermott, et al (1978) and Erickson (1982), I inferred from the participants' actual behaviour, and then cross-validated those inferences through interviews with the participants.

The goal of this chapter is to answer the sixth research question listed in 1.5: "Whose interests are served by the literacy promoted during news-time?". Doing so amounts to the second phase of my critical discourse analysis in that I attend to the third dimension of it, i.e., *explaining* what takes place during news-time *as social action*. This entails explaining the findings summarised in 4.6 in terms of the effect that they and the prevailing social order have on one another: in simple terms, whether news-time and the literacy practices which it promotes, confirm or, in some way, challenge the status quo.

There are five facets to the explanation I offer of what is at stake at news-time. The first addresses the authoritarian ethos prevailing at news-time, which I described. Totally at odds with the interpretation offered by proponents of news-time, namely, that it promotes egalitarian values, I provide further evidence to that presented in chapter 4 to support the interpretation that news-time serves to reinforce the markedly asymmetrical relations between teachers and pupils in this setting. News-time, in other words, is not different from other classroom activities, as teachers claim it is. I argue that there is an ideological justification for this disparity between what teachers claim and what materialises: news-time is a vehicle by which the teachers' hegemonic position in the classroom - and, more generally, that of people in positions of institutional authority - is bolstered, and the pupils' powerlessness is entrenched.

The second facet of my explanation centres on two intersecting factors: the uniformity and very high level of monitoring (or “policing”) that teachers subject their pupils’ news accounts to, on the one hand, and, on the other, the apparent difficulty which all but a very few children experience in attempting to conform to the teachers’ core news-time norms. I argue that the literacy practices of news-time are “policed” because, as precursors to schooled literacy, they are highly valued, and because, thereby, the hegemonic status of expository literacy is protected. To reinforce my claims in this regard, I, drawing on Eagleton (1991), identify the ideological strategies the teachers employ when promoting news accounts of the sort they prefer, and when counteracting those they disapprove of.

An exploration of the values and interests which are embedded in news-time literacy practices and promoted at news-time constitutes the third facet of my explanation of what is at stake during news-time. In this explanation I argue, essentially, that news-time is the vehicle for promoting Anglo-, western, middle-class values and interests, and, thereby, for reinforcing the hegemony of those values at the schools where, and at the time when I conducted my research. As part of this account of values and interests I discuss the significance of the teachers’ promotion of prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness during news-time, arguing that those norms help further to consolidate conservative middle-class values at a time of considerable political uncertainty.

What is apparently also at stake at news-time, and which is the focus of the fourth facet of my explanation, is the propagation of and therefore entrenched hegemony of the Utilitarian Discourse System (UDS). After first describing what the UDS is, where its origins lie and why it is significant, I demonstrate how closely congruent the discourse strategies, attitudes and beliefs associated with the UDS are with those promoted at news-time. I argue (as I do in regard to schooled literacy and expository literacy) that news-time is both an early precursor to the UDS and a vehicle, once again, by which its hegemony is confirmed and entrenched.

The fifth and final facet of my explanation is an attempt to account for the rigidity and conformity on the part of the teachers to the discourse they promote. I do this by relating it to some of the defining characteristics of the education system under apartheid and argue that the teachers were likely to have been influenced by it in ways which led

them to reproduce aspects of its features during news-time. In brief, the teachers, like the system itself, eschew diversity, entrench prescriptive rules of correctness, and promote forms of authoritarianism, exclusivism, and ignorance. In providing this kind of argument, I refer to the work of authors elsewhere who, likewise, turn to forces in the macro-context to explain behaviours (and patterns of resistance) in more micro settings.

5.2 Teacher domination at news-time

5.2.1 Introduction

In chapter 4 I concentrated on the *literacy practices* employed during news-time, i.e., on the form and content of targeted news exchanges as well as those which fall short of the teachers' norms. A by-product of this narrow focus is that other dimensions of news-giving are backgrounded or ignored. One such, which is crucial, I believe, to an appreciation of what is at stake at news-time, is how news sessions unfold in general and, more particularly, to understanding who controls how they unfold. In exploring this now I address a fundamental contradiction in the data, namely, teacher claims that news-time is different from other curricular activities, since, they claim, *pupils* assume responsibility for what takes place in it, and over-whelming evidence that *teachers' agendas* dominate virtually all aspects of news-telling.

In delineating rough phases in the unfolding of news sessions in 5.2.2, I rely, as I did in chapter 4, on the behavioural cues which the participants themselves provide as they co-construct news sessions. The account provided in 4.0 of the literacy-related norms to which the teachers and pupils orientate is clearly relevant to the account that follows. However, because of the considerable detail in which I have already described them, I refer to features of news-time literacy in summary form only, and then largely to emphasise the teachers' dominance. For the most part, I refer to the way in which news sessions unfolded in Mrs Higgs's class. This decision is one of convenience since the interactional processes exhibited in the unfolding of news-time in her classroom overlap largely with those in Mrs French's class. Where the processes differ significantly from what takes place in Mrs Byrd's Eager Beaver news sessions, other than in the respects described in 1.1.1, I draw this to the reader's attention.

5.2.2 Teacher control in the unfolding of news-time

News sessions are marked off from other classroom routines/activities in a number of ways. First, everyone is physically relocated, i.e., the participants get up from their desks and walk to the mat at the front of the classroom or else, as with the Eager Beavers, move to a new venue. The teacher either sits on a chair while the pupils sit on the floor in front of her in a series of half circles, or else she too sits on the floor at the head of the news ring. This is postural evidence of behaviour at a transition between one activity, i.e., what immediately preceded their moving, and the anticipated new activity (McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 3: 3.5.1 or else 4: 3.5.1). Significantly, it is the teacher, only, who initiates the relocation. Once relocated, the teacher and pupils deal with forthcoming plans and activities (which the teacher outlines) before the teacher provides a second set of signals that news-telling is to commence. Sometimes the signal which initiates news-time is given without preamble, though not in the following data:

- T: We going to do some baking. We going to learn all about bread this week. And I've brought a whole lot of different kinds of flours. Tomorrow we are going to bake our own bread.
- Xs: Oh, phew!
- T: Tomorrow, ah, today, I've brought something that I made at home this morning to show you what kind of thing can make. I'm not going to tell you yet.
- Xs: And then can we take our very own bread home?
- T: Yes, you can take it home or you can eat it here. Right, now, let's sit nicely...Who has got some news for me?

Here the teacher moves from discussion of a non-news topic, namely, baking, which is to take place in the future, to news, first partly prepared for by what Lemke (1990:50) refers to as 'boundary marking devices', namely, "Right, now", after which she explicitly labels the event as "news", cf. McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 1: 3.5.1.

The above data includes a further feature that is common at the beginning of news sessions (cf. Erickson's (1982) principle 2: 3.5.2), namely, explicit reference, by the teacher once again, to how intending news-givers should present themselves posturally (cf. McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 2: 3.5.1). A review of the data shows that the teacher consistently encourages the pupils to sit "nicely", as she does in the data above, or else she instructs them to sit "still" and "beautifully" or "straight", "quietly" and "up straight", as in this next exchange:

- T: Alright, just sit very very quietly. Just settle down. Alright, are you all sitting nicely, up straight?
- Xs: Yes (*in chorus*).
- T: Let's have...Barbara first today.

Janks (1997:17) in an account of “the discursive construction of subjectivity”, draws attention to an important insight by Luke (1990) (himself drawing on Bourdieu 1991) relevant to how the children are expected to present themselves at news-time. In essence, it is that “traditional school-based literacy practices (such as reading, or, here, news-time) *inscribe the bodies of the student*” (my italics). By this the authors mean that the discourse conventions dictate the form and nature not only of the literacy that is produced during a particular literacy event, but also the students’ non-verbal behaviour. One sees further evidence, therefore, of the extent to which the teachers, as the promoters of such behaviour, control the pupils’ presentation of themselves at news-time.

A further basis for deciding who will give news at this early stage in a news session is whether a pupil can convince the teacher that they have something “exciting” to report. This is a matter which I examined in 4.3.1. Crucial, it would seem, is that intending news-givers should be able to convince the teacher that their treatment of topic (regardless what the topic itself is) will be “exciting”. As my fieldnotes show, this produces behaviour similar to that which pet owners elicit from their dogs and cats as they tempt them with food (the prospect of sharing their news) immediately prior to feeding them (i.e., actually assigning them a turn) or to barterers haggling over the price of something with a would-be buyer. In all cases the party called upon to do the displaying or bidding is the one that is powerless, while the person to whom the bidding is done is powerful. Data such as that provided in extract 2 (4.3.1) illustrates this point in the context of news-time.

Significant at this time, too, is the teachers’ consistent requirement (McDermott et al’s (1978) criterion 2: 3.5.1) that news should relate to an activity that took place in the past, outside school hours. In other words, the teacher also controls the choice of temporal frame into which news accounts should be fitted.

Mrs Higgs has at least two further expectations during this phase of a news session. The first is that she, alone, will allocate speaking turns, as the following exchange shows:

T: Darling little things don’t all fight about who’s going to be first and last, I will choose, and see if you are sitting beautifully and neatly. Ah, Mustafa is sitting very quietly at the back, well done. You may be first today...

The second expectation is that pupils should not attempt to self-select, but should bid for the right to speak, by raising their hands:

- T: Come on Anwaar, slow coach.
 Xs: (*Indistinct.*)
 T: No darling, Warwick is. Put up your hand if you've got news.
 T: Sithabeli come here, naughty, naughty girl.

The two extracts above are instances of Mrs Higgs indicating what expected behaviour should be, after things have gone awry, i.e., McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 2: 3.5.1. They are equally examples of McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 4, i.e., contextualising behaviour when a breach takes place, or, in Erickson's (1982) terms, of the teacher applying negative sanctions (principle 3: 3.5.2).

I turn now to the next phase, which is when the teacher terminates one news-giver's contribution and ushers in the next. Would-be contributors on the mat are sensitive to the fact that a cluster of cues at this time signal the termination of a speaker's turn, the appearance of which means that they can start bidding for their turn to give their news. The cluster of cues can comprise the following "structural" features:

- (a) strong affirmation by the teacher of the news-giver and of the substance of his/her news. This affirmation sometimes entails exaggeration and can, but need not, be linked to a proverbial (or proverb-like) saying, a brief summarising statement, or a generalisation by the teacher which wraps up the child's news;
- (b) one or more boundary markers, drawn from a closed set consisting of the following members: "lovely", "good" and "right". As she speaks them, the teacher breaks off eye contact with the news-giver;
- (c) a further boundary-like formula, spoken this time as the teacher scans the audience looking for the person she will nominate to speak next, while prospective next speakers sit in the manner indicated earlier and bid. In its abbreviated form the formula is "Let's see...". Its more extended form is either "Let's see who is sitting nicely" or "Let's see who is next";
- (d) nomination by the teacher of the next contributor.

The relevance of the cluster of behaviours just outlined lies in the fact that it is recurrent, and as such contextualises the ensuing behaviour of all of the participants. Implicitly, too, it cues everyone to the behaviour that is expected (i.e., in terms of a working

consensus to which they are all party). Moreover, the cluster comes at what is effectively a “special moment”, i.e., a transition from one contributor to another (McDermott et al’s (1978) criterion 4: 3.5.1). Dominant throughout, in that it is she who supplies the evaluative and other cues, is *the teacher*. Evidence of how (a)-(d) above cluster together is apparent in the following four extracts:

- S: Yesterday my mum had a braai.
 T: Yesterday you had a braai? And what did you have at the braai?
 S: My cousins came and a few friends came and we et sausages and we et fruit drink and a coke and that’s all.
 T: [Wonderful
 S: [and we saw
 T: Did you swim, wasn’t it too cold? No? Alright. Right, let’s see who is nice, who is sitting nice? Kadar. In the front.

This exchange illustrates affirmation (“Wonderful”), use of boundary markers (“Alright” and “right”), followed by “let’s see...” and the nomination of Kadar. Consider now the following:

- J: What else did you do?
 K: and we played and we made the sandpit. Do you know how?
 T: How?
 K: took bricks and we put it up and put some er er...we put some...we never put red sand but we put the normal sand from the ground...it...it...has the bricks...and then we made our sandpit. (*Laughs.*)
 T: Lovely, and then did you play inside it?
 K: Yes.
 T: Lovely. Good. Right, let’s see who is next. Charmaine.

Here the basic pattern is the same as the one above, except that affirmation is accomplished through “lovely” (twice), “good” replaces “alright” as a boundary marker and is supplemented by “right”, and a different full form of “Let’s see” is used before the next speaker is nominated. Here is the next extract:

- M: I was swimming backwards and they were swimming frontwards and I
 T: and you
 M: and I
 T&M: still beat them
 T: Wow. You must be such a good swimmer, Meshah. Let’s see. Matthew Thompson? Danny, go and put that in your case my darling, please.

Of interest above is the exaggerated effect of “Wow”, use of a summarising statement (“You must be such a good swimmer”) and the abbreviated form “Let’s see”. The next (and last) extract on this topic is interesting in that it illustrates a proverb-like statement, (“All grannies spoil you. That’s what grannies are for”), followed simply by the nomination of the next speaker:

- T: You going to your granny's house? And where does your granny live?
 B: She at Umlazi.
 T: Does she live at Umlazi? Oh that's good. Do you like it there? Does Granny spoil you?
 B: Yes.
 T: Good. All grannies spoil you. That's what grannies are there for. Mervyn...Put your hands down if you waiting.

It is possible to infer both the norms of behaviour and further evidence of the teachers' dominance in the ensuing phase, i.e., between the teacher's nominating the next speaker and the nominated child's taking up the role of news-giver, by once again drawing inferences from the data.

In the following two extracts it is clear that children who are unsuccessful in bidding for a turn, are required to put their hands down and be quiet as they wait for the next news-giver to begin - thereby further inscribing their powerlessness vis a vis that of their teachers:

- T: Hanif (*T is nominating him as the next speaker*).....The rest of you sit nice and quietly, put your hands down while you waiting.

and

- T: Maurice (*nominating him next speaker*)? Danny, sit nicely please my boy.

Those waiting are expected to be patient and uncomplaining, as we see from the next two exchanges:

- T: Barbara (*nominating her next speaker*)? Ross, I'm coming to you my darling. Just wait. Okay.

and

- T: Right, whose next? Faith?
 M: I hardly ever have a turn.
 T: Oh Matthew have patience my darling.

Speakers in their turn are expected to start speaking only once they are in position in the front of the room, i.e., alongside the teacher and facing those on the mat, and not before. As illustrated below, they should also "speak up":

- B: Yesterday my mommy [gave
 T: [No I can't hear you Barbara, you are talking too quietly my girlie.
 B: Yesterday my mommy gave me this...

Once a news-giver is speaking, the teacher strongly disapproves of non-news-givers distracting the speaker. It is worth noting, in addition, that no forms of overt and active

interaction with the audience is expected. The teacher construes talking, in particular, as a very serious breach (McDermott et al's (1978) criterion 4: 3.5.1) and negatively sanctions the transgressor (Erickson's (1982) principle 4: 3.5.2). She calls for (and gets) instant redress from the guilty party. This is evident in the next exchange:

S: When my sister [was ...

T: [Hanif, I'm not talking to you again. Please remember your manners when other people are telling us their news. You don't like them talking when you talking, see.

H: (*Looks down and mumbles an apology.*)

T: Sorry Sithabeli.

S: Then my sister still at...

It is also evident from the following:

K: Mrs Higgs, this is what I was going [to write on

Xs: [Indistinct]

T: (*Clapping her hands three times*) now what is going on today with you children?.....Now all sit on your bottoms flat and quietly.....Thank you.

K: Yesterday I got this.

Turning now to the norms/rules which underlie pupils' news contributions themselves, it is clear from the account given in 4.0 that what counts as desirable behaviour is not only highly specific and consistent from teacher to teacher, but also that the teachers monitor pupils' contributions very closely. In summary, news-giving is constrained by the teachers in at least the following ways:

- (1) The content of news contributions should change from one session to the next;
- (2) contributions should be internally coherent;
- (3) the point or theme of a news presentation should be clearly stated;
- (4) thematic unity should derive from topic-centredness, not implicit associations between a number of unrelated topics;
- (5) news contributions should be phrased in grammatically correct English (the purist's dialect), be semantically precise, and be articulated using standard, non-regional or ethnically marked pronunciation;
- (6) contributions should be clear;
- (7) contributions should be elaborated, i.e., linguistically.

Since I have illustrated all of these before (in section 4.0), I shall not do so here again.

I close this account of how extensively teachers dominate news-time by referring briefly to the closing phase of news-time, the effect of which is to contextualise the end of news-time for the day and the beginning of the next curricular activity. In many ways the

closing routine mirrors the opening one. Having checked that she has given everyone a chance to contribute (or, at least, everyone she has earmarked to give news), the teacher marks the boundary between that sub-activity and the next, by asking the children to sit in the same manner as she did before nominating the very first speaker, and indicates where they should move to. The two endings below illustrate this:

T: Who else has not been up?

X: I've still [got

T: [No, alright.

X: Mervyn.

T: Mervyn, no news today boy? No? Okay.

X: Charmaine.

T: Right. All sit nicely, all sit up straight please. Today if you are very, very, very good and quiet, which you've been so far, we are going to go to computers.

and

T: Right, all sit down very nicely. Sithabeli this is not a hairdressing salon darling. Okay? Sit nicely, up straight. All stand up.

5.2.3 Teacher-dominance at news-time in other settings

Confirmation that the dominance that teachers exercise in my data is typical elsewhere is, as I explained in 2.6, to be found in the work of researchers in Australia. Christie (1993) considers news-time (or “morning news” as it is known in Australia) to be a *curriculum genre*. As a curriculum genre, she explains that it comprises two registers - a pedagogical register, concerned with pedagogical goals, specifically, the structuring of morning news activity, and a content register, associated with the “actual morning news giving role” (ibid). Unlike the content fields in other curriculum genres, for which teachers have prime responsibility, those of morning news are distinctive because, as she notes, they are selected from the *children's* experiences, as is claimed locally for news-time.

However, as Christie also explains, because teachers control the pedagogical register, they control the children's behaviour in line with the underlying goals of this genre. This control is seemingly relaxed during phase 4: “morning news giving” (cf. 2.6.2). However, as Christie also notes, non middle-class children, in particular, do not perform well in the role of news-givers because “teachers tend to favour particular kinds of fields of personal experiences in morning news activities” (which I detail in 2.6.2). In essence, therefore, Australian pupils' control over the content register is largely *illusory*, except in

the case of children from middle-class families - though even in such cases pupils are constrained both in their choice of topic and in their treatment of it.

Baker & Perrott's (1988) research, also conducted in Australian schools (and also referred to in 2.6.2), provides further evidence of the extent and nature of the control that teachers exert. Like Christie, they recognise that news sessions are "ostensibly spaces in the school day where children may introduce their own topics and interests" (p.19), but contend that in fact news sessions are "occasions for the initiation of pupils into school culture, for the definition of 'school knowledge' and for the development of interactive competencies relating to acceptable interrelationships in the classroom community" (p. 20). As they explain further, news sessions (p. 35) "construct(s) formal relations among children", and "recapitulate" the dominant view of pupil-teacher relationships, which is an hierarchical one. They emphasise, too, how, through "stage managing" news-time, teachers appropriate the "private/personal realm" of the pupils, namely, their choice of topics, and get them to "transform (that) subjective experience to make it fit the contours of the activity schedule and the accepted format of interrelationships as well as of the language requirements of classrooms" (p. 25). Elsewhere (p. 26) they note that "it is the teacher who receives and transmits what the children's 'news' is, coded into the categories and domains of school knowledge". In this there are strong overlaps in the work of Christie. While Baker & Perrott point out ways (in their data) in which teacher-pupil interactions at news-time differ from one classroom to another in their Australian data, they nevertheless conclude (a) that teachers rarely release their control over their pupils; and (b) that the outcome of news sessions is little different from that of other ('ordinary') pedagogical events in the school day. In sum, it is clear on the strength of the Australian data that teachers there also dictate what takes place during morning news and also dominate proceedings.

What is significant, finally, about the account of her sharing time experience provided by Gallas (1994) - cf. 2.6.2 - is that while seeking desperately to ground her practice of it in a different ideology from the authoritarian ones described above in the work, for example, of Christie and Baker & Perrott, Gallas catches herself counteracting her own efforts and so reaffirming the very elements of teacher control and domination that she sought to move away from.

5.2.4 Some conclusions

My own account (in 5.2.2), supported by the investigations of researchers elsewhere (as described in 5.2.3), overwhelmingly confirms the dominance and power that teachers exercise at news-time. During no phase do they release their control, which includes Christie's (1993) phase four, i.e., when the so-called content register holds sway. Likewise, no dimension of pupils' beings escapes their control during news-time either. Insights from Luke (1990) lead one to appreciate that news participants' bodies are also "inscribed" by news-time. A range of different perspectives such as those of Baker & Perrott (1988) and Christie (1993) illuminate the matter, ultimately, of "ownership" of news-time. *Teachers* "own" news-time while pupils, with few exceptions, do not, which is just the opposite of what teachers claimed when interviewed (see 4.2). The value of the introspective account by Gallas (1994) in part prepares the way for the central issue explored in 5.3.3, namely, the strategies teachers employ in order to secure the hegemonic status of the dominant group's news-time conventions - particularly, in the context of this thesis, those pertaining to the form and content of news items. It also anticipates chapter 6 which is concerned with the implications and applications of this research into news-time.

From the evidence presented in 5.2 it is clear that, in terms of the degree of teacher-control that it manifests, news-time contrasts only very superficially with other pedagogical events. The seeming contrast between them in fact masks a deeper level preoccupation of teachers at news-time and most other teaching events. This is their preoccupation with the inculcation of hierarchy and an authoritarian ethos. As I suggest in subsequent sections of this chapter, my data actually reflects this preoccupation more emphatically than data collected anywhere else in the world apparently does. For example, whereas pupils are permitted - indeed, are *encouraged* - to ask questions of the news-giver in the North American and Australian data, in my data, however, this is proscribed. The authoritarian socio-political structures of South Africa at the time and, in particular, the influence which the apartheid education system exerted on teachers may, as I argue in 5.7, help to explain why.

5.3 Teacher monitoring at news-time and what it means

A feature of my news-time data that is as evident as the degree of power that teachers exercise is, on the one hand, the difficulty most pupils experience trying to satisfy the targeted core norms, and the assiduous and consistent monitoring to which teachers subject their attempts, on the other. It is these two trends in the data and their relationship that are central to the account that I provide in this section.

5.3.1 Reasons for pupils' difficulty in meeting target norms

Three explanations for the pupils' difficulty in meeting the core norms (cf. 4.3) which teachers expect of them are offered in the literature. Frye (1985) suggests that the difficulty can be traced to the immaturity of the pupils. He notes of the behaviour of young readers that "young children (do) have difficulty in discussing a story once the conversation moves beyond telling what happens". He supports this contention by quoting Whitehead (1977), who writes: "The young reader seldom finds it possible to be articulate in any specific way about what he has liked or valued in his reading". In other words, evaluative commentary of the kind sought during news-time (as it is, for example, in extract 7: Anton's account of his visit to the Comores) is a skill that develops over time. If sought prematurely, pupils will have difficulty.

Christie (1993) concurs that the difficulties are linked to maturation, but develops this line of reasoning by reflecting on functional language development in children. Writing specifically of the challenges posed by morning news, she notes (p. 159) that the central linguistic capacity that it promotes is language for the recreation and representation of experience. Referred to by Halliday (1973) as the representational function of language, this is a language function which is (a) less important for children than most other language functions are (e.g. the instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic and imaginative functions) and (b) develops much later in children than do those just listed (cf. Halliday 1978). Hence, the demands made at news-time, particularly of very young children such as those in pre-primary school (cf. Jennifer's account - extract 11: 4.3.2.2), could well be premature, and therefore unrealistic. Hence, the difficulty young children have in meeting the targeted literacy behaviours.

A third explanation offered for pupils' difficulties in meeting the target norms at news-time is a sociolinguistic one: children's difficulties derive from mismatches between the targeted literacy and the literacy strategies into which children are socialised in different communities. News-time, as we saw in chapter 4, draws on a select and highly specific set of practices and little deviation from or variation in those practices is accepted. A case, as I pointed out in 2.2.3 where literacy practices fostered at home and in the community coincide with those which are valued at school, is described by Heath (1983;1986), namely, in Maintown. By contrast, in Roadville and Trackton, which are adjacent to Maintown, the relationship between home and community literacy practices is more complex, in that some practices, only, are congruent with what the school values. Moreover, certain practices (as employed in Roadville) are appropriate early on in the school curriculum, while others (as employed in Trackton) only become relevant in terms of the school's curriculum, much later, and so go unrewarded for a long time. Scenario 2 (2.4.2): "The literacy practices of Eli Fisher, Jr" and Scenario 3 (2.4.3): "Conflicting literacy practices in a Maine fishing community", also described in chapter two, likewise reflect mismatches, as does the work of Michaels (1981;1992) on news-telling in California. Her work, as pointed out earlier, suggests that race-based socialisation correlates in the case of white children with literacy behaviour which is rewarded (because it is topic-centred) while in the case of black children is not (because it is topic-associating).

5.3.2 Further reasons for teachers' and pupils' conduct at news-time

While many pupils struggle to meet them, teachers are apparently not consciously aware of the norms they orientate to at news-time. In spite of this, however, teachers are remarkably uniform in what they demand from news-givers. In accounting for this, I note that sociolinguists have shown (see Wolfson 1989:44) that people who are unable to articulate their sociolinguistic rules nevertheless are able to make accurate judgements about the appropriacy or inappropriacy of utterances. Critical linguists (e.g. Ivanic & Simpson 1992:141) suggest another not incompatible explanation, namely, that through such ideological processes as naturalisation (see Thompson 1990) norms (such as those of the teachers) become obscured, i.e., they become so commonsensical as not to focus people's attention.

As to the remarkable uniformity of the teachers' news-time norms, I believe the following ideas of Kress & Threadgold (1988:238) are helpful. According to them, the more clearly a genre (or, in the terminology of this thesis, a literacy practice) is defined, the more opaque it is to introspection, and, consequently, the more powerful it is. Conversely, the more contested it is, the fuzzier it is likely to be. Teachers, following this, are unable to articulate their news-time norms because they are too close to them. They nevertheless 'know' them. Pupils, meanwhile, are either too young to have acquired the representational function of language or else are not familiar with those norms because they have not been socialised into them and into the ideology which those norms embed.

5.3.3 Ideological strategies used to promote news-time literacy

A reconsideration of what I reported in chapter 4, supplemented by additional information provided in 5.2.2, indicates, perhaps not surprisingly, that the teachers in my study employ all six of the ideological strategies outlined by Eagleton (1991) - described in 2.5 - when promoting news-time and the core norms which underlie it. In what follows, I point first to evidence of *mystification* (Eagleton's strategy 6) because of the over-arching effect which this strategy has on participants' basic conceptualisation of: (a) the setting in which news takes place; (b) the news event itself; and (c) those who participate in it. Thereafter, I remind readers of evidence of the workings of naturalisation/universalisation (Eagleton's strategies 2 and 3) in the interview responses of teachers and in certain pupils' responses to one of the tasks I set. I then turn in somewhat greater detail to evidence of strategies 1, 5 and 4, i.e., 'promoting beliefs and values congenial to it'; 'excluding rivals', and 'denigrating rivals'. This overall ordering of the account of the teachers' strategies (i.e., 6, 2, 1, 5 and 4) corresponds in many ways, as readers will see, to the ordering of related issues in chapter 4.

Eagleton's strategy 6, with which I start, entails "conveniently obscuring social reality through mystification". This strategy is suggested in Mrs Byrd's characterisation (Interview: 16 November 1993) of Natal Pre-Primary School as fundamentally "child-friendly", a "child's paradise", in fact. The following are consequences which Mrs Byrd claims stem from these features of the school: (1) the children "know that every single person in *this* place cares for children"; (2) the children "know that in this world they

(are) safe and everybody's going to think that what *they've* got to contribute is valuable"; and (3) "there's an area in the school for whatever they want to do and you can be what you want to be in a place like this ... If you want to be a ballerina when you weigh 640 kilograms, you can be a ballerina. If you want to be a bride and push a pram, you can *be* a bride and push a pram. Really". Mrs Byrd did however concede that, in spite of the above, "we still have to pull them (the children) into line and say 'that's unacceptable, and socially you don't do that', etc."

Such an over-arching conceptualisation of the institution as a paradise where one can be and do whatever one wants to, echoes strongly of children's alleged freedom to say whatever is important to *them* at news-time and of the allegedly spontaneous nature of news-telling as opposed, for example, to "discussion" which at the pre-primary school is envisaged as training 'to stay on topic'. Similarly, the 'school-as-a-child's-paradise' conceptualisation conveniently misrepresents the extent to which the children's identities and behaviour are in fact constrained and channelled or, in Mrs Byrd's words, "pulled into line" by the school. What takes place at news-time (cf. 4.3-4.5 and 5.2) is sufficient proof.

Further evidence of mystification, this time pertaining both to the pre-primary and the junior primary schools stems from the characterisation of the news-time event itself. As I have already indicated (in 4.2.2, 5.2 and elsewhere), news is consistently touted as being *different from* other curricular activities - which Christie (1993), along with the weight of empirical evidence to the contrary in my corpus, suggests is not the case. Data reported on in 4.4 and 4.5 indicate that teachers claim in addition that news-giving is *fun*, a characterisation which, on the evidence reported in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, a number of pupils appear to endorse. Closer analysis of the majority of news-time interactions, however, highlights discrepancies between what most of the children *allege*, and what they endure during their turns at news-telling. As a *fun* activity news-time is implicitly contrasted with all other curricular activities - none of which are similarly described as being 'fun'. The fact that the children are relocated in order to engage in news-time (from their desks to the mat and, in the case of the Eager Beavers, from one room to another) appears to lend additional support to the claim that news is different from other school events. It also adds to its mystique. So too does the typically enthusiastic manner in which the onset of news-time is announced (by Mrs Higgs and Mrs French) and the equally

enthusiastic response of many children. The exaggerated expressions of disappointment on the parts of those not offered an opportunity to share their news on any given day is further confirmation of pupils' seeming endorsement of news-time as unique and special. Again, evidence of what really transpires during many news exchanges challenges this, as we saw in chapter 4 and in section 5.2.

The labelling of the group of seven pre-school children as "Eager Beavers" is a further instance, I suggest, of mystification, since it distinguishes them from all other groupings in the pre-primary school including others of their age who, like them, are in the school-readiness group. By so doing, the school confers mystique both on who they are and, more importantly from my point of view, on *what they do*. Significantly, the Eager Beavers receive more regular as well as more extensive practice in news-telling than their peers, which surely increases the mystique of news-time, both for the Eager Beavers and for those not part of the Eager Beavers group. Mrs Byrd's contention, in addition, that news-time with the Eager Beaver group is "a kind of family time" (Interview: 16 November 1993) is a further instance of mythologisation/mystification. Implicitly, labelling it as such legitimates the asymmetrical role-relationship which applies at news-time (cf. 5.2) and the rights which the teacher exercises over them. Mrs Byrd becomes a figurative mother to the Eager Beavers - caring for but also controlling them. I have more to say regarding her and the other teachers' mother identity later on, when discussing Eagleton's first ideological strategy, i.e., 'promoting beliefs and values that are congenial'. The mythologising of the group as a family, however, confronts us with a contradiction. Were Mrs Byrd and the seven children indeed a family, then *unfocussed* interaction would be appropriate (cf. Scollon & Scollon 1984:184). However, as chapter four has shown, news-time promotes the direct opposite, namely, *highly focused* (i.e., topic-centred, elaborated, decontextualised) discourse, which is typically *not* associated with family interactions. The fact that the teacher-pupil relationship is conceived of as a "kind of" family time (and not a "real" family time) is possibly all that can explain this anomaly.

Whether they are myths or misconceptions, I note that further mystificatory, mythologising effects, also associated with nurturance and the provision of benign, family-like care for younger members, are entailed by Mrs Byrd's essentially psychological interpretation of news-time and its functions. Throughout the period of

my research she consistently conceived of news-telling as a time of “sharing”, “caring”, and “promoting the children’s self-esteem” through “building a positive self concept”. News-time, she often said, is about “feeling good about yourself”. In addition, Mrs Byrd envisaged the children’s news as literally entering their homes where, too, ideally, it would engender the support and affirmation of the children’s real families. Her hope (as expressed in the interview on 16 November 1993) is that the children’s written, illustrated news will be prominently displayed at home, family members will see it, draw attention to the power of writing (since what is displayed for the parents is a representation of what was said in their absence) and affirm the children in the progress they are making towards acquiring writing-related skills. Quite apart from the mystification suggested here of writing, per se, real family support functions not only to legitimise news-time further, but, as the following exchanges show, it turns the children if not into heroes, then, certainly, into bringers of happiness, the instruments of that happiness, i.e., their illustrated news summaries, having earlier been produced in paradise, if we recall Mrs Byrd’s earlier description:

Interview with Grayson

T: Grayson?

G: Mm?

T: How does your heart feel when Mommy and Daddy read your news?

G: Happy.

T: Why?

G: Because I like it when they tell my news.

T: And do you think their heart’s happy when they read your news?

G: Yes....

(Eager Beaver drawing task interview: 18 November 1993)

Interview with Saxony

T: Saxony where do you put your news pictures when you take them home?

S: I give them to my Mommy.

T: And does she read them?

S: Yes.

T: And what does she say?

S: She says “that’s nice”.

T: Oh, and how does your heart feel when she’s busy reading?

S: Quite pleased.

T: And how do you think Mommy feels?

S: Very happy.

T: Does Daddy ever see your news pictures?

S: Only when he comes home from work.

T: And then what does he say?

S: He says “that’s nice” also...

(Eager Beaver drawing task interview: 18 November 1993)

The junior primary teachers appeared not to mystify either the institution in which they work, or the children when in the role of news-givers. They did though appear to rely more than Mrs Byrd did on the ideological strategies of *naturalising* and *universalising* news-time (i.e., Eagleton's strategies 2 and 3). As I pointed out in 4.2.1, news-time did not appear in their syllabi and, while Mrs French was less concerted in her scheduling of news-time than Mrs Higgs was - Mrs Higgs, we recall, believed that children should give news every single day - both devoted considerable time to news-telling, as the total number of my recordings testifies. Comments such as Mrs Byrd's "telling news is just such a part of the pre-primary school" "it's something that you just do" and Mrs Higgs's "it's just one of their subjects as such" (4.2.1) suggest each teacher's implicit belief in the naturalness and universality of news-time at this level. As I showed too in 4.4.3, such thinking spills over to some of the children, one of whom, Travis, himself claimed as follows when asked why we give news at school: "Because, because mm we (are) in the Blue group and we do all kind of stuff".

Evidence of the teachers promoting beliefs and attitudes congenial to news-time (i.e., of their employing the first of the ideological strategies outlined by Eagleton - cf. 2.5) is abundantly present in my data. For illustrative purposes I will confine myself largely to extracts 8, 9 and 10 in 4.3.2.1, those being cases where pupils provide news contributions which meet their teachers' formal expectations. Integral to the workings of this ideological strategy (in these and other cases) is the teachers' adoption of solidarity politeness strategies.

As Scollon & Scollon (1983) explain, solidarity politeness strategies entail two sets of things: firstly, they entail under-playing or treating as unimportant differences between the speaker and his/her interlocutor in power (status) and distance (familiarity). Secondly, they entail treating as permissible whatever impositions the speaker wishes to make on his/her interlocutor or, whatever face threatening acts s/he wishes to engage in - this on account of the presumed closeness of their relationship. Such behaviour, they note, can be either genuinely felt, or else can be the product of conventionalised, cultural behaviour. The teachers in my study impose on their pupils 'on record', i.e., engage in a range of face-threatening acts. By way of redress, they (a) claim common ground with the pupils in various ways and (b) convey the idea that they and the children form a partnership, i.e., they are co-operators. Let me briefly illustrate the above.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987:102) the solidarity strategy of ‘claiming common ground’ with one’s interlocutor can have many manifestations. One such is achieved through conveying admiration for or interest in something associated with one’s interlocutor. In extracts 8, 9 and 10 the teachers clearly do not simply notice, but take considerable interest in what Zena, Grayson and Warwick report. Their feedback is enthusiastic and supportive and the questions they ask (in Grayson and Warwick’s cases) develop and extend the accounts they provide, e.g. Mrs Byrd asks “What else can he do?” after first being told of Grayson’s dog’s antics, and on hearing that Warwick had been to The Oaks, Mrs French asks “Now tell me...”. In a number of places the teachers express intense, almost exaggerated interest which, according to Brown & Levinson, is a further characteristic of solidarity behaviour. Mrs Higgs’s rhetorical “Was she?”, spoken with marked rising intonation, followed by laughter in line 5 (extract 8) and her exclamation of “Goodness!” (line 12) are both instances of this, as are Mrs Byrd’s approving responses to Grayson’s accounts of the tricks that his dog does: “That’s a kind dog!” (line 6); “Ah: that’s very cute!” (line 9) and “That’s very nice” (line 15).

Mrs French’s exchange with Warwick is also richly illustrative of the high level of her engagement and intense interest in his account. “Wow! Had you ever been on a horse before this time?” (line 17: extract 10); her echoic response in line 21: “A split in the middle?” and reactions such as “Mm, so its nice and cosy to have an electric blanket” (line 27) are all evidence. Claiming in-group membership with one’s interlocutor is a further solidarity strategy which Brown & Levinson alert one to. Using in-group identity markers such as abbreviated, made-up or nick-names are one means by which this can be achieved. While not in evidence in the three extracts chosen for illustration, this is a strategy that occurs often elsewhere in the data, particularly that recorded in Mrs Higgs’s classes. (Examples: “Mish”, “Mr Alty”, “squiggly worm”). A further broad strategy by means of which it is possible to claim common ground and therefore solidarity with one’s interlocutor, according to Brown & Levinson, involves expressing unanimity or, at least, a measure of congruence with the point of view, opinions, attitudes and knowledge of others. What again typifies extracts 8-10 is the high level of agreement with and confirmation of the point of view that the teachers express in relation to Zena, Grayson and Warwick’s news. Disagreement on the teacher’s part is completely absent. The teachers empathise with the children in ways already mentioned. Echoic questions are a

very high frequency means by which this is conveyed throughout my data (cf. Mrs French's "A split in the middle?" (extract 10, line 21), and her "Does it?" in line 29) and are instances where the teachers presuppose or assert common ground. A very clear case of claiming common ground is the personal anecdote which Mrs Byrd provides of the tricks her pony did when she was a child. This appears in lines 37-40 in Appendix C-3, which is the full account of extract 9. A further assertion of common ground is evident in Mrs French's empathetic reactions (in lines 25-29) to Warwick's account of his parents' "heated bed": "Oh how nice and cosy!" (line 25), "Mm, so it's nice and cosy to have an electric blanket" (line 27) as well as to his description of the ice-cream at The Oaks: "Oh! that must be yummy", she says (line 29) on hearing that it tastes just like bubblegum.

Many of the strategies mentioned so far illustrate the co-operativeness that is fundamental to solidarity politeness and manifest themselves in indications that the teachers know what the pupils' wants are and that they take them seriously. Mrs Higgs, for example, demonstrates this when, in lines 12 and 13 (extract 8) she summarises the essence of Zena's account of the visit to Noddy Land, and gives prominence to the implicit moral to it. Mrs Byrd does so rather more fundamentally simply by engaging with Grayson on the subject of his dogs. At the time, they dominated his thinking and he spoke of them constantly, often to Mrs Byrd. To be hearing about them once again clearly is a manifestation of her concern for his need to talk about his dog yet again. Finally, the teachers convey their co-operation and solidarity by "claiming reflexivity" and "claiming reciprocity" (Brown & Levinson 1987). These they achieve through offers and promises which they make to the children. Such behaviour is not illustrated in extracts 8-10, except for the offering Mrs Byrd makes of additional information regarding Anusha's dog and her own pony in extract 9 (Appendix C-3), but is evident in other exchanges where, for example, children are offered opportunities at the next news session to report on information not developed in their news that day. Being optimistic typifies the teacher's stance towards much of what the children report and, again, is a means by which they signal solidarity with the children. Finally, giving or asking for reasons, as Mrs French does in line 12 (extract 10): "By that time you were used to it, weren't you?" and again in line 19 "So you're getting quite good" is a further solidarity-seeking strategy which is common in the data.

This account, I believe, provides revealing evidence of “beliefs and values congenial to news-time” being conveyed during news-telling as a consequence, particularly, of the solidarity politeness strategies that the teachers employ. In summary, the beliefs and values that pupils and others might consider “congenial” are that:

- (1) the teachers are deeply interested in the children’s worlds and what the children say about them;
- (2) the teachers are extremely supportive of the children during their news-telling, they are ‘on their side’;
- (3) the teachers are empathetic, in a caring, motherly way; and
- (4) the teachers are also like close friends of the children.

Were they asked about the effects of or even the motivation behind their use of solidarity politeness strategies, I believe the teachers would be pragmatic, and, possibly, would point to the degree of pupil co-operation which it secures. In other words, they would claim that they employ such strategies because doing so assists them to ‘do the job of news’. If one adopts a more ideological point of view, one is, I believe, forced to acknowledge the remarkable strategic gains which accrue to the teachers as a result of their reliance on solidarity politeness strategies. To appreciate this, all one needs to do is recognise that the assumptions underlying such politeness behaviour ensure that the teachers are granted the very freedom of access to the children’s worlds that they need if what they want to do is mould and shape the children’s selection and then representation of the details of those worlds to people outside them. To express this point more graphically: because of the assumption that power and distance differences are to be ignored and that otherwise potentially face-threatening behaviour is condoned, the teachers are able, firstly, to rummage around in the children’s worlds, and, secondly, are permitted to take charge of the children’s reporting of the details relating to them - and none of this is seen as intruding or imposing.

A different way of understanding the above, in that it likewise assures teachers of the rights of access we see them enjoying during news-time exchanges and because it predicts the level of control they exercise (and the dependence which they engender), is in terms of *interpellation* (Althusser 1970). Indeed, interpellation is also another way of understanding the various forms of mystification described earlier. Janks & Ivanic (1992:308) explain that interpellation has to do with the naming that takes place between

people, and the effects of that naming on people's behaviour. If accepted, such naming positions or 'subjects' the participants, resulting in "a surrender of power to the interpellator", i.e., to the one who does the naming. News-time, on the evidence of my data, clearly involves both naming and a surrender of power to the interpellator. In terms of the labelling that takes place, pupils are reconstructed back to being little children, their teachers constructed as their guardians. The following interpellating drawn largely from the data provided in 5.2.2 bears this out: "Darling little things"; "(my) darling"; "my girlie"; "little girl"; "my angel"; "naughty, naughty girl"; "my boy"; "you children" and "boy". And though news-time is claimed to be the *pupils'* time, it is their construction of the pupils as dependent small children that presumably permits the teachers to step in at news-time and, as it were, direct them, step by step, in all that they do.

If pupils comply with their teachers' desires and present their news in a way which conforms with the core norms, further congeniality - in fact, further solidarity treatment - awaits them. As the three exchanges analysed in 4.3.2.1 show, pupils are rewarded in different ways. In Brown & Levinson's terms (1987:102), the teachers "fulfil H's (i.e., the pupils') want (for some x)", examples which they list being the following: "Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, co-operation)". In extracts 8-10 the "gifts" encompass the following: non-verbal affirmation by the teacher in the form, for example, of smiles, nods, pats and strokes (cf. extract 10); favourable and overtly verbalised evaluation of their news cf. Mrs Byrd's "That's very nice" (extract 9, line 15) and "Right, thanks Warwick, that was lovely" (extract 10, line 29); a longer than average turn at news-giving or more frequent turns than is the norm (as happens in Grayson's case); and being spared negative sanction (cf. Zena's account: extract 8). On three occasions Mrs Higgs rewards the children for "behaving nicely at news-time" by "going to computers" (cf. the last exchange quoted in 5.2.2). This, too, therefore, counts as a "gift".

If clear evidence of promoting beliefs and attitudes congenial to news-time is to be found in 4.3.2.1, that of the remaining two ideological strategies mentioned by Eagleton, namely, "excluding rivals" and "denigrating rivals" and (strategies 5 and 4) is provided in 4.3.2.2, 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 and in much of 4.5.2.

The rivals which are 'excluded' or 'denigrated' are, of course, rival literacy practices to those defined collectively by means of the core norms (described in chapter 4) and known

as “schooled” or “expository” literacy. Included amongst what are construed as rivalling the targeted literacy practices are the following:

- (1) literacy which is collaboratively produced by three or more participants not including the teacher. Travis seeks, unsuccessfully, to engineer three-person literacy in extract 11, while Sipho successfully accomplishes collaborative literacy with a number of children in his class in extract 22 - but is unrewarded for it by the teacher. Such literacy is further characterised by the fact that it does not seek to provide a faithful portrayal of events, but aims rather to achieve an evocation of the general atmosphere and spirit of the event recounted incorporating sound effects and laughter from the audience as well as appeals to specific members by the central figure;
- (2) unfocussed, unelaborated, inexplicit, context-dependent literacy - such, for example, as Mervyn provides in extract 12;
- (3) literacy which relies on pointing out the features of an object through *displaying* that object (such as the double page in Danny’s stamp album is in extract 13) and identifying its features non-verbally as well as verbally, rather than doing so in the absence of the object and relying exclusively on verbal means of description;
- (4) personal rather than impersonal literacy - which is what Shamitha’s account (extract 21) might have been and which Danny attempted, though vainly, in extract 13;
- (5) literacy which is cast in a dialect of English other than the purist variety of standard English (i.e., SASE), as extracts 14-20 are.

Some of the ways in which teachers seek to exclude such rival practices are suggested by the ways I describe them promoting practices congruent with the core norms in chapter 4. I describe them as ‘coaxing’, ‘shaping’, ‘channelling’, ‘offering a template’, ‘shepherding’ and ‘directing’ the children’s news accounts along the paths which they prefer. Denigration of rival practices, meanwhile, is suggested by such descriptions as the teachers ‘heading off’, ‘discouraging’, ‘closing down’ and ‘interrupting’ accounts cast in terms of rival or dispreferred practices. Alternatively, denigration is implicit in expressions I use in chapter 4 suggesting the systematic domination of pupils’ accounts by their teachers, the teachers interfering with, interrupting, obstructing rather than facilitating the pupils’ flow of ideas and suspending or terminating their accounts, as well

as when I comment on the children “paying the price” both for observing the teachers’ requirements and when disregarding them.

In what follows I shall expand briefly on some of the strategies by which rivals are both excluded and denigrated, so completing this account of the ideological strategies employed during news-time. What this will mean, in essence, is synthesising the accounts I provided earlier in chapter four of the routines, practices and strategies employed by the teachers when promoting news accounts consistent with the core norms, on the one hand, and summarising, on the other, the range of forms of negative sanctioning which the teachers mete out to them when they employ - or are enticed by - rival literacy practices.

Teachers employ a vast panoply of routines, practices and strategies to channel the children’s presentations in the ways they approve of. The extent as well as the concertedness of the shaping that this entails is graphically illustrated in Mrs Byrd’s news sessions with the Eager Beavers, an illustration of which is provided in extract 11. The routine consistently employed is particularly successful in channelling the children’s contributions in the direction of topic-centred, elaborated, linguistically complex discourse. By way of reminder, the routine comprises five major practices:

- (1) *Nomination*: Here the teacher employs one of two syntactic formulas both of which involve focusing and elaborating and model how individuals can be introduced into a news account.
- (2) *Topic elicitation and development* (these are two separate practices - though I include them together here): Asked “What would you like to tell me today?”, the news-givers identify a topic which only they and the teacher thereafter develop. Only the teacher is permitted to ask questions.
- (3) *Synthesis in written summary form*: On the conclusion of the pupil’s spoken account of his/her news, the teacher summarises it in large writing on a piece of card, articulating what she writes as she writes it, and then reads it through in full. In this way the children’s news theme is confirmed retrospectively, it is cast in a syntactically complex form and, implicitly, at least, the high value accorded to topic-centredness is endorsed.

- (4) *Summary illustration and associated talk*: Summaries are returned to their originators who then illustrate them. Such activity is constrained by the summary, and thematises any subsequent discussion of the illustration or reiteration, elaboration or clarification of the original news.

As I pointed out in 4.3.2.2 in regard to extract 11, the routine just mentioned is complemented by two sets of strategies which ensure further that the children's discourse is topic-centred and elaborated. Firstly, Mrs Byrd consistently weaves key words associated with the topic of the news (or else proforms for them) into the fabric of the discourse that she collaboratively produces with the news-giver. In addition, she constantly invites the news-giver - either implicitly or else much more explicitly by means of yes/no and wh- questions - to elaborate on his/her news account. In this way she provides news-givers with a template or blue-print in terms of which to engage with and present information on a topic. All that is described here is, I suggest, ideologically motivated, in that its purpose is to exclude the multiplicity of potential alternatives/rivals to topic-centred, elaborated literacy. The threat that they pose, as we can see from the above, derives in part from the ease with which they are produced, i.e., what distinguishes targeted from rival practices is the presence or absence of relatively small differences between them, such as whether the discourse involves two or three participants, has one or more than one theme, is elaborated by the news-giver alone, or collaboratively by both the news-giver and the teacher, etc.

The strategies employed by Mrs Higgs (extract 12) and Mrs French (extract 13) are possibly less elaborate than those of Mrs Byrd since they lack anything equivalent to stages 1, 3 and 4 of the routine Mrs Byrd relies on, but the intention underlying what they do is, ultimately, very similar. Mrs French's strategy (in extract 13) largely involves dominating proceedings, much as a director might find himself/herself doing in his/her early dealings with a young actor. Hence, it is she who effectively takes centre stage and determines what the theme of Danny's account will be and how it will be developed. A measure she introduces in order to exclude context-dependent accounts, is to forbid children from bringing objects to school, thereby preventing them from referring to them during their news presentations. Concerted questioning is a further means by which she too ensures topic-centredness and elaboration and is also the means by which, through

asking some but not other questions, she ensures that rival practices such as overly personal accounts, are avoided.

For her part, Mrs Higgs (in extract 12) employs the twin strategies of modelling what she wants and prompting/cueing Mervyn in ways intended to lead him into providing elaboration and specificity on his own. Again, this entails that she largely dominates the news session.

If, lastly, we consider the strategies which all three teachers employ in order to exclude the rival practices which they perceive as emanating from the children's usage of non-standard grammar, it is clear that instant identification and eradication is the preferred course of action, i.e., the ideological strategy of denigration (Eagleton's fourth).

Denigration of a rival literacy practice takes various forms in the data, all of which are implicit, and all of which entail negatively sanctioning the user of such literacy practices. Some practices are implicitly denigrated through the teacher's withholding gifts of different forms (gifts, that is, in the sense of Brown & Levinson 1987) from the users of those rival practices. In extract 11, after first mildly sanctioning Travis ("Just wait please, Travis") she draws attention more explicitly (and more publicly) to the nature of the transgression that she perceives him to have committed: "But Travis, you have had your turn, let's listen to Jennifer's news". In so doing she denies him the gift of freedom of action while concurrently suppressing three-party as well as multiple-topic news-telling. In extract 13 Mrs French not only denies Danny the "gifts" of affirmation and approval, but alienates him from his topic and the feelings he appears to have wanted to convey in regard to it. The reason for such denigration lies, as I suggested earlier, in his attempting to employ a literacy in which (a) he displays and (b) which is personal, not impersonal. The literacy practices employed by Siphho (cf. extracts 15, 22 and 24) are also denigrated in various indirect ways (as well as in somewhat more direct ways, as I show later). Extract 22 is particularly revealing: Siphho brings obvious joy and delight to his audience and engenders a high level of engagement and participation from them, but, largely because his account is not analytically restrained, factually correct, anchored in the real world and free from non-verbal accompaniments or audience participation (i.e., performance dimensions, cf. scenario 6: 2.4.6), she withholds all demonstration of appreciation or approval, i.e., all gifts. If rival literacy practices are not denigrated

through the teacher's withholding gifts, they are denigrated through being obstructed in different ways. Readers will recall instances (such as in extracts 14-20) where teachers are willing to arrest the momentum of the news-givers' accounts as well as the joy they are bringing to those on the mat, in order to affect a grammatical repair. Shortly thereafter (except in Siphon's case - extract 15 - where she intervenes on a number of occasions) they terminate those accounts. In some instances teachers also appear to scoff at and mock accounts where children employ dispreferred literacy practices. Mrs Higgs's "Now what's 'I ran with Kadar'?" (line 3) and "Did you just run in and then go home" (line 12), both drawn from extract 12, are examples. What the teacher is denigrating here is literacy which, on the one hand, is unelaborated, and, on the other, insufficiently decontextualised. The following exchange (extract 27), with which I conclude this account, foregrounds minimality and a lack of co-operation as the principal features of a perceived rival literacy:

Extract 27

- T: Come on Kabeer, come here quickly. I want to hear something from you today, please. Right, tell us something.
- Xs: (*Laughter.*)
- X: No news.
- T: No, excuse me. No laughing. Don't be spiteful. You must have news, darling, what did you do yesterday?..... When you got home...Did you jump into bed and sleep?...All afternoon and all night?... What did you do?.....Think nicely.....
- K: After Madressa I played.
- T: Where did you play?
- K:At home.
- T: At home? Who with?
- K: With er, with er, with no-one.
- T: Just with no-one, by yourself? And what did you learn at Madressa yesterday?
- K:
- T: Who do you go to Madressa with?
- K:my daddy.
- T: Just your daddy? You and your daddy?...Oh, don't you go with anybody from the school?
- K: (*Shakes his head.*)
- T: And Latifa, does she go?
- K: (*Nods.*).....
- T: Yes. And what do you learn there, tell us?
- K:
- T: What do you learn about?
- K:
- T: Is that what you learn?
- K:
- T: No. Tell us quickly.
- K:
- T: Come on. I know you go to Madressa and Hanif goes and Zena goes...and Yusuf goes and Anwaar goes... What do you learn?
- X: I know.
- T: You also go, Mish?

K: I learn all sorts of things.

T: And what sort of things, tell me please?

K:

T: What do you learn about?

K:

T: Do you learn about farms or houses or trees? What do you learn about?

K:(*Whispers.*)

T: Hm? Don't you know? Oh dear me, I'm going to have to speak to your dad. If you going every day and you don't even know what you learning, that's very sad. (*T then nominates the next news-giver.*)

In this exchange we see how solidarity politeness (“darling”, the wide range of suggested topics the teacher offers as well as suggestions for developing some of them, and her joking “Did you jump into bed and sleep?...All afternoon and all night?”) gives way to pleading and then to retribution of a seemingly more sinister kind (“Hm? Don't you know? Oh dear me, I'm going to have to speak to your dad. If you going every day and you don't even know what you learning, that's very sad”) as the teacher denigrates the literacy Kabeer is willing to offer. Mrs Higgs and Kabeer's father are in cahoots, it would appear, and the negative consequences of Kabeer's non-compliance with the teacher's wishes are far from over. In fact, Mrs Higgs's comments hint at coercion.

5.3.4 Some conclusions

In the account provided in 5.3 I have dealt with the second facet of my explanation of whose interests are served by news-time literacy practices of the sort outlined in the previous chapter. I have concentrated on the uniformity and very high level of monitoring or “policing” that teachers subject the pupils' news accounts to, and the apparent difficulty which all but a very few children experience in attempting to conform to the teachers' core news-time norms. My argument is that the norms of news-time literacy are “policed” because, as precursors to schooled literacy (and as overlapping with the literacy valued in courts of law, in tertiary education and in science teaching - cf. 2.5), they are highly valued, and it is the hegemonic status of such expository literacy that is being protected. I have given considerable attention to the role played in achieving this of ideological strategies, they being the principal vehicle of the policing that takes place, and the means, ultimately, by which the hegemony of the norms for news-time literacy is ensured. What I have not referred to, are the values that are promoted along with the literacy practices and whose/what interests they serve, since these, clearly, are also policed. It is to the specifics of such matters that I now turn.

5.4 The value system promoted at news-time

Early in chapter 4 I provided evidence to suggest that news-time has become a naturalised pre-primary and early junior primary speech event, one which none of the teachers recall ever participating in themselves as children or receiving instruction in as trainee teachers. It is what you do if you are a teacher at this level, hence Mrs Byrd's comment recorded earlier (in 4.2.1): "telling news is just such a part of the pre-primary school", "it's something you just do" as well as Mrs Higgs's comment: "it's one of their subjects as such" which, I noted, is not literally the case. The perception that news-giving and early formal education are integrally associated is, we also noticed (in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2), a feature of at least some of the children's thinking. At that time I raised the possibility (4.6) that the literacy practices associated with news-time (the core norms) might be a medium by which values and attitudes favoured by the teachers are transmitted, and that the promotion of such values and attitudes might be a major implicit goal of news-time. In their responses to my questions (see 4.2) the teachers provided no overt recognition of this likelihood, leading me to suggest that they probably saw such matters as side-effects or by-products of news-time, rather than as being linked in a more fundamental way to the function of news-time.

At various points in my analysis of the interactional data in chapter 4, however, it became clear that issues closely associated with a preferred "moral order", "world view" or "value system" were deeply embedded in the teachers' interactions with their pupils and were part of what they were inculcating as they worked with the children. The value system is one which some of the pupils share, especially those whose news-time presentations, I showed, met the teachers' expectations and were consequently affirmed or rewarded in various ways. Pupils most obviously in this category include Zena (extract 8: the almost prototypical 'ideal' student in the teachers' eyes), Grayson (extract 9), and Warwick (extract 10). The value system which the teachers expect and promote is not one, however, which all of the pupils are completely familiar with or, indeed, accept. The most outstanding figure in this category is Siphso, whose implicit value system and world view is noticeably different from that of Mrs French, his teacher (cf. 4.5.2.1).

In the account which follows, I intend demonstrating, through reference to the data, what values/world view and moral order are promoted by the 3 teachers for whom they, like the convention of news-giving itself, have become naturalised to the point where the teachers are unable to see them for what they are, namely, a particular selection from the vast array of values, beliefs, assumptions and expectations potentially available for them to choose from. What alerts us to the fact that a particular selection or set of preferences is at issue, rather than a universal core, is the lack of congruence, often, between what the teachers expect in this regard and what many of the children provide, or else fail to provide. It is significant that a number of the pupils who 'rub against the grain' of the teachers' expectations are, if not black or Indian, then from non middle-class backgrounds, and when neither of these categories applies, female (cf. similar observations made in relation to science in 2.5.3). What this suggests is that the maintenance of class, racial and cultural hegemony is perhaps at stake. The fact, firstly, that the news-time value system does not come easily to many of the pupils and, secondly, that they are closely policed by the teachers (and certain pupils) serves to reinforce this likelihood. This was the case, as I argued similarly in 5.2, for the hegemonic shaping during news-time of teacher-pupil relationships. Teachers, on the evidence of my analysis, are seemingly the primary (or only) agents in the promotion of the value system that I am about to outline. The compatibility, however, of those values with ones fostered by Western educational systems as a whole, by the educational ideological milieu in South Africa prior to democracy, and to the UDS, which enjoys dominance in all the powerful institutions locally and in the Western world (cf. 5.6), suggests that there is a much bigger backdrop to the promotion of those values at news-time, and that many more interests are at stake.

The data suggests that teachers promote the following values during news-time:

- (1) individuality,
- (2) originality,
- (3) commitment,
- (4) restraint,
- (5) factual accuracy,

- (6) analyticity,
- (7) rationality and
- (8) articulacy.

In addition to these values the teachers present their preferred (middle-class) view of the world by, at best, ignoring or, when pushed, quickly dismissing what they regard as unpleasant realities. In what follows I will explain the above features and give particular attention to items which overlap or which appear to be in conflict with one another.

The high value placed on *individuality* is apparent from injunctions such as those of Mrs Byrd: “Be independent, have your own ideas. Be individual. Don’t go with the crowd. What you have is worth something. Don’t just jump on the bandwagon”. (Interview: 16/11/1993). As Adendorff & Nel (1998) argue in regard to the pre-school literacy event “planning time”, which also promotes it, individuality is a Western, middle-class value. Heath’s (1986) account of bedtime story reading in Maintown also highlights the middle-class preference for individuality. Individuality contrasts with collectivism or group responsibility, an instance of which is Heath’s (1986) analysis of reading and writing practices favoured in the working-class community of Trackton. Individuality is similarly jeopardised in my news data by moves on the part of certain pupils towards more collaborative forms of news-telling than are permitted, witness Sipho’s account of his roller skating activities (extract 22: section 4.3.4) and the stringent manner in which Mrs French seeks to eliminate it. We recall, too, the alacrity with which Mrs Byrd prevents Travis from infiltrating into Jennifer’s account (extract 11: section 4.3.2.2). While it is more obviously an instance of interruption than a form of collaborative news-giving, Travis’s behaviour at least threatens the assumption that people give news one at a time. It is possible, too, that without Mrs Byrd’s intervention, others would also have sought to claim the floor. Quite apart from this evidence, the isolation of the news-giver from his/her peers and the decontextualised accounts of their news which the children are required to give (cf. Danny, extract 13: 4.3.2.2) underscore the high value placed on individuality by the practice of news-giving itself.

Originality, the second item listed, is related to individuality in that teachers prefer news-givers to give their own accounts and not rely on what an earlier contributor might have

said. Mrs Byrd's reaction to the tendency among some pupils to duplicate or else embellish the topic of previous speakers is an instance of this. As she explains:

If I've now had three Aladdin stories and now one child as little Grayson does and sometimes picks up on somebody else's story and he makes it three times better and reports it as his own news, then I will say "No, I now want proper news from you" or "I know that that didn't really happen but what did you do when it was Sunday and I saw you had burnt face on Monday. Where did you go?" So I give him a positive opening to report decent news. So I will prod him, bring him back into line (Interview: 16/11/1993).

So, too, are the sentiments of Mrs Higgs who, while on the one hand claiming "I don't mind if they bring their gun, the same gun week after week or "I played with my friend" every single day, at least they are contributing" (Interview: 11/12/1992), and therefore seeming not to endorse originality, indicates her preference for what she calls evidence that they are enquiring, whether they "have learned something that they can share with us. Not just, "I played with my friend". Her preference therefore is for new rather than recycled accounts (cf. the data provided in 4.2.3). The pupils' hostile response to Andile's account in 4.3.1 (extract 6), is further evidence that originality is valued over repetition or recycling, as is Mrs Byrd's observation that "*they* (i.e., pupils) can see who's got interesting news and who hasn't got interesting news. 'Cos they often say 'But you've told us that so many times'. You know, and they actually they themselves say 'Oh no, not this again'". It is perhaps significant that Andile is African and therefore perhaps draws on a value system in which "originality" is not as highly valued. This is relevant since, as Tannen (1984:193) shows, originality is valued by some, but certainly not by all cultures. It is treated as such by Anglo, middle-class groups, for instance, who take care to avoid clichés and other well-worn formulations in their formal writing. They also seek, for example, to avoid buying clothing (shirts, dresses, etc.) with patterns which they know others already have. Other groups, by contrast, place considerable value on received wisdom and on what is old, and so prefer to use fixed expressions rather than formulate anew what they want to say. Similar cultural assumptions possibly also explain why many so-called "non-traditional" (African and Indian) students currently studying in South African universities plagiarise, given the weight of authority accorded in their cultures to the wisdom of those who have preceded them. Research in New Zealand by Jones (1991) is also revealing in this regard. Exploring the literacy and pedagogical practices employed by the pupils in two classes at the same grade level in a New Zealand

school - one a low-to-middle stream class of children largely of Pacific Island migrant working-class families, the other a top stream of pupils largely from white middle-class professional and business families - Jones found that while both groups believed in the value of hard work and indeed did work hard, they drew on very different discursive experiences. Thus, those in the first class relied on the authority of the teacher, recording everything the teacher said and learning what she said for examinations and tests. Such literacy behaviour on their part led in turn to the teacher dictating notes to them. The other group, by contrast, saw the teacher as one of many knowledge resources, and went well beyond absorbing and repeating information from any single source. They questioned, challenged and took up detached positions on issues, and strongly resisted dictation. Unlike the class largely of Pacific Islanders - who were dependent on received knowledge and ascribed authority - they placed a high premium on their independence and freedom to choose, in original ways, from multiple sources, incorporating their own points of view. In sum, accumulating evidence suggests that originality is a *culture-specific preference*, not something that is universally valued and practised. There is also evidence to suggest that it is a *Western* preference and that, in this country, it correlates more closely with white, educated, middle-class, Anglo groups than with others.

Commitment or, at least, overt indications of enthusiasm towards what one does is also culture-specific. Brown & Levinson (1987) suggest, as I indicated in 5.3.3, that overt displays of enthusiasm are a form of solidarity politeness. But as both they and Scollon & Scollon (1983) point out, only some cultural groups employ overall or 'global' politeness systems which emphasise such solidarity behaviour. To illustrate: whereas it is conventional for East coast Americans to employ solidarity politeness strategies in their business communication (e.g. when representing themselves in cv's and when making business presentations) thereby "putting their best foot forward" and "selling" themselves, such behaviour is alien to other groups, who would find it offensive, overly pushy and opinionated to behave in this way. For them, under-representation of their accomplishments and a more neutral (even negative) representation of their chances of success are expected.

Interestingly, it is the assumption that it is desirable to be positive and enthusiastic and to sell oneself (or, at least, one's message) by putting one's best foot forward, that Anton (extract 7, section 4.3.1) apparently does not share, though others in his class 1 group

clearly do. Again, it is significant to note that Anton (who is coloured) is not what would then have been regarded as a “mainstream” child. Consequently, it is unlikely that such displaying and selling would have been conventional for him and his group.

There is no overlap between the culture-specificity of overtly displaying enthusiasm, being publicly positive, and selling oneself, and the first of the values discussed so far, namely, individuality. Clearly though there *is* a link between overtly manifesting commitment to one’s news through “selling” that news, and originality (the second of the values above), manifested, for example, in the teachers’ concern that news-givers foreground what is exciting, unusual or special. Anton’s account has already been mentioned in this regard, but the same applies to those of Shamitha (extract 21: Indian) and Mervyn (extract 12: non-mainstream white). Here, too, the teachers unwittingly presume knowledge relating to how one should be packaging one’s message which is deeply embedded in a system of cultural preferences which are alien to the children. And, once again, they are the assumptions of Western, Anglo groups.

Restraint is the next value to be considered here, and, in many ways, subsumes those (listed as items 5-8) that remain. While it might be objected that ‘restraint’ and ‘enthusiastic commitment’ (item 3) are opposites, it is important to note that the latter (i.e., enthusiastic commitment) applies only to the manner in which the news information is presented. For the rest, restraint is consistently endorsed.

Mrs Byrd, for example, appears to regard Grayson’s account of his dog’s antics in his grandfather’s speedboat, as frivolous. It lacks restraint, and so she negatively sanctions him (see extract 23: section 4.3.4). The same appears to be at the heart of Mrs French’s response to the accounts Siphon gives (cf. extracts 22 and 24) as well as the sentiments recorded earlier in 4.5.2.1. As she says in 4.5.2.1 “Siphon should not be allowed to “go over the top”...“because you don’t know where it’s going to lead all the time...and what impression it’s going to make on the other children because...they might get the idea that you approve”. “I put a damper on it” (his news-telling).

Factual accuracy (item 5) is clearly very highly valued. Evidence of this is plentiful, since, in almost every exchange, the teachers devote considerable energy to eliciting and at times checking on an accumulation of facts from the news-givers. Extract 14 (section 4.3.3) also provides an instance where a pupil is held accountable on a matter of factual

accuracy by one of his peers. Though employed originally to make a slightly different point, extract 12 (Mervyn: “I ran with Kader”) demonstrates this preoccupation. Mervyn, clearly, does not recognise that news accounts should be filled with facts. Evidence gleaned of his parents’ occupations, the kind of afterschool care provided for him and what the family spends their leisure time doing suggests that the family is probably not mainstream middle-class, which again reminds us of bias in terms of social class in the teachers’ expectations at news-time.

An account where the *veracity* of some of the information provided is at issue, is Siphos’ account in extract 22: section 4.3.4. Because of his perceived unwillingness to slow this account down so that issues of fact can be double-checked e.g., “And where, where were you hanging on?” (line 18); “What were you hanging on to?” (line 20), Mrs French withholds all forms of affirmation for him.

The high value accorded to *analyticity* (item 6) is partly suggested by the concerns for facts, particularly accurate ones. What I have in mind more, though, are accounts such as those of the death of Shamitha’s grandmother (extract 21), the features of a stamp in Danny’s album (extract 13) and Jennifer’s day at the beach (extract 11). Analyticity of the desired kind is *not* a natural feature of the children’s accounts whether, again, because it is a specifically middle-class preoccupation (cf. Heath 1983;1986), or because the children are too young to practice it. That it might be culture-specific, is suggested by Scollon & Scollon’s (1984) work on the Athabaskans. They show that the volunteering of information, analytic or otherwise, is not done, especially to strangers. Wallace (1994:129) raises a further issue with a bearing on analyticity, namely, that raising consciousness of contentious matters is “a cultural matter; it may not be acceptable in some socio-cultural contexts”. As I note slightly later, prompted by the work of Ashton-Warner (1963), the analyticity which the teachers encourage (and model) in my data, does not extend to contentious issues.

Analysis of my data shows, further, that *rationality* (item 7) is valued, whereas emotionality is not. Put differently, facts are highly regarded, expression of feeling is not. This we saw poignantly illustrated in extracts 21 (the death of Shamitha’s granny) and 13, Danny’s stamp collection - particularly the teacher’s ‘silencing’, through not building on it, of discussion of the *source* of the stamps. The backgrounding of feelings in public

discourse is typical of white males in this country. That their preference in this regard should form part of what is transmitted at news-time emphasises yet further the non-neutrality of the value system which news-time literacy practices embody and promote - through the close surveillance which the teachers carry out. That it should be *female* teachers who promote an essentially male preference reminds one of the hegemonic status of such discourse.

Articulacy (item 8), correlates with commitment (item 3), analyticity (6), factual accuracy (5) and rationality (7). As Labov (1972) has shown, this (i.e., "articulacy") is a middle-class value. Actualised, for example, in the discourse of the boardroom, academic conferences and the courtroom, it conforms, ideally, to prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness, themselves a largely middle-class creation monitored/policed in schools and beyond (cf. Bolinger 1980) by 'custodians' of correct English whose concern is the hegemony of English and, in particular, the purist variety of it.

I turn finally to what is essentially a "benign" view of the world, which results in topics such as death, revenge, rude gesticulation, war (all of which figure in 4.3.4) as well as divorce, irrational behaviour (such as a parent storming out of the house), senile incontinence, racism and loneliness, which are explored in news accounts elsewhere in my corpus but are not included in this thesis, being discouraged by the teachers. In their place prominence gets given to what is "nice", "happy" and "moral" in the sense of middle-class morality. Powerfully emblematic of this contrast is extract 24: section 4.3.4 in which Siphso satisfies his teacher by reflecting the morality she prefers, namely, playing hide-and-seek, after first declaring that he and his friend were going, that afternoon, to take revenge and beat up the gardener. Siphso is adept in making the adjustments that Mrs French requires of him, but it needs to be remembered that, while he associates with middle-class children and lives on the property of a white middle-class family, he is black and lives with his mother in the domestic helper's quarters on that property. His 'lived reality' is thus likely to embrace far more that is "ugly" and that is incompatible with the comfortable middle-class morality of his mother's employers. One should, I believe, also keep in mind the lived experience of children like Kabeer who, unlike the mainstream child whom the teachers appeared to envisage as their prototypical pupil during news-time, indicated in the class 2 questionnaire that he did not like telling news because "I don't have much news and don't go any where" (4.4.2). In concluding this account of

the class-specific world view which news-time appears to embrace and promote, I feel it necessary to refer to the work and, in particular, the topical choices which Ashton-Warner (1963) permitted in her work teaching reading to working-class Maori children. I do so because those choices provide a contrast to those of the teachers I investigated and remind one that believing in a benign world and talking only about what is “nice”, “happy” and “moral” is no more than a conventionalised preference.

Central to Ashton-Warner’s “organic reading” (and writing) method, is the elicitation from each pupil of what she calls their “key vocabulary”, it being the starting point from which they learn print-based literacy skills and the vehicle by which she sought to reduce the threat which written culture posed to the working-class children she taught. The vocabulary choices referred to are “key” because of their particular significance to each child. They must have “intense meaning for the child”; and be “part of his being”. Ashton-Warner writes, further, (p. 33) that: “Pleasant words won’t do. Respectable words won’t do. They must be words organically tied up, organically born from the dynamic life itself. They must be words that are already part of the child’s being”.

Ashton-Warner (p. 49) considers key words to be “captions to the pictures in the (child’s) mind”, enabling the child to link reading to his/her “inner life”, and so making it meaningful to him/her, rather than having words, and reading more generally, imposed from outside.

The Ashton-Warner method proceeds as follows: once elicited, the child’s chosen word is written on sturdy card and given to the child. It becomes his/her property - physically and psychologically - the child, in a sense, *owning* it. At subsequent stages pupils write their words in their notebook, share them with the rest of the class by writing them on the blackboard and, having accumulated a sufficient number, write sentences and then stories with them.

Referring to the pattern she detected in the key words of children she worked with, thereby illustrating typical key words, Ashton-Warner (p. 40) writes of: “the fear words dominating the design, a few sex words, the person interest, and the temper of the century. Daddy, Mummy, ghost, bomb, kiss, brothers, butcher knife, gaol, love, dance, cry, fight, hat, bulldog, touch, wild piggy...”

In addition, she provides striking examples of the key vocabularies of specific children, the elicitation of, or, in some instances, the stimulation of which (after she had acquired background information about those usually very silent children) promoted a sudden surge in their performance during “reading” lessons. The following set (p. 44) is an example of a surge from one child: “Daddy, Mummy, Puki, fight, yell, hit, crack, frightened, broom”.

Ashton-Warner’s work raises a number of issues which help to throw the news-time value system/world view and its effects into sharper relief. On the evidence provided, key vocabulary emerges from and illuminates the children’s inner worlds and family circumstances, including their fears and anxieties. Key vocabulary reflects what matters *to the children*, not what matters to someone else, and the process of reading/writing, accordingly, becomes meaningful to them. News-time, it has to be said, does likewise on occasion, but rather than permitting children to explore their fears, and, often, what genuinely interests *them*, the teachers in my data gloss over and retreat from “uncomfortable” topics and pursue aspects of the children’s news that are interesting to them, the teachers. Often, the focus falls on materialistic considerations, e.g. on what new acquisitions children have acquired; on consumer-linked activities, e.g. entertainment; on non-essential food and beverages that the children (and teachers) have enjoyed; and on other concerns linked to the pursuit of pleasure. The expression of feelings and of values is largely confined to the teachers, and then usually in order to promote their preferred world view and value system.

A number of children in my data (all, significantly, non-mainstream) are either silent or else reluctant contributors. While the reasons for this are potentially numerous, one reason might be that the inner worlds and feelings of those children are not explored as they would be in Ashton-Warner’s work. The outer worlds, though, are. Consider the following exchange between Mrs Higgs and Sithabeli (a mother-tongue speaker of Zulu). I find it noteworthy for the teacher’s reluctance to enter Sithabeli’s inner world and, for example, to explore her feelings at the time:

Extract 28

S: Yesterday we went to P Section

T: Hanif (*T reprimanding him for talking*)!

S: and my mom said if we can buy some um.....roast chicken and...my...ah...dad said no.

T: You dad said no?

S: Ja.

T: Oh,...no.....Warwick. (*T nominates W as the next news-giver.*)

The children's outer-worlds, though, are validated against a world view characterised by the trappings of middle-class consumerism and materialism. For children who do not participate in this world, news-telling is, to use Baker & Perrott's (1988) psychological terminology, essentially a "cold" event rather than a "hot" one. Pupils are unable to own their topics as pupils appear to have been able to in Ashton-Warner's work, so that instead of witnessing the surges of involvement that Ashton-Warner writes of, one witnesses pupils at news-time resorting to such tactics as repeating themes (their own or those of others), nominating but not building on themes, choosing "safe" but empty themes - e.g. "today I got another sticker" - or else declining the turn to contribute, all of which, one could argue, are signs of being disempowered by news-time.

Ashton-Warner herself contrasts the hotness of her method (based on the children's key vocabulary) with the coldness of the alternative preferred at infant schools at the time (imposed 'from outside') when she juxtaposes "Daddy, Mummy, ghost, bomb, kiss, brothers, butcher knife, gaol, love, dance, cry fight, hat, bulldog, touch, wild piggy" (mentioned earlier) with "Come John come. Look John look. Come and look. See the boats?" (drawn from a book in the *Janet and John* series). She describes the latter as "the vocabulary of the English upper middle-class, *two-dimensional and respectable*" (my italics) and asks "If you were a child, which vocabulary would you prefer?" (p. 41).

A second observation deriving from Ashton-Warner's concern to elicit the children's key vocabulary, is the following set of corollaries: (a) the engagement between teacher and pupil (and, presumably, between pupil and pupil) produces genuine interaction. As Ashton-Warner explains (p. 44): "No time is too long spent talking to a child to find out his key words"; (b) the nature of what materialises in the children's writing books is often "dramatic", i.e., from the point of view of middle-class morality and aesthetics: "These books they write are the most dramatic and pathetic and colourful things I've ever seen on pages" (p. 52); and (c), the children's output - specifically their writing - is not criticised: "they are private and they are confidences and we don't criticise their content. Whether we read that he hates school or that my house is to be burned down or about the brawl in the pa last night the issue is the same: *it is always not what is said but the freedom to say*" (p. 54 - my italics).

News-time clearly contrasts with Ashton-Warner's approach in all three respects itemised above. Writing of the adaptations needed for her method to fit conditions in rural Ecuador, Gunter (1987) draws attention to the essentially democratic ethos which underlies the Ashton-Warner approach and which presumably prevails during her classes, and its incompatibility with the authoritarian, racist assumptions which underly the Ecuadorian education system. In doing so he reminds one of the undemocratic ethos of news-time in South Africa and hints, in referring to the effects which an education system can have on the discourse practices within it, at a possible explanation for its being so. This is something I pursue further in 5.7.

The contrast between news-time and Ashton-Warner's work highlights a further issue of a contextual nature which perhaps helps to explain why news-time is undemocratic. What we see taking place at news-time is a form of censorship, since what is considered "bad", is disallowed. The focus on key vocabulary, by contrast, does not involve censorship, since what is permitted is what the child deems important, the only proviso being that whatever vocabulary items the child requests must be key to him/her, not peripheral. Censorship, it needs noting, was a measure that was integral to South African society under apartheid.

A final contrast which emerges from a comparison of news-time and Ashton-Warner's approach to literacy acquisition is the greater critical consciousness that the latter is likely to lead to. Ashton-Warner's approach shows strong parallels with Freire's conception of the nature and function of literacy and of how to teach it. This is because the starting point of literacy acquisition for Ashton-Warner is also issues which the learners themselves - as disempowered individuals - identify in their immediate context as affecting their lives. A further similarity is the critical awareness (and consequent empowerment) that presumably comes from externalising those issues and coming to understand why they are as they are. News-time empowers pupils because it equips them with dominant literacy strategies. As practised at the schools I investigated, however, it disempowers, too, because it does not promote critical consciousness, self-reflection and insight into the circumstances and effects of domination. Evidence of this fact is the teachers' unwillingness to explore further such issues as I mentioned earlier as death, revenge, rude gesticulation, divorce, irrational behaviour, racism, loneliness, etc.

In conclusion: It seems likely to me that teachers foster news-telling as consistently and assiduously as they do because news-telling embodies and promotes values and interests which, to the teachers, are commonsensical. Such interests are broadly compatible with Western, Anglo-, capitalist (?), largely white, middle-class values and assumptions. In promoting them as they do, teachers are ensuring the hegemony of those values and interests. Thus far, therefore, I have argued that what is at stake at news-time is three forms of hegemony: that of teacher-pupil relations, that of news-time literacy, and that of the middle-class value system. In what follows in 5.5, I further consolidate the argument expressed so far before suggesting (in 5.6) that news-time is the vehicle, in addition, by which the hegemony of the Utilitarian Discourse System is assured. Thereafter, by pointing to specific features of the apartheid education system, I seek to explain why news-time norms in my data are applied with a degree of rigidity which distinguishes news-telling in this country from its equivalents elsewhere in the world.

5.5 The significance of promoting prescriptive rules of grammatical correctness at news-time

As I demonstrated in 4.3.3, grammatical correctness is one of six emically salient features of news-telling for the teachers in this study. I arrived at this conclusion on the evidence of analysing teacher-pupil interactions and after consulting with the participants and with other informants. What is interesting, is that grammatical correctness did not emerge at all from the interviews I conducted with the teachers prior to recording their news-time interaction and investigating their actual behaviour. This disparity between what they do and what they say suggests, perhaps, that awareness of the importance of grammatical correctness is more deeply embedded in the teacher's consciousness, and therefore is less available to conscious recall, than are other of the core norms. Building on ideas presented in 5.3.2, it seems plausible to argue further that the reason that grammatical correctness is so deeply embedded is attributable to the extent to which these norms have been naturalised and, following Kress & Threadgold (1988), their consequent opacity.

Further distinctive aspects of the teachers' concern for grammatical correctness which emerge from chapter 4 are that the teachers uphold a rigidly purist variety of grammatical correctness, and do so with noteworthy vigilance and alacrity. By this I mean that the

teachers monitor all levels of linguistic structure (phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic) and that they seek immediate repair to the errors which the children make. Such intervention, I noted further, usually obstructs the flow of the children's ideas and their contact with their audience leading, in most instances, to the termination immediately afterwards of the children's turn. Finally, in contrast to their teachers, a number of the pupils articulated their clear awareness when interviewed of the focus at news-time on language. A significant number of those pupils were from non-mainstream groups.

My goal in what follows is to explain why prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness are promoted as they are, and whose interests they serve. In doing so I draw on insights from four commentators - Crystal, Penelope, Collins and Cameron - who, adopting different perspectives, offer a range of ultimately related explanations as to why prescriptive norms of correctness are promoted. On the strength of the insights they provide I contend that all apply helpfully in explaining what is at stake in my news-time data.

Crystal (1995:367) provides three possible hints as to why children are expected to conform to prescriptive norms of correctness at news-time. The first derives from his claim that "prescriptive attitudes play an important part in defining the educatedness of a society, and should not be glibly dismissed". Implicitly what Crystal appears to be suggesting is that adherence to prescriptive norms is a marker of societal distinction, suggesting that there is a hierarchy operating on a global scale in terms of which societies are ranked and, presumably, in terms of which their relative prestige can be determined. Hence, promotion of prescriptive norms of correctness is a form of societal investment in that hierarchy and its assumed prestige. The second hint derives from Crystal's observation that, in regard to English, prescriptive attitudes are "the product of over 200 years of social history, and it is probably impossible for anyone to grow up in an English-speaking society without becoming sensitised to some of these attitudes". Not only is Crystal alerting us to an historical dimension to the issue, he also seems to be implying that prescriptive norms of correctness function intra-societally as well as inter-societally, and that consciousness of their effects is deep-seated and omnipresent. Finally, Crystal (1995:367) draws attention to the *aggression* with which the prescriptivist cause is presented, and writes as follows: "Its language is invariably highly charged, using the

metaphors of conflict (defending the language, a battle lost), and strongly condemnatory. At such times, the watchword of 'eternal vigilance' becomes obscured by an apparently eternal intolerance".

Further motivation for promoting prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness - in addition to distinguishing between societies and individuals who are educated or else are not, so drawing attention to their place on two kinds of hierarchy - is that it allows the 'educated' to engage in verbal aggression. The effect of such aggression is, as Crystal explains elsewhere, that it produces insecurity in those who are attacked. Its underlying purpose therefore appears to be psychological, in that one undermines people's security through promoting prescriptive grammatical norms. This, as I suggested in section 2.5, is common wherever hegemonic practices are imposed on marginalised groups and individuals - here children and less educated adults - for whom the practices often do not make sense because they differ so radically from the language they use in their everyday experience, or because they symbolise values with which such people do not wish to identify.

Penelope's (1985) account adds to Crystal's in that it clarifies the agents of and underlying motivation for propagating prescriptive norms of language behaviour, something missing in Crystal's account. Prescriptivism (she prefers "purism") "has political as well as economical origins" according to Penelope (1985:83), who notes further that it "frequently finds its staunchest defenders among the economically and socially privileged members of society", and is a means by which such people signal their group identity and exclusivity. Prescriptivism is also the means by which they exercise power over non-group members (Crystal's "aggression"?) through, for example, producing or at least referring to books on good/proper English usage. Like Crystal, Penelope thus provides a social-psychological justification for their conduct. Interestingly, she adds that she believes prescriptivists are themselves motivated by fear. Such fear, she writes: "is aroused by the prospect, which they (i.e., purists) see as inevitable, that, once the distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' ways of speaking and writing are lost, they will also lose the basis for their claims to superiority in comparison to the language use of other people". What she appears thus to be adding to our understanding is that what accompanies the promotion of prescriptive attitudes in times of social change is the *promoters'* social vulnerability. Valuable for my purposes is the

link Penelope alerts one to between prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness on the one hand, and middle-class identity, capitalist advantage and the vulnerability of powerful groups in times of social change, on the other. The security or otherwise of the white middle-class was very much a concern at the time when I collected my data. Were the teachers in my study likewise promoting prescriptive norms because of the middle-class investment they perceived those norms to embody - and were they possibly also doing so because of a heightened sense of threat to the white middle-class through “invasion” of their institutions by hitherto excluded groups?

Collins (1987;1991;1993), in contrast both to Crystal and Penelope, approaches prescriptivism and what it stands for from the perspective of critical literacy and, in particular, the role it helps to play in reproducing the status quo. For him (see also Street & Street 1991), prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness operate in conjunction with and as an integral feature of schooled literacy practices. The effect of the prescriptive norms for him is thus not independent of the literacy, as it is for Penelope, but is bolstered by them and, in turn, bolsters them. As I have already pointed out (2.5), schooled literacy practices and their derivatives - in law, etc. - enjoy hegemonic status in the powerful domains of Western life. If Collins is correct about the intimate relationship between prescriptivism and schooled literacy, the hegemony of schooled literacy safeguards prescriptive grammar notions and ensures that their influence persists. Thus, my teachers can perhaps be said to promote prescriptive notions of grammatical correctness simply because they are an ‘ingredient’ of schooled literacy. The picture, though, is more complex.

Referring to what he sees as the sociopolitical motivation behind the promotion of schooled literacy, Collins (1993:180) notes (consistent with the ideological model - cf. 2.2.3) that “literacy is an essential aspect of *social order and disorder*” (my italics). Expanding on this point in regard, specifically, to the influence of education, Collins notes (p. 182) that “literacy and education often seem to resolve fundamental social antagonisms, but the price of ‘resolution’ is a particular shaping of literacy in which appropriative definitions and hierarchical institutional arrangements disguise and displace the earlier conflicts”.

Collins illustrates this point first by cross-referring to Cook-Gumperz's (1986) explanation of why schooled literacy emerged and was institutionalised (cf. my overview of this in 2.3) and, more valuable for my present purposes, also illustrates it by referring to recent attempts to resolve social antagonisms through "discursive manipulations". His observations (p. 182) as to when and why such appropriations took place are especially significant, hence my italicising:

...these institutional appropriations *begin in periods of social crisis*. Indeed, the recent history of literacy shows a recurrent pattern: a displacement of social crisis onto literacy and its 'skills'. Thus the literacy 'crises' of the late 1970s in the USA and Britain were represented as a perilous decline in basic skills necessary for participation in the economy and, especially, for higher education (Street, 1984). The crisis was announced *at a time of severe economic depression and at a time when new groups - women, minorities, large numbers of working-class students - were arriving at university*.

Cross-referring to Rose (1985), Collins notes how the solution to the issues referred to is typically sought in intensive, controlled drill in remedial skills - what Auerbach (1992) earlier (cf. section 2.3) refers to as the 'back to basics' call. This invariably includes a return to prescriptive conceptions of grammar.

Thus, what Collins appears to be arguing is that prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness are imposed on non-mainstream groups as part of the greater imposition known as schooled literacy in times of crisis, i.e., when those non-mainstream groups are perceived as threatening the stability of the prevailing social order and of challenging the inequalities which are integral to its survival. The perceived benefits of schooled literacy and prescriptive grammar to the threatened group lie, in essence, in the exclusionary effect they have. With my own data in mind, it is also worth asking whether the literacy practices required by the teachers do not similarly amount to a discursive manipulation at a time when new groups were arriving at the schools. To reinforce this possibility, i.e., that the teachers are retreating into schooled literacy and prescriptive practices in response to a perceived threat to the school community and its identity (much in the general spirit of Labov's (1963) Martha's Vineyard study) would of course require comparative news-time data from a couple of years earlier, when apartheid ideology was less threatened and political certainty was greater than it was when I conducted my fieldwork.

The sentiments of other writers on this matter are similarly illuminating. Clark & Ivanic (1997:187), for example, argue that the insistence on ‘correctness’ in written language (for which news-time can, as I have argued elsewhere, be seen as a fore-runner) “has a *disciplinary*, normative and *discriminatory* role in social life” (my italics). Such insistence, in other words, brings writers ‘to heel’ and discriminates against those who do not comply. Both are ideological strategies by which the desired discursive manipulations are effected and the hegemony of the dominant group’s practices are assured. They are strategies, too, by which unequal social relations of power are promoted.

It is instructive at this point to turn to the findings of research into reading practices conducted by Piestrup (1973) which have been interpreted by Collins (1986;1991 & 1993). I have four reasons for doing so: firstly, the research illustrates the exclusionary behaviour (Penelope), verbal aggression (Crystal), discursive manipulations (Collins) and disciplinary and discriminatory agendas (Clark & Ivanic) identified by the bracketed authors; secondly, it demonstrates the effects of each of these forms of behaviour on the children; thirdly, it gives prominence to the role played by prescriptive norms of correctness while suggesting the synergy between prescriptive norms and schooled literacy; and, finally, since it corresponds so closely in its basic detail to what takes place in my own data (cf. the interactions included in 4.3.3), it helps to explain what may be taking place in my data.

Piestrup, essentially, was concerned with the influence of teachers’ attitudes towards non-standard speech on the educational performance of pupils who used non-standard language. Like mine, her data reveals how assiduously the teachers correct non-standard speech. Particularly evocative of this is a transcript (quoted by Collins) from a reading lesson. In it the teacher intrudes often, and makes multiple corrections. However, these corrections relate not to the *fluency* of the child’s reading (or even to his/her misrecognition of words) but rather to the child’s non-standard pronunciation of words. What the child does, consistent with a rule of Black English Vernacular phonology, is, for example, to delete the final “t” in a word like “what”. The teacher’s concern in other words - bearing in mind that this is a *reading* lesson - is that the child should produce *spelling pronunciation*, i.e., pronunciation which conforms to what Collins refers to as “the ‘literate bias’ in our culture”. As Collins (1991:242) points out, in instances such as

this, “prescriptive practice...works a subtle discrimination”, because “a definition of literacy as ‘reading aloud’ is not merely a technical display and evaluation of skill, but rather a socially inculcated orientation towards literacy, with demonstrably differing effects on various classes and groups in society”. By this Collins alludes to the fact that it is largely the non-mainstream (i.e., black, working-class) children who are singled out in this way for public scrutiny. In the process of pursuing this goal, the teacher of course also destabilises and distorts the reading process for the child, reducing the children’s opportunities to practise reading. In this way they are discriminated against doubly.

Collins (1987:316) interprets the teacher’s behaviour as a form of dialect repression or devaluation, as an instance of what he calls the “enduring relation of inequality between the dominant verbal means of a society (including the academic variant of the dominant code) and the dominated or vernacular modes of speaking”. Taking this yet further, Collins (316-7) writes that “repressing the latter, while only partially and inadequately presenting the former, is part of the general “exclusion from the pedagogic message” (Bourdieu, 1973) visited upon dominated classes and groups. That exclusion helps reproduce the differences of educational skill and achievement so characteristic of, and essential for, modern class-divided societies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)”. Clearly the teacher’s preoccupation with grammatical correctness and standard pronunciation is likewise discriminatory and distorting during news-time. It also selectively empowers certain children, so reproducing the status quo.

Cameron (1995:78-115) offers an interpretation of prescriptivism that is somewhat different in emphasis from those we have considered so far, yet is compatible with all of them. Central to her account is the notion, drawn from cultural history, of ‘moral panic’. According to Cameron (1995:82) “a moral panic can be said to occur when some social phenomenon or problem is suddenly foregrounded in public discourse and discussed in an obsessive, moralistic and alarmist manner, as if it betokened some imminent catastrophe”. Examples of moral panic include concern about dogs savaging children, overpopulation, drugs, etc.

Cameron notes that one of the mechanisms associated with the spread of a moral panic is the creation of a scapegoat or target (p. 83); she observes that the media typically play a central role in ‘constructing’ and promoting the panic; mentions that ‘successful panics’

have recurrent themes; that they “do not occur randomly...but cluster around the obvious points of social conflict: around relations of race, class, gender, generation, sexual practice and political dissent”; and notes that they are typically “highly coded affairs”, i.e., “the apparent problem is not always the real one” (p. 84). Cameron points out that the real problem in the case of a moral panic is usually ‘deeper’ than it seems, and that typically moral panics are expressions of anxieties which are “less socially acceptable” if expressed explicitly because they bear on the points of conflict referred to earlier. Moral panics, she adds, finally, are “fundamentally conservative responses to conflict”. They are typically about perceived social change and “locate the threat almost always in a subordinated group” (p. 85).

What is interesting about her account as I have represented it so far, is the degree to which ideas and issues raised earlier by the other commentators in explaining the promotion of prescriptivism echo in her work e.g., social conflict, race, class, anxieties, perceived social change, subordinated groups. Two new concepts that emerge are *morality* (as in “moral panic”) and *conservativism*. These issues are central to her work in unravelling the ‘coded interests’ which she discovered were at stake in the moral panic which gripped Britain from the mid 1980s to roughly the mid 1990s over the teaching, particularly, of English grammar. It is to them that I now turn.

Those in favour of traditional grammar teaching Cameron refers to as “the pro-grammar conservatives”. They, throughout the period of the moral panic, consistently employed the ideological strategy of aligning matters of correct grammar, standard English, BP pronunciation, etc., to the preservation or decline of such issues as lawful behaviour, discipline, respect for persons and property, character cleanliness, etc. What superficially is baffling are the causal links made between them (for example, between using correct grammar and being clean). They (the links) become clearer, Cameron suggests, when one views them as conceits, or metaphors. Then, by treating the structure of language as if it were analogous to the structure of society one is able to decode the causal link. As Cameron (p. 95) explains:

...conservatives use ‘grammar’ as the metaphorical correlate for a cluster of related political and moral terms: *order, tradition, authority, hierarchy* and *rules*. In the ideological world that conservatives inhabit, these terms are not only positive, they define the conditions for any civil society, while their opposites - *disorder, change, fragmentation, anarchy* and *lawlessness* - signify

the breakdown of social relations. A panic about grammar is therefore interpretable as the metaphorical expression of persistent conservative fears that we are losing the values that underpin civilization and sliding into chaos.

In other words, and this is where the potential value of Cameron's work lies for me, she is suggesting that prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness symbolise *core moral values and standards* for those, essentially conservatives, who are most affected by the moral panic described. As she describes them elsewhere (p. 111), these include "a commitment to traditional values as a basis for social order, to 'standards' and 'discipline' in the classroom, to moral certainties rather than moral relativism and to cultural homogeneity rather than pluralism".

A final point of note: Cameron (p. 97) concedes that the metaphor aligning the structure of language and the structure of society - *as a metaphor* - is in many ways an apt one. As she explains, "grammar is a *traditional* practice of imposing *order* on languages by describing their structure in terms of *hierarchical rules* which have *authority* for speakers. The association between grammar and authority or discipline is particularly ancient". My reason for drawing attention to this, is that it allows one to entertain the possibility that, while the group of teachers in my own study who promote prescriptive notions of correctness might not have been influenced by the conservative moral concerns that underlay the particular instance of language-related moral panic that Cameron describes, they might have been influenced by the more literal acceptance of the metaphor as just explained.

As a way of closing my account of what is at stake through the propagation of prescriptive norms of correctness at news-time, let me summarise the positions of those whose views I have outlined. In times of social change and instability, whether perceived, real or imminent, as was the case in South Africa in 1994, a retreat to prescriptive notions of grammatical correctness is an essentially conservative act. As Collins explains, it is a form of *discursive manipulation*, the purpose of which is to solidify the middle-class values and standards which those norms embed - such as those referred to by Cameron. The motivation behind promoting norms of correctness at such a time is essentially exclusionary, designed to drive a wedge between those who have traditionally enjoyed power (conservative middle-class whites in the South African situation) and those who are seen as threatening that power. Promoting prescriptive

norms is ultimately a form of aggression, an ideological strategy which seeks in all six of the senses explained by Eagleton (1991) to preserve the status quo, i.e., middle-class hegemony - along with the other aspects of hegemony which I have outlined so far in this chapter, and which I outlined in 2.5.

News-time may, therefore, serve the same macro-purposes as Clark & Ivanic (1997:119) argue writing in general does - thereby providing yet further evidence of the link between news-time and writing, first noted by Michaels (1981), and of the importance of studying news-time. Drawing on the work of Gramsci, Clark & Ivanic note that writing fulfils a *regulatory function* and a *reproductive function*. The first “concerns maintaining orderly behaviour”, for which written documentation is the vehicle (e.g. laws and the gate-keeping this leads to), while the second, i.e., the reproductive function, ensures that dominant values are maintained and reproduced.

5.6 Compatibility between the Utilitarian Discourse System and news-time

Arising out of a particularly Western education system is the Utilitarian Discourse System (UDS), which, according to Scollon & Scollon (1995) is a product of the Enlightenment and of Utilitarian philosophy. In terms of such philosophy things have value, not in themselves, but to the extent that they bring about a desired result (e.g. power and influence). Scollon & Scollon (1995) claim that the UDS is today an ideology which, because of the features which its discourse is assumed to have (which I explain shortly), and peoples’ implicit trust in them, acts as a model against which people’s communicative conduct is evaluated. The more closely that conduct approximates it, the more favourably such people are judged, i.e., the more prestigious their discourse is assumed to be. Not surprisingly, those who most closely approximate it are those employed in the most influential institutions in industrial societies: government, education, commerce, industry, the media, etc. Typical examples of genres that conform to the discourse preferences of the UDS are the essay, the press release, the newspaper article, the sales presentation, the job interview, and many other forms of professional communication. All are consistent with C-B-S style, so named because its principal features are clarity, brevity and sincerity. Such genres - as with news-time - are,

according to Scollon & Scollon (1995:99), guided by the general assumptions that: “communication should be analytic, original, move rapidly forward, have a unified thesis, avoid unnecessary digressions, and, in essence present only the most essential information”.

It is my contention that a possible further reason for the teachers’ promoting news-time of the form that they do and with the degree of conviction that they do is that they intuitively recognise that news-time prepares children for UDS-like discourse and for the influence attendant on its mastery. (Mrs Byrd, we recall, conceives of the Eager Beavers as her “leaders in waiting” and part of the special training she offers them is more frequent and more extensive news-telling.) The most compelling evidence derives, as I will show, from the remarkable degree of overlap between the six features which Scollon & Scollon claim characterise the discourse favoured within the UDS and the core norms which underlie targeted news-time behaviour. The extent of this overlap is such as to suggest that news-time is the fore-runner, thus, not only of schooled literacy, as I suggested earlier, but also of the UDS - and this is why teachers promote it.

What follows is an outline of the features of the Utilitarian Discourse System which Scollon & Scollon provide on pp. 106-113 (numbered 1-6 below) and an indication of the extent to which each is a part of the teachers’ core norms:

- (1) The discourse of the UDS is *anti-rhetorical*. What this means, essentially, is that utilitarian discourse forms “should appear to give nothing but information” (Scollon & Scollon: 108). Scollon & Scollon elaborate as follows: “they should appear to be making no attempt to influence the listener or the reader except through his or her exercise of rational judgement”. This feature reflects a strong Gricean orientation to the discourse preferences within the Utilitarian Discourse System. It is a feature, equally, which resonates strongly of the tensions experienced by the first two teachers described by Sola & Bennett (1991) in scenario 6: 2.4.6 - who attempt unsuccessfully to promote anti-rhetorical discourse in their classes in Harlem. It is also one which figures strongly in teachers’ preferences in my own data. We recall Mrs French’s rejection of Siphos’ news in extracts 22 and 24. Her characterisations of him and Wesley (see extracts 25 and 26) appear also to stem from her own

preference for anti-rhetorical discourse during news-time. Mrs Byrd's response in extract 23 to the alleged antics of Grayson's dogs is further evidence.

- (2) The discourse of the UDS is *positivist-empirical*. What this means, according to Scollon & Scollon (109), is that "the authority of the person or of personal relationships is played down and is replaced by the authority of the text itself. One believes what is said not because of who is saying or writing it but because of how the text is written". This characterisation, again consistent with the ideal of maximally efficient information transfer which adherence to the Gricean maxims promotes, resonates strongly of the tussles and struggles Michaels (1981) describes in her account of sharing time, where credibility derives from how explicit, decontextualised and topic-centred the reporting is. Little credence is given to implicit, context-dependent reports which involve topic associations.

The Puerto Rican strategy of progressively strengthening the personalisation of hypothetical accounts - and Ms S's reaction to this in scenario 6: 2.4.6 - is a further illustration where cultural preferences for personalisation are rejected because of the teacher's preferences for stronger text-based authority. Features in my own data such as the teacher's rejection of collaborative exchanges (cf. extracts 11: 4.3.2.2 and 22: 4.3.4), the strong emphasis given to elaborated accounts (cf. section 4.3.2: extracts 8, 9 and 10), and the systematic depersonalising, for example, of Danny's account (in extract 13: 4.3.2.2) are a few of many examples where personal authority and personal relationships are side-lined by the greater authority attributed by the teachers to the text and how it is constructed.

- (3) The discourse of the UDS is *deductive*. This feature of utilitarian discourse appears to overlap with aspects of both of the first two characteristics explained above. In essence, "utilitarian discourse prefers to act as if human relationships were of little or no consequence" (Scollon & Scollon 1995:110). Effacement of the individual - especially if s/he is a newcomer within academic discourse (cf. Ivanic & Simpson 1992: 2.5.2) is in tune with this feature of utilitarian discourse, as is Canagarajah's (1996) recent call for alternative modes of research-reporting to the traditional scientific-empirical approaches that are currently dominant. Alternative, *critical* modes might, for instance, include "a more sustained and rigorous exploration of

the ways the researcher's subjectivity influences the research process" (p. 325); and would seek to represent the informants' views more richly - as well as tensions between those of the researcher and the informants. Co-authoring of texts is one suggested way of introducing more voices into the research reports. Employing more narrative styles ("because they represent holistically the local knowledge of the communities studied" (p. 327) and because they embody "implicit forms of reasoning and logic" etc.) is another. The treatment of human relationships in my own data, for example in extract 13 (Danny's account of the source of some of his stamps) and extract 21, Shamitha's account of the death of her granny - as also that of Siphon towards the gardener (extract 24) - are wholly consistent with the deductivism which characterises Utilitarian Discourse.

- (4) The discourse of the UDS is *individualistic*. This characteristic of Utilitarian Discourse has two sides to it: (a) it encourages one to show oneself "to be free" by saying whatever one wants to; and (b) to do so by "producing original phrasings and statements". Included here is the expectation that "speakers and writers should avoid set phrases, metaphors, proverbs, and clichés, and strive to make their statements fresh and original" (p. 110).

This characteristic of utilitarian discourse is echoed in the first of the six core norms outlined in chapter 4: "Pupils' news-time contributions should be interesting, reflect pupil commitment and be original". It is precisely because she violates the expectation regarding originality, for example, that Andile's news contribution is judged deficient by fellow class-mates in extract 6. Mrs Byrd's response - "No, I now want proper news from you" - and the meaning she intends it to convey to children who rely on the news-time topics of others ("Be independent, have your own ideas. Be individual. Don't go with the crowd. What you have is worth something. Don't just jump on the bandwagon": cf. 4.3.1 and 5.4) similarly reflects the criterial status of originality for her.

- (5) The discourse of the UDS is *egalitarian*. According to Scollon & Scollon (p. 110) this characteristic of utilitarian discourse is evident in the assumption that writers/speakers and their readers/hearers are equals (in terms, presumably, of power), even if they are not so in reality. Such an assumption is consistent with

what applies in the case of members of the discourse community of molecular geneticists, cf. Myers (1989). However, it is not clear to me whether - and if so, how - these same assumptions are reflected in the discourse promoted at news-time. The only sense in which targeted news-time conduct can perhaps be said to reflect the equality of the participants is in the assumption that both parties will be maximally explicit (i.e., maximally context-free) in their discourse (?).

- (6) The discourse of the UDS is *public* (i.e., institutionally sanctioned). What this means is that utilitarian discourse is policed. Scollon & Scollon (p. 111) cite examples such as the screening which editorial staff do of letters to the editor prior to their acceptance for publication and peer reviewing of manuscripts submitted to academic journals. The literature reviewed earlier in 2.5 highlighted a number of similar instances by which hegemonic literacy practices are monitored. The news-time data provided in chapter 4, for its part, provides abundant evidence of the fact that the discourse produced is checked - largely by the teacher, but also by certain of the pupils (as in extract 14: 4.3.3) - and the account provided of policing at news-time in 5.3. In this, they act as surrogate peer reviewers or editorial staff, monitoring/policing the discourse of would-be members to the news-time discourse community.

The issues ultimately at stake in the promotion of UDS-like literacy (i.e., schooled literacy, news-time literacy, etc.) are captured revealingly by Canagarajah (1996:303). According to him, the “internationalisation of academic discourse through writing”, such is its influence, “will be instrumental in ushering in the international hegemony of Western discourses and institutions”. The effect of this will be to “destroy the distinctiveness of local communities in the long run and simply make them clones or satellites of the Western academic-military-industrial complex”. Along with such destruction goes identity loss, the loss of native discourses and loss of community allegiance. I return to these and allied issues in chapter 6.

5.7 News-time in the context of the apartheid education system

So far in this chapter my goal has been to argue that what is at stake at news-time is the preservation of hegemony: that of teachers over pupils, of school agendas over private

agendas, of expository literacy over vernacular and other literacies, of conservative, largely white middle-class values over other values, and of the Utilitarian Discourse System or UDS. My goal in what follows is somewhat different. This is because, rather than outlining further dimensions of what is at stake at news-time, I attempt instead to account for the distinctive rigidity and conformity on the part of the teachers so central to this study. Accordingly, I report briefly on the broadly shared features of the education system under which the news-time exchanges in chapter 4 took place and under which the teachers in this study were themselves educated and trained. I argue that my news-time data is, to some degree at least, likely to be as constrained and policed to the extent that it is because of the apartheid education (and teacher training) system in South Africa and the beliefs and values it promoted. I highlight certain features of the system in particular, namely: its divisiveness; the extent to which it discriminated against people on the grounds of their race; the authoritarian forms of control and largely monolithic style of teaching it relied on and fostered; and the degree of ethnocentrism and cross-cultural ignorance it promoted. I contend that various manifestations of these features can be found at news-time, reproduced by the teachers. In the light of the arguments I provided in 5.5 to account for the strong adherence to prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness during news-time, I hypothesise further that such “status quo preserving behaviour” on the part of the teachers is especially likely in times of political uncertainty, such as prevailed prior to the first democratic elections in South Africa.

5.7.1 An outline of the principal features of the apartheid education system

The system of education in South Africa under National Party rule was a central instrument by which the society was regulated and power distributed to groups and individuals. It was one that exploited and distorted divisions within and between groups; blatantly discriminated in favour of whites; relied on authoritarian modes of control and was part of an elaborate array of related means by which feelings of superiority were inculcated amongst whites. It fundamentally misinformed those who worked or were educated within it and, in addition to fostering racism and prejudice of various kinds, generated considerable ignorance across group boundaries.

The extent of the segregation and division which it actively engineered (part, ultimately, of a divide and rule strategy) is reflected in the fact that there were a total of fifteen

departments of education in the country, one for each of the four different population registration groups within South Africa and one for each of the "homelands". In addition, city schools were distinct from rural schools, as were private and overtly religious schools from government schools. Moreover, the policy of initial mother-tongue instruction led to the further separation of children into different schools according to language groups, though there were also bilingual schools.

The discriminatory effects of the system are reflected in many ways, the most palpable being, firstly, the difference in per capita expenditure on the part of the Government on pupils from each racial group, secondly, average teacher-pupil ratios and, thirdly, teacher qualification levels. Thus, even in 1989, by which time the gaps in provision between groups had been narrowed, the per capita expenditure (including capital expenditure) on white children was R3082.00, on Indians R2227.00, on Coloureds R1359.78 and on Africans R764.73. (NB: these figures relate only to educational provision within South Africa) As regards teacher-pupil ratios, the average in 1989 in White education was 17:1, in Indian education 20:1, in Coloured education 23:1 and in African education 38:1. As far as qualification levels are concerned, again in 1989, 100% of teachers in white schools were professionally qualified, i.e., possessed a matriculation or higher academic qualification in addition to a teachers' certificate or diploma, 98% were similarly qualified in Indian schools while in Coloured and African schools the figures were 55% and 48%, respectively (Hofmeyr & Buckland 1992:23).

Turning now to the forms of control which characterised the education system, it is worth noting, first, that it was strongly centralised, being vested in the ministries of Education and Education and Training within the central government, and controlled from Pretoria, i.e., it was a 'headquarters-dominated' system. Regarding the administration of the system within the homelands, Hofmeyr & Buckland (1992:25) point out that even latterly the South African government exercised a high level of (indirect) control there too as a result of the homelands' financial dependency on South Africa as well, inter alia, as a common examination system which applied in South Africa and in the homelands. Teachers, as employees of the state, were required to register with the government, abide by its prescribed codes of behaviour and carry out the government's educational policy. Within schools, structures were markedly hierarchical: principal, deputy principal, vice principals, senior teachers, ordinary teachers, pupils. There was

likewise hierarchy within the pupil body: head prefect, deputy prefect, senior students, house captains, monitors, ordinary students or else, usually in black schools, student representative councils.

Education departments specified syllabus content. They required that learning be conducted in English or Afrikaans from standard two onwards, thereby privileging the languages of the white groups and not, simultaneously, promoting facility in languages native to black and Indian groups. They also determined that syllabi would have a predominantly eurocentric bias, with little, if anything, being taught, for example, on African, Eastern or Third World history. Teaching methods were teacher-dominated and emphasised form over content. Pupils in turn were passive recipients of knowledge, required to memorise information and repeat it in tests and exams. As such, teaching exemplified what Freire (1972) refers to as a “banking system of education”. Knowledge, a commodity, was “exchanged” rather than jointly created between the pupils and teachers, and pupils were given few opportunities to think, discover things for themselves and develop critical consciousness, especially of the world around them.

Inspectors and subject advisers were a further feature of the system. For the most part they were perceived as policing and controlling what teachers did: checking, for example, that teachers kept to the prescribed syllabus and were up to date.

The ethnocentrism of the system is revealed in the eurocentric bias I referred to earlier. Its full extent, though, can best be understood in relation to the educational paradigm which dominated white education, namely, Christian National Education (hereafter, CNE), the guiding principles of which were laid down in the National Education Policy Act of 1967. Two of the ten principles which constituted the framework for white education are:

- a. Education in schools, maintained and managed by the state or by a provincial education department shall have a Christian character, but the religious conviction of the parents and pupils shall be respected in regard to religious instruction and ceremonies.
- b. Education shall have a broad national character.

As many commentators have pointed out, key terms such as “Christian character”, “nation” and “national”, etc. were *in practice* defined very narrowly, so as to reflect a

white, nationalistic, Afrikaner world view - one in terms of which second class status was assigned to anyone not white and Afrikaner hegemony asserted. The exclusivist, Afrikaner nationalistic aims of CNE are further reflected in such programmes as Youth Preparedness and Veld Schools, both of which in various ways intended to teach CNE values. Youth Preparedness, from 1972, was introduced as part of “Guidance” for which the following were some of the compulsory components of the syllabus: emergency planning, fire fighting, drilling and marching, drilling, shooting and orchestra, shooting and self-defence, vocational guidance and moral preparedness. A number of these syllabus components have clear links to the South African Defence Force and, though I will not explore the point further, the programme encouraged different treatment for boys and girls, thereby emphasising gender differences.

In concluding this account, it is worth pointing out that one of the National Education Policy Act (1967) principles ensures a place for what it refers to as “the parent community”:

- h. The parent community shall be given a say through parent-teachers’ associations, school committees, boards of control or school boards or in any other manner.

This and all that precedes it is compatible, as I shall now show, with the following: the highly normative, prescriptive nature of news-time; its authoritarian ethos; the promotion at news-time of an essentially white value system and world view; the closeness of the monitoring/policing that takes place; the suppression of bi/multiliteracies and bi/multilingualism; and such general manifestations of conservatism as the eschewal of diversity, the narrowing/suppression of options and inflexibility which the teachers themselves experienced in their school lives and teacher training programmes.

5.7.2 Evidence of the influence of the apartheid education system on news-time

It is unlikely that the extent of the segregation and division which prevailed under apartheid - described by Chick (1996:33) as “unprecedented in human history” - or the nature of that segregation and division, given the fact that it emphasised the very “points of social conflict” which Cameron (1995:83) refers to - did not influence the perceptions and world view of those who were associated with it and so influence news-time practices. Segregation on so systematic and deliberate a scale within the educational sphere was of course reinforced in all other spheres of life and led, as we know from

hindsight, to a range of extremely damaging effects, not the least of which are skewed perceptions, compartmentalised thinking and feelings of superiority among whites. On an inter-group level it has bred considerable ignorance and distrust. Diversity and difference, not surprisingly, were, as a consequence, undervalued and misinterpreted, usually in deficit terms. So complete were the effects of segregation that, some time after admitting children of colour, the teachers at Natal Pre-Primary School realised that they were not providing pupils with an adequate range of colours from which to select when doing an initial body image exercise. As Mrs Byrd explains:

...in the beginning of the year we just mixed up flesh colour, now we mix up flesh colour and light brown and dark brown and medium brown and we just put it all out and they paint the colour that they feel um suits them...and gone is the day where this is flesh colour, we now call it apricot or peach...it just suddenly makes you sit up and think well, you know, what gives you the right to call this flesh colour? (Interview: 16/11/1993.)

Exposure to *linguistic* diversity and appreciation of the societal benefits of such diversity clearly was impossible in the apartheid society because of how curtailed inter-group interaction was and how fragmented people's sense of the overall society became. Moreover, within education, the policy of initial mother-tongue instruction followed by instruction in English or Afrikaans, without equivalent provision in white schools for instruction in or use of Indian and African languages, for example, substantially reduced the educational value of these languages. For whites, as a consequence, there was no incentive to learn such languages. What I find striking about my news-time data (as I mentioned much earlier, in chapter 3) is that there is no single instance of bilingual or multilingual behaviour, including codeswitching or mixing which might have facilitated news-time exchanges in a number of ways, especially with black pupils. This state of affairs may have been in part mutually achieved, since the parents of black pupils and the pupils themselves may have felt that their mother-tongue did not carry status in an educational environment. As far as tolerance towards varieties of *English* was concerned - for example, those spoken by blacks or Indians - it is very significant to note the hostility in South Africa in the early to mid 1990s of white English speakers to the deliberate attempt on the part of the South African Broadcasting Corporation to broaden and so democratise the band of Englishes on radio and television programmes beyond the RP-like varieties heard until then. This phenomenon, mentioned by Wade (1996), attests to the moral panic which gripped especially white South Africans immediately before the

elections as well as afterwards. With evidence such as this, *at that time*, it is not surprising that diversity per se and, in the context of this thesis, diverse linguistic and literacy practices, are either totally absent, or else are very heavily constrained in my news-time corpus. The political/education system simply did not promote understanding and appreciation of diversity. An observation in this regard by Clark & Ivanic (1997:121) is revealing, since it applies equally to what happened at news-time in South Africa. Dealing with the manner in which writing serves what they call “the reproductive function of the state”, the two authors note that:

In some socio-political contexts the values and beliefs promulgated in writing will be relatively varied, showing a tolerance for diversity; in other contexts patterns of domination will be apparent; yet in others the values represented in writing will be singular, suggesting repression of alternatives.

If we turn next to a few of the more obvious effects of discrimination and inequality, one consequence of the relatively small class sizes in schools for whites, is that it facilitated very close teacher monitoring/policing of the children’s behaviour and learning, such as is evident in my data. Also, the relative lack of success of black pupils in the matric examinations (compared to white ones) and the high school dropout rates of black pupils, appeared in various ways to be confirming the *rightness* of what those involved in white education received and what they did. It might also account for the, in this instance, valid assumption implicit in the teachers’ conduct towards non-mainstream children in my data suggesting (a) that they (i.e., non-mainstream children) ‘have come into our territory’ and (b) that they have done so ‘because they want to be like us’.

Turning next to the consequences of the forms of control which characterised the apartheid education system (referred to in 5.7.1) and the possible bearing they might have on news-time, it is easy to see that such features as: (a) the highly centralised nature of decision-making; (b) teachers’ contractual obligations to serve the system, inter alia, through promoting the principles of CNE; and (c) the markedly hierarchical structures which typify staff and pupil bodies, could have had a naturalising effect on those within the system, i.e., because of their pervasiveness. Hierarchy, asymmetry and the uneven allocation of power, especially in pupil-teacher relations, came to be seen as natural. More generally, it is likely that these features of the system could have naturalised peoples’ *dependency* on the system in that it assigned them a place and, along with it,

rights and duties. To put it crudely: rule-following behaviour was integral to the success of the system, and is clearly apparent in the teachers' management of the curriculum genre, news-time.

The 'pre-specified' character of syllabi, the stringency of the medium of instruction policy and the eurocentric bias to much that was taught as a result of the apartheid education system in turn highlight the degree of prescriptivism which the system relied on, and, possibly, the naturalising effect that prescriptivism, per se, perhaps had on those for whom the prescriptions were made. Moreover, prescriptivism by its very nature precludes negotiation and debate - and so does not help in fostering diversity. The medium of instruction policy further accounts, as mentioned before, for the low level of bilinguality (other than English-Afrikaans) and multilingualism that white teachers and pupils, in particular, were capable of. The implicit effect of eurocentricism would, on the one hand, have been to emphasise the superiority of the white, western world and of western values and, on the other, would have ensured a high level of ignorance of other world views, values, etc.

Concrete evidence of the teachers' ignorance of the ways of life, values and traditions of groups other than their own is present at various places in my data and is most likely to be revealed during news sessions which coincide with cultural events and festivities. In what follows I provide four instances, though note in regard to Mrs French that she openly acknowledged her ignorance and often sought, albeit tentatively, to 'fill in' cultural and other information that she lacked through tapping into the pupils' knowledge. To quote from an interview I conducted with her (7/12/1993):

T: I became more aware of it this year with so many more Muslim children than in the past, and their festivals, how little we know about it and, um, that really we should learn to know more about the others, and in the news it does come out, about what they've done, and so on ... and our children with their Western upbringing sit with eyes agog ... and I thought I'm going to have to, in myself, change more, and become much more aware

R: Um

T: as we go on, because our numbers are changing much more rapidly. Next year, in class 1 there's only a third to two thirds white, the Western culture, um, although a lot of the Indian children obviously do bring in more of the Western culture, but we have to make much more radical changes.

Asked if she found that she needed to learn to listen in new ways to how the information unfolds, Mrs French continued:

T: I think I've got to learn to listen more to their way of speaking, 'cos I don't always understand what they are saying ... especially the Indian children, a lot of them, um, I, I, I really don't know what

- they are saying, and the children, actually, are interpreting for me.
- R : The non-Indian children, or the?
- T : The non-Indian - just the other children
- R : Ja
- T : So I say "I beg your pardon", and then somebody else will pipe up and say "But he said this and this and this"
- R : Ja
- T : And they've understood it better than what I have.

Evidence of ignorance as a result of their having been socialised in isolation from other groups takes various forms. In extract 29 (which follows) the teacher displays assumptions (in her second, third and fourth utterances) which suggest that she is unfamiliar with - if not the 'culture of poverty' - then certainly the fact that many families (such as Hanif's) do not live in homes which have large gardens where the children can play healthily. Mrs Higgs appears to take such luxury for granted:

Extract 29

- H: Today when I...a...today after school I'm going to my friend's house.
- T: Oh, are you? And what are you going you do there?
- H: I'm a play t.v. games and I also play with my gun
- T: Are you? You mustn't play too many t.v. games. If you go and play with someone, you must go and play out in the garden. You mustn't go and sit [in
- H: [they don't have a garden.
- T: Don't they? Where do they live?
- H: flat
- T: Oh dear. Alright. Because I know lots of you little children when you go and play with each other, you sit in front of the t.v., and that's not playing, is it? No, you must go and play outside and get some lovely healthy fresh air. *(A (white) child with a garden informs T that he himself regularly plays outside, for which she affirms him. She then terminates H's turn, and nominates the next news-giver.)*

The speaker in the next extract is Sithabeli, a Zulu pupil for whom English, clearly, is a second language. Apart from the fact that the teacher does nothing such as switching to Zulu in order to facilitate meaningful interaction with her, since she is unable to do so, the exchange is significant for the fact that the teacher does not know that "Nozipho" is a *girl's* name. Had she grown up in an apartheid-free society, i.e., alongside Zulu (and other) children, such ignorance would be inexplicable. As it is, her ignorance is not surprising:

Extract 30

- S: Yesterday Nozipho came to my house and, um, Nozipho stay a little while...and with her friend and um... cousin.
- T: Is Nozipho a girl or a boy?
- S: Girl
- T: A girl...and where does she come from?
- S: Eastridge.
- T: Eastridge? Also from Eastridge? And where does she go to school?
- S: I don't know.

T: You don't know? Is she at school?

S: Yes.

T: Yes, she is. Sarah? (*T nominates Sarah as the next news-giver.*)

The following extract (extract 31) attests again to cultural ignorance, this time regarding Madressa (Islamic schooling) and what is taught there, namely, about the Islamic faith, the teachings of the Qu'ran and how to read it. It reveals, in addition, considerable insensitivity on the teacher's part towards the cultural significance of the story that Zena and Hanif attempt to relate, and, indeed, ignorance of the fact that Zena has confused the information she provides in her second utterance:

Extract 31

Z: Today for my Madressa in Overport, today and tomorrow we going to have a exam where a lady comes from another place and she and and then she asks you kind of questions.

T: And what does she ask you about?

Z: About what happened in the pa:st and um about the pe...people they used to...a how they used to take their their daughters and bury them alive.

T: Ooh no, what did they do that for?

Z:

T: Oh?

H: I know (*bidding*).

T: Why?

H: Because...they they think the girls are going to be weak, and the boys are going to be strong.

T: Goodness me...Wow! Is that what they used to do when they they were in long ago?

A: Yes.

T: I'm so glad I don't live then. Aren't you?...Hm?

X: Ja I...(*Indistinct.*)

T: Yes, I know. (*T here responds to something which is indistinct on the tape. She then nominates the next news-giver.*)

In the fourth and final illustration, which follows, the teacher's ignorance is apparent, both from what she asks, and from what she fails to ask. Especially pertinent is the fact that Shivani's purchases will enable her to attend an *Indian* wedding - hence additional questions relating to the cultural specificity and/or distinctiveness of the event would have been appropriate, particularly if it were a Hindu wedding. It would appear though from the fact of her being a "special person" and wearing white shoes that she is Christian. This would have been worth establishing. It is also unusual for the father and not the mother to do the buying mentioned. However, the teacher appears to have avoided clarifying such issues because of the limitations of her world experience, as a result, probably, of her having been socialised under apartheid:

Extract 32

T: Now we moving to somebody whose birthday is near Mrs Byrd's. She's nearly Mrs Byrd's
[twin

X: [Shivani:

- T: Shivani. What would you like to tell me Shivani?
 G: I guessed again, you'd say Shivani!
 T: Okay. Shivani what do you want to tell me?
 G: Shivani
 T: Sht now, Grayson.
 S: Today my daddy's going to buy me new shoes.
 T: Ooh, that's nice, is daddy taking you shopping, or is he going to bring them home?
 S: No, he's taking me shopping
 T: What are you going to choose?
 S: For someone's wedding.
 T: That's nice, are you going to be a special person at the wedding?
 S: *(Nods.)* My Daddy's going to buy me a school a school a school shoes.
 T: Gee whiz, are you going to get two pairs of shoes shoes to wear to school and shoes to get to to wear to the wedding?
 S: *(Nods.)*
 T: What would you choose for the wedding?
 S: White shoes
 S: White shoes and *(speaks indistinctly)*.
 T: White shoes. Shivani says: MY DADDY IS GOING...TO BUY...ME...SHOES...FOR...THE WEDDING
 X: *(Sneezes.)*
 T: ...AND SHOES FOR SCHOOL. What shoes would you choose for school?
 S: Black.
 T: Black. Would you choose black shoes to wear to school, would they be shiny? Would they have buckles or laces?
 S: Mm...buckles.
 T: Buckles. And the shoes you going to buy for the wedding, are they going to be shiny white shoes?
 S: *(Nods.)*
 T: Are they going to have high heels?
 S: Mm
 T: They be party shoes?
 S: Ah, white shoes for the wedding, black shoes for school.
 T: For school, oh Shivani I'd love to see those shoes when you've got them.

Turning now to a further feature of the apartheid education system, namely, teacher-centred teaching styles, the pupil-dependence they engender and their effects, it should be clear that these are clearly consistent with other forms of hierarchy and dependence mentioned previously. It is also compatible with what transpires at news-time (cf. section 5.2), despite the myth that news-giving is a pupil-driven activity.

The likely effects on teachers and learners of the exclusivism and militarism associated with CNE and their influence, in turn, on news-telling are consistent with a number of issues raised so far in this account. If not leading literally to promoting the specifics of the Calvinist-Afrikaner vision and value system that it was intended to, CNE is likely to have buttressed group-specific thinking in varying degrees, especially that of whites, and so confirmed the relative unimportance of understanding the world views and value systems of other groups through exploring diversity and difference. These consequences arise in part from the 'siege mentality' which CNE sought to promote - in terms of which

one concentrates on protecting what belongs to one's own group. Militarism, actualised, for instance, in school cadets, further overtly manifests hierarchy and prescriptive codes of correctness, thereby possibly further naturalising these phenomena. Finally, it seems likely that the process of trying to make sense of the host of contradictions and paradoxes generated by CNE, such as claims that South Africa was a democracy, a (united) nation, a country that respected the diversity of its peoples, etc. - all asserted against mounting and very tangible evidence that these features did not apply to the country, provides practice in living with the sort of paradoxes that lie at the heart of news-time. In the context of a recent conference on 'Languages of the past', Nuttall (1996:82) makes the following observation which applies usefully to my basic point regarding a likely effect of CNE on the country at large, including, I suggest, teachers at news-time:

Under apartheid as in other totalitarian regimes, ideology replaced memory in the public forum, not simply by cancelling it, but by trying to impose an artificial and homologizing memory abolishing diversities, to produce the same images over and over again. Worse, the need for unanimity led to the pretence of being open and democratic.

Finally, I referred in 5.7.1 to the alleged place within the apartheid education system of the "parent community" in order to draw attention to the desirability *in theory* of community involvement in education, but the relative emptiness of what transpired in this regard *in practice* is evident under the apartheid system. While community support today is sought in order to promote identification with, a sense of ownership of, and a say in schools by members of the diverse groups whose children attend them, thereby seeking further to foster a diversity of interests and viewpoints and democratise education, *then*, the parent community was monolithic and their involvement, at best, simply solidified race-based needs and interests.

5.7.3 Conclusion

Bowles & Gintis (1976) have argued that the formal, systemic features of certain education systems correspond to the structures and prepare pupils to meet the needs of the world of work. In addition, contributions to Coleman (1996) suggest how difficult it often is to introduce innovations and make changes in well-established educational systems, i.e., to depart from educational practices which preserve the status quo. It

seems reasonable to me that news-time is, similarly, the product (at least in part) of the structures and assumptions of the South African apartheid educational system. Because of the interests it represents (which I have explained at length in 5.2-5.6) and the symbolism I suggest it acquired prior to the democratic elections, news-time practices as promoted by the three white teachers in this study would likewise have been resistant to change.

5.8 Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to answer the sixth research question listed in 1.5: “Whose interests are served by the literacy promoted during news-time?”. There are five facets to my explanation. The first addresses the authoritarian ethos which prevails at news-time, as I described it in chapter 4. Providing further evidence to that presented in chapter 4, I show that news-time is not different from other classroom activities, as teachers claim it is, and that there is an ideological justification for the disparity between what teachers claim (i.e., news-time promotes egalitarian values) and what materialises. That justification is that news-time is a vehicle by which the teachers’ hegemonic position in the classroom (and that generally of people in positions of institutional authority) is bolstered. News-time is also the vehicle by which the pupils’ powerlessness is entrenched.

The second facet of my explanation centres on the uniformity and very high level of monitoring (or “policing”) that teachers subject their pupils’ news accounts to, and on the apparent difficulty which all but a very few children experience in attempting to conform to the teachers’ core news-time norms. Here I argue that news-time literacy practices are “policed” because, as precursors to schooled literacy, they are highly valued, and by policing them, the hegemonic status of expository literacy is protected. I reinforce my claims in this regard by identifying the ideological strategies the teachers employ when promoting news accounts of the sort they prefer, and when counteracting those that they disapprove of, drawing on Eagleton (1991).

The third facet of my explanation of what is at stake during news-time involves exploring the values and interests which are embedded in news-time literacy practices and

promoted at news-time. In this explanation I argue that news-time promotes Anglo-, western, middle-class values and interests, and reinforces their hegemony at the two schools where I conducted my research. As part of this account of values and interests I explore why the teachers promote prescriptive norms of grammatical correctness during news-time, and argue that those norms help to consolidate conservative middle-class values at a time of considerable political uncertainty in the country.

What is apparently also at stake at news-time - the focus of the fourth facet of my explanation - is the propagation of and therefore entrenched hegemony of the Utilitarian Discourse System (UDS). As part of my account of the UDS, I show how closely congruent the discourse strategies, attitudes and beliefs associated with the UDS are with those promoted at news-time, and argue that news-time is both an early precursor to the UDS (as it is to schooled literacy) and a vehicle, again, by which its hegemony is confirmed and entrenched.

The final facet of my explanation is an attempt to account for the teachers' rigidity and conformity to the discourse they promote at news-time. This I do by relating it to some of the main features of the apartheid education system, arguing that the teachers were likely to have been influenced by it in ways which led them to reproduce aspects of its features during news-time - such as the eschewal of diversity, entrenchment of prescriptive rules of correctness, and promotion of forms of authoritarianism, exclusivism, and ignorance.

6. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND AN APPLICATION OF THIS RESEARCH

6.1 Overview

In this final chapter I reflect, firstly, on ethical issues raised by my study. These include reflections on the culpability of teachers for propagating news-time literacy (and the ideological assumptions associated with it) and discouraging alternative literacies and alternative ideological assumptions. They include also reflections on my own responsibilities towards the participants and the institutions at which I conducted this research.

In section 6.3 I respond to my final research question, namely, "*What is the applied relevance of my research? Specifically, what does it suggest regarding the teaching/learning of literacy in early education in the "new" South Africa?*" I first outline *implications* of my research for the teaching/learning of literacy in the new society (in 6.3.1). In essence I call for consciousness-raising on the part of teachers and teacher-trainers regarding the form and function of news-time - in the context, that is, of a broad understanding of literacy and the ideological agendas which different literacy practices support. Partly linked with the above is the need for teachers to acquire richer analytical and interpretive abilities than those evinced by the teachers in my study - for which I suggest both content and a method by which such abilities may be developed. I argue, in addition, for consciousness-raising of alternative/additional pedagogical options and possibilities than are evident, on the strength of my data and reading, and also outline these alternatives. Finally, I argue for the need for teachers to acquire multilingual and multicultural proficiencies so as to improve the quality of teacher-pupil engagement in the changed educational circumstances that prevail in South Africa. I then deal very briefly (in 6.3.2) with one *application* which stems from the preceding account, namely, literacy planning, in regard to which I make various suggestions for a micro-literacy policy. I follow this with an account of key challenges which vested interests in the current literacy order pose if one wants to initiate a more democratic micro-literacy policy, and close the chapter and the thesis as a whole by drawing attention first to limitations of my study and, partly arising from them, profitable lines for future research.

6.2 Teacher culpability and researcher responsibility

My concern to reflect on the issue of teacher culpability (or ‘agency’) derives not merely from the prominence the teachers enjoy in the many exchanges analysed in chapter 4 and in the early part, at least, of the explanation I provided in chapter 5. It arises, more particularly, from my responsibility, as an ethnographer, to reveal the invisibility of everyday life (i.e., news-time at the two schools) as fully as possible, to make the familiar strange and interesting, the common-place problematic, so that what happens can become visible. It derives, too, from my sense of the ethnographer’s responsibility when reporting on his/her research, firstly, to show respect for the personal and institutional reputations that are at stake (Erickson 1986:154) and, secondly, to construe the reporting that is done as a form of teaching (Erickson 1986:156) - something I develop more fully in 6.2.2. Finally, I feel obliged to deal with the issue of the teachers’ culpability because of the collaborative researcher-researched relationship that I and the teachers constructed during this research and the reflexivity that this entails.

As a prelude to the above, I review diverse opinions about the role - or degree of agency - of teachers during news-time (and other literacy events). These opinions I divide into four categories, all of which deal with the matter of culpability. The last of these presupposes responsibility on my part, as researcher, and leads naturally to the issues I explore in 6.2.2 (researcher responsibility) and 6.3 (implications and an application of this research).

6.2.1 Teacher culpability

The first broad category of opinion about the role of teachers is that they are innocent people merely doing their job. Hence, they are not culpable for promoting news-time and the ideological assumptions which are embodied in the six core norms which underlie it, nor are they culpable for proscribing news-time conduct which differs from the core norms. Kress (1985) appears to support this position. His argument (applied to news-time) is that teachers behave as they do because news is a socially valued activity. As a result, teachers are expected to perpetuate it, along with the social and power relationships it embodies.

A somewhat different perspective of culpability (i.e., within the first category) is provided by McLaren. He (1992:333) reminds readers that “both the voices (experiences) of the students and teacher have been subject to historical and cultural constraints which help shape their identities”. He points out too (p. 334) that: “A critical literacy is ... one in which the personal is always understood as social, and the social is always historicised to reveal how the subject has been produced in particular”. Hence, teachers who promote news-time in whatever form, do so partly, at least, because of how their past has socialised them. Like all other literacies, news-time is socially constructed, politically motivated and historically determined - by which I mean that social, political and historical conditions develop and distribute what Bourdieu refers to as the cultural capital that shapes and reshapes the lives of teachers and pupils.

According to Lankshear (1997:30) teachers are *mediators* in the processes suggested above, and, again, are not responsible for them. As he explains: “Dominant social and cultural groups have been able to establish *their* language, and *their* knowledge priorities, learning styles, pedagogical preferences, etc., as the ‘official examinable culture’ of school”. He notes that “*this is not necessarily a conscious process, far less a conspiracy* (my italics). It is simply what tends to happen ...”.

Michaels (1981:440) also appears to believe in the teacher’s innocence and so to reflect the first broad category of opinion regarding the role of teachers. Referring to the dealings of Mrs Jones, a teacher, with Deena, a black first grader during sharing time in California, she writes:

I do not mean to imply that the difficulty Mrs Jones experienced with topic associates like Deena was due either to prejudice or to incompetence. She was, to the contrary, an excellent teacher, highly regarded by the principal, her peers, and myself as well. Rather, the problem appeared to relate more generally to differences in ethnic and communicative background, leading to unintentional mismatches in conversational style.

The issue, in line, generally, with what McLaren pointed out earlier, is that differences in the teacher’s and Deena’s cultural backgrounds are the source of their problem. An additional and new dimension which Michaels introduces, at least implicitly, is ‘*loyalty to the club*’, i.e., we notice that she is at pains not to criticise the teacher for the outcome of her and Deena’s encounters, yet there are unfortunate long-term consequences of the “unintentional mismatches” which Michaels refers to:

such mismatches, over time, resulted in differential amounts of practice doing literate-style accounting for black children and white children in this class. Inasmuch as sharing time is an activity that promotes the development of prose-like oral discourse, such differential treatment may ultimately affect the children's progress in the acquisition of literacy skills.

Social reproduction, one could argue, in this situation continues on its way, unchecked, with the teacher exonerated for any part she might be considered to have played in it. One could even hypothesise that a hidden purpose of news is simply to promote the interests of white pupils and, subtly, to undermine those of black pupils such as Deena. Developing this argument further, one could claim that the ultimate intention is to maintain rather than change the prevailing class structure in American society, and hold the prospects of black mobility in check (cf. the denial of access reported for Hispanic women in Rockhill's study: scenario 4: 2.4.4). The ideological effect of news-time would thus be to maintain inequalities in the overall society and, indeed, to actualise prejudice, despite disclaimers from Michaels.

A second category of response on the matter of teacher culpability, therefore, is that teachers are *not* innocent in terms either of what takes place at news-time nor of what transpires subsequently, in much the same way as "good, law-abiding" citizens were not innocent in apartheid South Africa. The essence of this argument is that they are complicit through their inaction, i.e., through not contesting the prevailing order at the time, they helped perpetuate it and the inequalities associated with it. Fairclough (1992), Street (1993) and May (1997) argue similarly for the manner in which descriptive sociolinguists, proponents of the autonomous model of literacy, and traditional, descriptive ethnographers, failed to draw attention to power inequalities in the societies they investigated and so helped maintain the status quo in those settings. From the point of view of teachers at news-time, ignorance of what they do, following this line of argument, is no excuse.

A stronger version of this line of argument would be that teachers are deliberately deceptive in carrying out the role society assigns to them. Lankshear's (1997:34) alternative position is much more moderate and ameliorative. Highlighting the 'invisibleness of our literacy practices to us, he notes as follows: "Because we have always been 'in them', they become so much a 'part of us' that we do not 'see' them: it does not occur to 'look' for them. We just play them out. In 'playing out' dominant

Discourses, teachers unwittingly become agents in the cultural politics of language ‘brokering’ dominance”. Key, here, it would seem, is the teacher’s trappedness, and, therefore, the unwittingness of his/her promotion of literacy practices and what they entail. This argument regarding the teacher’s role is one, moreover, that can be developed by pointing out how their complicity is implicated in more subtle and more complex ways, being, as teachers are, at the nexus of various cross-cutting forces, some societal, others more global, as I have already suggested in chapter 5. By providing this more moderate explanation, Lankshear avoids the accusation that he is engaged in “teacher-bashing”, which is what the view that teachers are deliberately deceptive amounts to. What he foregrounds, rather, are ideological forces and their potency, especially when they are not ‘seen’.

Fine’s (1995) thoughts on the matter are also valuable, and help to provide another perspective on culpability. Writing in the context of a study of the policies and practices of silencing at a low-income public high school in New York City, Fine (1995:205) notes early on that her study “does not aim to place blame on teachers, but only to retrieve from these interactions the raw material for a critical examination of silencing and literacy”. However, in a reflective postscript much later, she writes (1995:220): “The process of conducting research within schools to identify words that could have been said, talk that should have been nurtured, and information that needed to be announced (these are the mechanisms she identifies by which silencing is affected at schools), suffers from voyeurism and perhaps the worst of post hoc academic arrogance”. She quickly follows these comments up with the following (*italics added*): “The researcher’s “gottcha” sadistic pleasure in spotting another teacher’s collapsed contradiction, aborted analysis, or silencing sentence was *moderated only by the ever-present knowledge that similar analytic surgery could easily be performed on my own classes*”. In other words, Fine, like Michaels, acknowledges her own culpability. Having done so, she then makes the following points: “it is the very “naturalness” of not naming, of shutting down, or marginalising conversations for the “sake of getting on with learning” that demands educators’ attention” (i.e., unwittingness is insufficient). Finally, she asserts (1995:221) that: “A self-critical analysis must be undertaken so that we (she now speaks as teacher and researcher) can make visible the ways in which we teach children to betray their own voices and to reject their own literacies”. The power of her overall argument, to my

mind, rests on the manner in which she integrates key themes in the forgoing accounts, namely, 'club loyalty', naturalness, collective responsibility, complicity; and the need for explanation. Her line of argument is consistent, in turn, with the goals of critical ethnography, which also implicate the researcher as they do the teacher. Thus, if the goal of CE is to change things for the better, and if the teacher's effect - without self-knowledge - is to reproduce the status quo, then, as Fine points out, we (as researchers) are obliged to call the teachers' role in doing so to their attention, and to offer alternatives.

The final perspective on culpability is that of Lemke (1995:131), who believes that "critical praxis" is crucial. He defines critical praxis as "a shorthand way of saying that we need to examine ourselves, examine our own actions, beliefs and values to see how they connect up to the larger patterns and process of the system of which we are part, to understand how we are part of the problem in order to have any hope of becoming part of the solution". As he explains further (1995:131): "Critical praxis practices the hermeneutic of suspicion (Ricoeur 1970); it assumes that we *are* part of the problem, that even our most basic beliefs and values should be suspect. Critical praxis should lead to changes in these beliefs and values as well as to changes in our actions". Finally, he makes the point (1995:132) that: "We all participate in the processes of social control, the processes that work to inhibit fundamental social change".

Thus, in spite of all that impacts on teachers, not forgetting the hiddenness of many of the ideological strategies employed to ensure that the interests and underlying assumptions of powerful groups are maintained and promoted, I, like Fine and Lemke, nevertheless feel that teachers should be held responsible for their actions. In later sections of this chapter I explore various means of ensuring that teachers are better informed about literacy practices, what is at stake in their promotion, and how to set about promoting different literacies. One means is through becoming familiar with alternative pedagogies such as an 'engaged' pedagogy; a pedagogy of difference; a pedagogy of possibility; and a pedagogy of alternate discourse. Another means of assisting teachers derives, as I mentioned earlier in 6.1, from implementing a suitable literacy policy, which I outline in 6.3.2.1.

6.2.2 Researcher responsibility

If, as I have just argued, teachers' conduct is typically driven by unseen ideological forces which promote conventionalised/naturalised behaviour, if the nature of that behaviour and its effects can be documented (as chapter 4 shows it can), and if one accepts that teachers, like all social actors, are ultimately responsible for promoting the literacy and other practices that they do - as a "hermeneutics of suspicion" suggests - then it is incumbent on researchers committed to social change, to explain their research findings to teachers/teacher-trainers and so help to promote alternatives. Collaboration with the researched, in any case, is consistent (as Erickson 1986 explains) with good ethnographic practice, and educating teachers on the strength of such analysis is partly an extension of that. Given the audience that the teachers constitute, this educative goal is an appropriate one when reporting on the findings of my ethnographic study of their behaviour (cf. Erickson 1986:156).

In what follows, therefore, I will be outlining implications and an application which, in a suitably translated form, I intend sharing with the teachers whose practices I observed, in the hope that doing so will contribute towards changing things "for the better" (May 1997:197). By so doing I will, I hope, be making '*what happens*' visible (which is a major goal of traditional ethnography: Erickson 1986:121) and suggesting '*what might happen*' (which is a major goal of critical ethnography - CE).

It is worth noticing, in the context of critical ethnography, that my intention to return the insights from this research to the teachers will entail doing three things not normally associated in practice with CE. The first is that in spite of the applied goals of CE (which I refer to in chapter 1) a major criticism of CE is that "most critical ethnographies simply critique the malign influence of unequal power relations in education and consequently give little practical advice, or much hope for change, to practitioners" (May 1997:202). I will also be countering Wexler's (1987) criticism of voyeurism, referred to by Anderson (1989:262), i.e., that critical ethnographers view "their research subjects' lives with the detachment characteristic of television viewing" and that "there is an increasing awareness among critical ethnographers that if educational critical ethnography shares with applied educational research the goal of social and educational change, then it must address its impact on educational practitioners". More particularly, I will be countering the criticism of Jordan & Yeomans (1995:401), who write as follows:

To create a really useful and critical praxis, it is not enough 'to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the persons being researched' so as to attain 'full reciprocity in research' (Lather, 1991, p. 60). Rather, we must aim to learn and impart skills which will allow our subjects to continue investigating the world in which they will go on living. We emphasize skills here because we believe it is not only sources of critical commonsense that we need to tap, but the everyday methods used to produce this knowledge. In short, making the everyday world problematic for ourselves is not enough; making it problematic for those we leave behind in the field should be the point. The researched as researchers then becomes the problem for critical ethnography.

Returning the insights of this research to the researched will overcome a second limitation of CE, voiced by Jordan & Yeomans (May 1997:203), which is "that the aims of critical ethnography should be redirected away from the privileged role of the academic researcher to facilitating the active engagement of the participants themselves". Since this research relates to language, it is unique in a third way. As May (1997:203) explains, "very few studies have explored the role of language in legitimating power relations in schooling".

Before exploring implications and applications, I believe it is worth noting that the suggestions I will be making will, if implemented, be applied to a radically changed social context from the (undemocratic) one I originally investigated in 1992 and 1993. This, I suspect, again renders this research unique, in that the implications and application suggested will *extend* (and not initiate) processes of social reform *already under way*. As a result, such action and such policies as stem from them will benefit from the tide of reform currently evident and, because of this, are likely to be met with considerably less resistance than they might otherwise have been. This though is not to suggest that there will not be opposition since, as I suggest in 6.3.3, the status quo secures vested interests which various groups will be reluctant to relinquish. In spite of this fact, however, the research represented in this thesis is I suggest able, because of recent political events, to transcend what Willis (1977:186) refers to as the "immobilizing tautology implicit in most critical research - 'nothing can be done until the basic structures of society are changed, but the structures prevent us making any changes'".

6.3 Implications and an application of this research

The essence of what I shall be suggesting in this section is nicely captured in the following quote from Walsh (1991:18-19):

...the emphasis in a critical approach is on a heightened awareness and enlightened action ... Most importantly, it permits a pedagogy that gives space to traditionally silenced voices and gives credence to the languages students speak and the cultural and social conditions in which they live and struggle. This discourse allows the possibility of “literacy as praxis” and offers hope for a more equitable world to come.

I start (in 6.3.1) by outlining various implications of my research, central to all of which is the need for “heightened awareness” (as Walsh refers to it) on the part of teachers and teacher-trainers, or, as I will be referring to it more frequently, “consciousness raising”. Stemming from such awareness/consciousness is the major application of this research, namely, literacy planning.

6.3.1 Implications for the teaching/learning of literacy in the new South Africa

Consciousness-raising in respect of the teaching/learning of literacy in early education in the “new” South Africa is needed on four fronts. This is so in order to: counter the high level of ignorance in education regarding literacy; alert practitioners to the largely unseen role it plays in constituting and regulating the social order; promote a metalanguage with which to talk about literacy; and assist teachers and others in effecting social change.

There is a need, I believe, to promote the following on the part of teachers and teacher-trainers:

- (1) enhanced understanding of the form and function of news-time - in the context of a broad understanding of literacy and the ideological purposes and effects of different literacy practices;
- (2) richer analytical and interpretive abilities in regard to literacy than are demonstrated in my study;
- (3) a richer repertoire of pedagogical options than is evident in my data;

- (4) multilingual and multicultural proficiencies, enabling the quality of teacher-pupil interaction in the largely multilingual and multicultural classrooms that are now the norm in South Africa to improve.

In what follows, I expand on each of the above in turn.

6.3.1.1 Need for consciousness-raising

In raising to consciousness an explicit understanding of the form and functions of news-time - in the context, that is, of a broad understanding of literacy and the ideological purposes and effects of different literacy practices - one will achieve the ethnographic goal of making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange and interesting (Erickson 1986). Possibly, too, one will equip teachers with an emic perspective on news-time, and, stemming from it, may foster the desire on the part of teachers to explore the emic significance that news-time has for themselves and for their pupils. An interesting and unanticipated by-product of my involvement at Natal Junior Primary School (cf. 4.2.1) was that the principal, Mrs Richards, for the first time asked herself and the rest of the staff "now why do we actually have news?", thereby raising the matter to a level of consciousness it had not enjoyed before. Moreover, Mrs Higgs was so enthusiastic about the way in which the speech bubble task (cf. 3.4.3.1) revealed her class 1 pupils' perceptions of the functions of news-time that she indicated she would be repeating it with her classes in future, so as to understand their perceptions on the matter. Both illustrations, I suggest, indicate the desire on the teachers' parts to enquire into the emic nature of what they probably both considered to be no more than common sense. The norms or emic assumptions which underlie many literacies - particularly those that are highly valued - are typically *not* declared, as this thesis shows in the case of news-time, and as Lankshear (1997:34) and Clark (1992:119), for example, demonstrate. Consciousness-raising of the sorts I indicate below thus provides a basis from which teachers and others can start to interrogate *all* literacy practices, particularly those which they promote in the course of their work.

I believe teachers and teacher-trainers need to be sensitised to at least the following:

- old and new definitions and conceptions of literacy (cf. 2.2.1);
- models of literacy and differences in their underlying assumptions (cf. 2.2.2);

- the dangers of “great divide” thinking;
- a definition of ideology and explanation of how power is exercised both through force, i.e., coercively, and ideologically (cf. 2.5);
- an historical or diachronic understanding of social conventions, where they come from and how they are products of previous conflicts (cf. 2.3.9);
- the *alleged* purpose of news - as reflected, for example, by way of the interviews reported on in 4.2.2, and as described by Michaels & Collins (1984:223 - footnote 2) and Gallas (1994:17);
- evidence of what *actually* takes place during news-time (cf. 4.3 and 4.5);
- the formal characteristics of news-time literacy (cf. 4.3 and 4.5);
- an indication of how schooled or expository literacy contrasts with literacies that are dispreferred by teachers at news-time (cf. 5.3.3);
- the ways in which expository literacy itself limits and constrains ways of understanding and constituting the world (cf. 2.3.9);
- a demystification of academic discourse, demonstrating its non-foundational character, its “interested” character and what it suppresses (cf. 2.3.9 and Canagarajah (1991:305) who deals tellingly with the “politics of research reporting”);
- the ideological investment or ‘interestedness’ of all literacies: how literacies inculcate values and beliefs - some of which, as Baker & Perrott (1988), Lemke (1990) and Ivanic & Simpson (1992) show in chapter 2, can lead to forms of domination, appropriation, colonisation, etc.;
- the presence, usually, of conflict in educational settings, and *why* this is so (cf. scenarios 3, 5 and 6 in section 2.4);
- the class and other biases engrained in educational practices - and the extent to which they consolidate the position, security, power, etc. of those interest groups - cf. chapter 5, in addition to Lemke (1990:80-81; 1995:138-139); Collins (1991); Street & Street (1991); and Fairclough (1991);

- the possibility that pupils' value systems might be compromised by that promoted at news-time, cf. Scollon & Scollon (1984); Lemke (1990); and Canagarajah (1991);
- standardisation and its effects historically - cf. Fairclough (1989) and Auerbach (1992);
- the extent, nature and means by which children are 'silenced' at school - sections 4.3 and 5.3.3 of this thesis deal with the silencing that takes place at news-time, while 2.5 deals with aspects of silencing in other settings. Fine (1995) also provides compelling evidence at multiple contextual levels of this taking place in a city school in New York City; Ashton-Warner (1963) is obviously also relevant, as is Evans (1993);
- literacy variation, its dimensions, and its social meaning (cf. 5.3.3 and scenarios 2,3 and 6: section 2.4);
- how the two extremes of authoritarianism and egalitarian democracy might be translated in terms of literacy practices;
- different interpretive (i.e., post-structuralist) movements and what they stand for, e.g. educational sociologists (Foucault, Bourdieu and de Certeau); liberatory pedagogists (Giroux, McLaren, Lankshear); feminist pedagogists (Lather, Luke, hooks) and critical linguists (Fairclough, Kress, Janks, et. al).

Means which I suggest teacher-trainers would find helpful in equipping teacher-trainees with the above insights and abilities include the following:

- (a) providing teacher-trainees with case studies/scenarios (such as I provide in chapter 2), discussing these, and having teacher-trainees produce original scenarios of literacy ecologies that they are familiar with or else which they are required to explore for the first time;
- (b) reading diary accounts such as those of Rodriguez (1981) on bilinguality and Rose (1989) on what it takes to operate within mainstream linguistic and literacy conventions when you start off *outside* them. Such literature is valuable for revealing the psychological and emotional adaptations that are required;
- (c) encouraging teacher-trainees to become critical ethnographers of literacy (equipped with insights such as those I provide in 1.1.2, 1.1.4 and chapter 3 on ethnography

and on critical ethnography). Suggestions (a) and (b) above could be seen as preparing teacher-trainees for this;

- (d) equipping teacher-trainees to become critical discourse analysts (in ways described in 1.1.4 and 3.6 and illustrated in chapters 4 and 5). Requiring teacher-trainees to produce transcripts of news-time interaction (such as are provided in chapter 4) and then analyse them; or else providing them with suitable transcripts and guiding the trainees in their analysis of them are ways of assisting teacher-trainees with the *description* dimension of critical discourse analysis. Having teachers work with transcripts of news events such as those included in 4.3.1, 4.3.2.2, 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 - where matters *go wrong*, i.e., where what the pupil contributes does not mesh with what the teacher expects, and this leads to conflict - would be particularly valuable. Clearly 'inimical' to the goals claimed for news-time, trainees can be helped to recognise that such conflict hints at the fact that other issues are at stake;
- (e) providing teacher-trainees with a list of ideological strategies, such as Eagleton's, and having teacher-trainees identify the ideological strategies employed in case studies and other forms of data that they are provided with (cf. 5.3.3);
- (f) providing teacher-trainees with lists of literacy strategies, such as those identified in chapter 2 (for law, tertiary education and science) or in chapter 4 (where they are referred to as "norms") and assisting teacher-trainees in identifying the literacy strategies/norms evident in data. Suggestion (e) above is a means by which teacher-trainees can be assisted with the *interpretation* and *explanation* dimensions of critical discourse analysis;
- (g) introducing teacher-trainees to elementary critical theory covered, for example, in 2.5 and parts of chapter 5 (and partly prepared for in (f) above) and alerting them to useful sources of macro-contextual information such as political documents and cartoons (cf. 1.3) as well as site documents of various kinds (cf. 3.7);
- (h) assisting teacher-trainees to infer the social meaning of literacies in the context of particular literacy ecologies. For data for this, teacher-trainers can use the case studies/scenarios mentioned in (a), the diary accounts mentioned in (b), their own experience, and that of those around them. A useful starting definition of social meaning (related to language) is provided by Downes (1984:51);

- (i) providing teacher-trainees with examples of many different kinds of literacies, thereby sensitising them to the *range* of literacies that exist and, by implication, the extreme narrowness of the band of literacies that is rewarded in higher education and elsewhere. As a start, teacher-trainees might be exposed to the data included/referred to in the accounts of Willinsky (1991), Camitta (1990;1993), Shuman (1993), and Kress & Threadgold (1988). These will have the added benefit of disabusing trainees of the belief that there is a clear-cut separation between spoken and written literacies.

6.3.1.2 Need for enhanced analytical/interpretive abilities

In this account I am in effect foregrounding for further consideration a sub-set of the issues listed in 6.3.1.1, namely, what actually takes place at news-time, what are the formal characteristics of news-time literacy, and how schooled/expository literacy contrasts with the literacies that teachers discourage. In essence, teachers need to be assisted in recognising that a great range of literacy practices exists, all of which, when considered as *texts*, have formal properties. Developing in teachers the ability to analyse such texts will, I believe, foster respect for different literacies; it will promote their ability to compare and contrast literacies, and in so doing will strengthen their abilities as teachers of literacy. A by-product of their active engagement with texts and the need to talk about the features of literacies will be the emergence of a metalanguage with which to do so.

As one means of developing teachers' analytical and interpretive abilities, I recommend building on what they have acquired through studying literature. Thus teachers are already familiar with such genres (or, in different terms, "literacies") as the poem, short story, drama/play and novel. Within these genre/literacy categories, they are likely, moreover, to have been exposed to - perhaps even to have memorised parts of - the following poetic sub-genres/literacies: sonnets, poems in blank verse, lyrics and epics, etc.; within the category 'novel', they will have been alerted to the influence of 'periods' on the literacy outcome in each case, hence 'Victorian' and 'modern' novels are distinctive, while as far as dramas are concerned, they know that histories, comedies and tragedies have different literacy properties. Moreover, teachers are familiar with the differences between essays or compositions, lecture notes and letters, and what in broad

terms distinguishes a lecture, for instance, from a chat. They have told and listened to jokes, gossiped, interacted with a range of gatekeepers - in speech and writing - watched and listened to advertisements and processed a whole host of other audio-visual messages - to list but a few of the many literary literacies with which they will be familiar. Teachers are also likely to know graffiti when they see it, will have written or received love letters and chain letters, kept personal diaries, and sent invitations, etc. In addition, they are likely to be familiar with terms like simile, metaphor, introduction, body, conclusion, plot, denouement, punch line, headline, chapter, etc. Access currently to word processors means, too, that most teachers will be familiar with the many print options that are available to writers: bold, reduced, italicised, capitalised, underlined, indented, to name a few.

Reminded of knowledge such as this, teachers can be guided in recognising the structural features of transcribed but 'unfamiliar' oral events, such as news-time. The mere fact of working with transcripts will be instructive and is likely to foreground differences between the two modes of speech and writing and equip teachers in training to *look* for and start noting distinctive textual properties. From this teachers can be introduced to "mixed literacies", such as those described by Camitta (1990; 1993), Shuman (1993) and Kress & Threadgold (1988). In this way they leave behind texts with familiar textual properties and enter the realm of unfamiliar texts and unfamiliar practices, learning, in the process, to see what distinguishes different literacies. From here teachers can be introduced to the analyses provided, for example, by Michaels (1981; 1992) and Bennett (1991) - which involve very close tracking of what takes place in the spoken as well as written narrative accounts of individual adolescent children - and then analyse such as my own of the news-time contributions described in 4.3 and 4.5. Equipped with a list of formal features (cf. 4.3), and a transcript, teacher trainers can require them to identify examples of the literacy features in the transcribed data. Likewise, provided with transcripts featuring 'disapproved' literacy practices and a description of the strategies that help to realise that discourse, teachers can be required to identify and label examples of the practices which distinguish that literacy.

Ideas provided in Janks (1997:22-23) are useful as far as simulating for teachers the psychological effects of the dominance and alienation non-mainstream pupils experience when confronted with the task of making sense of mainstream literacies and the

assumptions that underlie them. She suggests presenting teachers with texts which are discursively alienating - which “other” them - in the sense that the teachers lack a frame of reference and set of rhetorical routines for engaging with such texts. Having struggled to interpret them for a while, teachers can then be given ‘clues’ to enable them to process those texts and so will start experiencing their ‘naturalness’. ‘Estrangement’, in other words, gives way to ‘engagement’. However, as Janks argues, too full a sense of engagement is normally problematic, since such easy engagement obscures the ideological content of the text and, with it, the degree to which uncritical readers/interpreters of texts generally, are positioned by them.

Once teachers have the analytical and interpretive abilities to see what literacies surround them in their particular teaching context, they will be in a position to promote a greater range of literacies, if convinced of the value of doing so, and, like the language arts teacher in the account provided by Sola & Bennett (1991) - cf. scenario 6: 2.4.6 - would be equipped, again if they judged it appropriate, to amalgamate institutionally preferred and institutionally discouraged literacies so as to empower, not alienate their pupils. “Ms L”, the third teacher described by Sola & Bennett, used the pupils’ ‘discouraged’ literacy practices as a vehicle by which to “piggy-back” schooled literacy. By so doing, she facilitated the sort of “ideologically and rhetorically-satisfying alternative discourse” that Canagarajah (1991:304) writes of.

6.3.1.3 Need for pedagogical options

A necessary preamble to exploring pedagogical alternatives to what takes place during news-time is, following a suggestion by Canagarajah (1991:303), to “unravel the hidden curriculum” associated with it. This I have done in detail in chapters 4 and 5, where I demonstrated, inter alia, that news-time is the vehicle by which a narrow band of interests and values in the society are conveyed and consolidated, namely, those, largely, of conservative white, Anglo-, middle-class individuals. A response to this discovery is to explore what Walsh (1991:viii) terms “the *transformative* possibilities of pedagogy”, a number of which pedagogies have recently been proposed in the literature. In what follows, I review a selection of these pedagogies and add various suggestions stemming from my analysis earlier of perceived drawbacks to news. Thereafter I consider a

pragmatic matter, namely, how transformative pedagogy needs to be in the very early stages of children's education in South Africa.

Street & Street (1991) alert readers to a set of questions with pedagogical implications: the first is whether we should seek "homogenization or variation" and, if we opt for the latter, *which* literacies we should teach. For Canagarajah (1991:305) the answer to the questions is to develop what Pierce (1989) refers to as a "pedagogy of possibility", i.e., a pedagogy which places the plight of learners from linguistically and culturally marginalised groups at its centre, and seeks to emancipate them, in part, by drawing on and thereby legitimising a wider range of literacies. Elsewhere Canagarajah (1991:304) refers to the quest of African authors to "creatively construct(ing) an alternate English discourse that is ideologically and rhetorically satisfying". A central feature of such an "alternate discourse" is that it accommodates "local discourses". Translating these suggestions into an alternate news-time - which accommodates local literacies and is ideologically and rhetorically satisfying would, I presume, mean somehow amalgamating the teachers' six core norms (cf. 4.3) with features of the rejected literacies that I outline in 5.3.4. The outcome of doing so, following Canagarajah's argument, would be a more "democratic and pluralistic literacy".

In the context of Critical Language Awareness work in South Africa, particularly in heterogeneous classes, Janks (1997:23) suggests to me the possibility of a further alternate pedagogy:

The heterogeneous class is a space where mainstream students can enter into dialogue with students who occupy discourses which contrast with or contradict the dominant discourses of the institution. Diversity is a rich source of alternative readings; of multiple ways of seeing; of extended conditions of possibility. The real challenge for teachers and students is learning how to value the perspectives that come from the margins given the institutional forces mounted in support of dominant readings and dominant practices. We have long recognised the importance of an extensive linguistic repertoire, *what I am arguing for is an extended discursial repertoire* (My italics).

If we substitute "literacies" for "discourses" we can interpret what she writes as a call to make space for and promote *all* of the literacies which children employ during news-time. In this way each child is socialised into every one of the practices represented, whether they be dominant ones or ones "that come from the margins".

Lankshear (1997) alerts readers to a related pedagogy, what he calls a “pedagogy of difference”, which appears to be informed by the thinking of Gee (1991) and Giroux (1993). Consistent with democratic and egalitarian ethics, Lankshear (38) notes that: “many educators call for school classrooms and classroom pedagogies to provide sites in which all students are exposed ‘to a variety of alternative primary and secondary Discourses’ (Gee 1991:10)” the outcome of which would be that children would “critique their primary and secondary Discourses, including dominant secondary Discourses”.

Later on Lankshear (1997:61) alludes to an implicit pedagogy which, presumably, supercedes the one just mentioned when he writes of the ideal he envisages for critical literacy. That ideal, he notes, “will accord with a social ideal of democratic life, justice, and human emancipation”. The educational goal “is simultaneously progenitor and outcome of such a social ideal” and he says of it further that it is characterised by the attainment of a critical consciousness which has four component qualities: power awareness; critical literacy; desocialisation and self-organisation; and self-education.

In the broader context, next, of a critique of what she perceives to be a white bias to the discourse of feminist pedagogy - reflected through a lack of eagerness on the part of white professors “to nurture any interest in feminist thinking and scholarship on the part of black female students if that interest included critical challenge”, hooks (1994:186) argues for what she calls an “engaged pedagogy”. Such a pedagogy, she writes, (1994:15) emphasises “well being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to match in a manner that empowers students”. Thus, before creating and engaging in ‘counter’-literacies, teachers need to be totally committed to their own empowerment and that of their pupils. I return to the implications of such a pedagogy in 6.3.3 when I consider the price of promoting and employing counter-discourses to those currently entrenched in education and in other of the influential institutions in Western societies. For now it is worth noting how radical hooks’s proposal really is. What it effectively calls for is the emancipation from the perceived shackles of schooled/expository literacy of *everyone* associated with education through the collective employment of a *new* discourse. My belief is that, barring a fundamental conversion, this would be a highly unlikely outcome

for the teachers I investigated, since part of their identity lies in serving the institution that employs them and the system it supports.

Willinsky's (1991) 'pedagogy' is interesting because he models it on patterns and features of popular literacy predating the emergence of public schooling, dominant among which were 'sociability', 'content over form', 'non-standard usage', and 'performance'.

Finally, in the closing section of an account in which she argues that literacy is both a social practice and an individual endeavour, McKay (1996:438-441) outlines the following "implications for the literacy classroom", all of which, clearly, are implicit pedagogical suggestions: (1) language teachers need to foster collaborative literacy practices in the classroom; (2) teachers need to encourage students to read text critically and be alert, in particular, to how individuals and groups are positioned in them (for my purposes I choose to construe "read" in the broadest possible sense, not restricting it to written texts); (3) teachers need to value alternative literacy traditions and encourage others to do likewise; and (4) teachers should explore assessment options which "respect differences without becoming arbitrary" (McKay 1996:441) - while at the same time promoting a common culture.

McKay's list of suggestions forms a convenient bridge between the largely theoretical pedagogical options which precede hers and my own more practical ones which follow. They, as I explained earlier in this section, derive from a consideration of the forms of resistance and reaction of the children in this study to the teachers' core norms.

I suggest that the schools should actively promote both multiple literacy events and multiple literacies, i.e., literacy events and practices that currently enjoy institutional recognition and are perceived as "powerful" and those that do not yet enjoy such power and prominence. If news-time is to be modified, I suggest that it should:

- give priority to the *pupils*' voices;
- include a greater range of interpersonal stances (cf. Baker & Perrott 1988) and be more 'humanised' (cf. Lemke 1990:134-5);
- permit alternative formats (cf. Cazden 1994), through, for example, promoting controversy; asking real questions; getting *pupils* to ask questions; valuing

contentious ‘unsanitised’ topics that children genuinely want to talk about - cf. Ashton-Warner (1963) and the language arts teacher in Sola & Bennett (1991);

- encourage multi-modality through, for example, allowing children to convey parts of their message by means of song, mime, dance, reference to realia, etc. if necessary;
- accommodate humour, but the teacher and pupils should periodically reflect on the sources of that humour, given the apparently contentious nature of humour;
- respect dialectal variation, teacher intervention being permissible only where it is clear that the news-giver’s message is unclear and listeners are struggling with the point of it;
- periodically incorporate meta-level discussion on the ‘ground rules’ for the activity, thereby promoting the objectifying of literacy behaviour in an elementary way and introducing a rudimentary meta-language for doing so;
- encourage social reflection and critique stemming from the content of news contributions, i.e., on matters such as race, gender and class, though obviously at an appropriate level of detail and sophistication;
- permit pupils’ responses to films and stories and encourage the range of literacies that such reporting might give rise to. In this I am influenced by Fox (1993). She reports on the different literacies which children employed who were regularly read to by their parents as they came to terms with and accommodated the details of that reading (essentially stories) and then acted on those stories in the presence of a tape-recorder. This gave rise, inter alia, to stories and poems that the children devised, simulated news reports, interviews, etc. Of note is the obvious enthusiasm which the stories and the opportunity to act on them, engendered among the children, as also the creativity that the activity promoted and, tellingly, the non-intervention of the parents - all of which features are distinctly absent in my news-time data. While the parents involved were all educated and drawn from the middle-class, it is presumably possible that the pre-school teacher could act as an equivalent stimulus, and read the stories to the pupils, thereby promoting the use of a range of literacies in response;
- setting up *tasks* (rather than a formal audience as in news-time) which call for networking of some kind as a preliminary to encouraging individual expository reports

and other literacies. In this suggestion I am guided by McKay's suggestion earlier that "teachers need to foster collaborative literacy practices in the classroom", and the work of Fingeret (1983) and Heath (1983 and 1986).

The issue of whether one can indeed successfully adapt news-time is one, as we saw in 2.6.2, that Gallas (1994) has attempted. Worth bearing in mind, in the light of her experience, is the power of traditional, dominant mainstream assumptions regarding teacher intervention and control, topic choice and how a topic should be developed at news-time - which need to be resisted if innovation and change are to have a chance of succeeding.

In drawing this account to a close, I return to an issue raised earlier, namely, how transformative it is necessary for a news-time pedagogy to be, given that the learners we have in mind are no more than four to eight years old. Clearly it is important not to disregard the calls to institute a changed pedagogy, nor to underestimate the influence which traditional pedagogies exert. Equally, it is possible that too radical, too 'conscious' and too overt its transformative character, the more alienating and undemocratic it might be. Hence, a pedagogy that balances and seeks to equip all children with all possible literacies is probably the most sensible - and democratic - option.

6.3.1.4 Need to acquire multilingual and multicultural proficiencies

Section 4.3 of this thesis points very clearly to the extent of the hegemony which English monolingualism enjoys in the schools I investigated, while the evidence provided in 5.7.2 suggests how limited cultural knowledge is on the part of the white teachers in the study towards their Indian and black pupils. It is in response to these issues that I offer the suggestions that follow.

Not only is it English monolingualism that enjoys hegemonic status at the schools I investigated, it is English monolingualism that is based on the standards of White South African English. At no stage did I hear Zulu, nor did I encounter code-switching, even in instances (cf. 5.7.2: extract 30) where it would have been extremely valuable. As I point out further (in 4.3.3) alternative varieties of English, such as South African Indian English and South African Black English are quickly suppressed, White South African English forms being offered in their place. The lingual context described at Natal Pre-

Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School thus closely resembles that described by Saxena (1994) in Southall (cf. scenario 5: 2.4.5) prior to the advent of Punjabi agitation and the transformation it gave rise to. Indifference towards multilingualism, it would appear, is widespread - at least in formerly colonial societies - as Lankshear (1997:34-36) shows in relation to Australia and New Zealand, suggestive, again, of the interdependence of literacy and language (cf. Collins 1987;1991;1993; and section 5.5), and of their combined potency in reproducing cultural and linguistic hegemony.

Clearly, provision needs to be made for the languages previously absent and, on the evidence of my fieldwork, ignored or silenced in the early period of racial integration of schooling. As in Southall (Saxena 1994), such "voices" need to manifest themselves openly, not only in the mouths of the teachers and pupils, but also in the notices that leave the schools intended for parents, on the posters used to advertise the school and its upcoming functions, as well as on the charts and many other messages that adorn the walls and elsewhere and typify early western education contexts.

Understanding such basic sociolinguistic matters as accents, dialects, style, diglossia, codeswitching, code-mixing and other manifestations of bilingualism - highlighting in particular (a) their general value as communicative resources and (b) their social meaning, particularly for 'insiders' - is especially necessary. I deal with the central linguistic and communicative features of codeswitching in a KwaZulu high school and offer pedagogical suggestions directed mainly at teacher-trainers in Adendorff (1993), all of which I believe are pertinent in the context of the present account too. Such knowledge, suggestions and understandings are not intended to promote escapist pluralism because, as McLaren (1992), Fairclough (1989;1992) and others argue so cogently, such sociolinguistic pluralism merely reinforces the status quo, promoting sociolinguistic rules of appropriacy whose standards of judgement are those of the very groups whose influence on the new social order in South Africa needs to be reduced, not reinforced (cf., too, the account given in 5.5).

Turning now to cultural matters, it is clear in the light of the multiple impasses suggested in 5.7.2, where teachers simply did not have the necessary cultural frames of reference to engage meaningfully with their Indian and black pupils, that, at least in the short term, in-service teacher education provision needs to broaden their cross-cultural, encyclopaedic

knowledge (Downes 1984:271), as well as their tolerance for and understanding of cultural differences, until 'natural' acquisition of such knowledge through teachers' day-to-day interaction and socialisation with members of other groups renders this unnecessary. In addition, active steps need to be taken to incorporate different cultural practices, or, at least, reference to them, where appropriate, into the fabric of everyday school talk and school activities. Knowledge needs to be actively disseminated about cultural and religious festivals, about the histories of different groups - including as a first step, for example, biographies of the pupils themselves, and of their parents and grandparents, including discussion of family photo albums, telling family stories, etc. where family members themselves are invited to tell those stories. Knowledge also needs to be disseminated about art, music and dance conventions associated with different cultural groups, including forms which combine elements from a range of different cultural and other sources, so as not to compartmentalise and emphasise cultural difference. Transformation of the teaching corps at schools such as Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School, is an obvious means by which to promote the above, in so doing ensuring that, through natural means, school discourse develops and reflects a different texture from before, and cultural and other ethnic influences are again introduced naturally into the school setting. Such teachers also become cultural mediators and translators, firstly, for the children and parents of groups that are under-represented at the schools, and, secondly, for their white colleagues. What is significant are the macro-structural steps that the government is taking to promote cultural integration and understanding in schools as well as in the society more broadly. To mention just one step, the Equity Bill. In terms of it, educational institutions are required over three to five years to structure their staff in such a way that the staff complement reflects as fully as possible the racial composition of the community.

Teachers, as gatekeepers, need to change. They need to develop new cultural and linguistic proficiencies, and both become tolerant of difference and foster such differences. This will permit them to engage meaningfully with pupils on such matters as Madressa, Hindu weddings and cows and enable them to use or switch to the codes of their learners, so as to assist pupils like Sithabeli (cf. extract 30: 5.7.2). Such proficiencies will ensure that teachers (in the words, slightly modified, of Land & Whitley, quoted in McKay 1996:440) "acquire the ability to suspend judgement, to allow

the literacy (spoken or written) to develop slowly, like photographic print, shading in detail". Ways of ensuring this is one of the items that should appear on the agenda of staff meetings.

6.3.2 An application of this research

In the previous section my implicit argument has been that, rather than promoting either ideological reproduction or escapist pluralism, the applied goal of critical research such as this is, should be empowerment, on the one hand, and emancipation, on the other. The means I have suggested for achieving *empowerment* is consciousness-raising of various kinds, the outcome of which, ideally, would be that teachers' knowledge of literacy would be enhanced, as would their repertoire of pedagogical possibilities. Pupils, thus, could look forward to a teaching/learning process which would extend their discursal/literacy repertoire (Janks 1997:23), in the process enabling them to negotiate more space for their own literacies, or else the teaching/learning process would facilitate the creation of new literacies, which have the right 'ideological feel' to them (Canagarajah 1991:306). Lastly, all would be empowered through the teachers' promotion of bi- or, indeed, multi-lingualism, dialectalism and culturalism. A vehicle for achieving *emancipation*, is literacy planning, and, in what follows, I briefly sketch what I believe should be the foundation stones of an emancipatory literacy policy.

6.3.2.1 Outlines of a micro-literacy policy

The literacy policy that I have in mind here is a *literacy in early education policy*. In reporting on it I concede that it represents no more than the very earliest stages of my thinking and that it is at best little more than suggestive. In essence, the policy is influenced by the new national multilingual language policy and on insights from the work into literacy and language planning of Street (1994), Ruiz (1984) and Hornberger (1994,1997). That work reflects for the most part macro-level conceptions of literacy, language planning and language/literacy policy. My concerns are both more modest, and more 'micro', since I am seeking a rational basis for influencing people's understanding as well as facilitating acquisition of expository literacy in its '6 core norms' guise (cf. 4.3) and such other literacies as are listed in 5.3.3, which I repeat here for the sake of convenience:

- (1) literacy which is collaboratively produced by three or more participants not including the teacher, which, in the case of extract 22, is further characterised by the fact that it does not seek to provide a faithful portrayal of events, but aims rather to achieve an evocation of the general atmosphere and spirit of the event recounted, incorporating sound effects and laughter from the audience as well as appeals to specific members by the central figure;
- (2) unfocussed, unelaborated, inexplicit, context-dependent literacy - for example, extract 12;
- (3) literacy which relies on pointing out the features of an object through *displaying* that object (cf. extract 13) and identifying its features non-verbally as well as verbally, rather than doing so in the absence of the object and relying exclusively on verbal means of description;
- (4) personal rather than impersonal literacy - which is attempted in extract 13;
- (5) literacy which is cast in a dialect of English other than the purist variety of standard South African White English, as extracts 14-20 are.

The work of Street, Hornberger and others suggests a number of important macro-level analogies which I feel ought to be matched at the micro-literacy level. It is in this spirit that Hornberger notes in the preamble to her account of models of literacy development, that, as Hymes (1992) pointed out in relation to languages, “all literacies are potentially equal, but, for social reasons, (are) not actually so”. This leads her, in the context of a concern for macro-literacy issues, to note (1997:4) that: “For literacy developers in multilingual contexts, then, the question is not so much: how to develop literacy? but, which literacies to develop for what purposes?”

Hornberger outlines the following models of literacy development: national literacy, mother-tongue literacy, multiple literacies, local literacies and biliteracies. All, barring ‘mother-tongue literacy’, as I see it, have micro-literacy analogues: core norms news-time literacy (CNNTL) - the preferred literacy behaviour in the contexts described in chapter 4 - parallels ‘national literacy’; the array of literacies listed above, along with CNNTL, parallel ‘multiple literacies’ inasmuch as they represent literacy variations within the same context; the listed literacies - though this time *excluding* CNNTL - are

analogous to one of Street's (1993:221) three categories of "local literacies", namely, 'vernacular literacies'. Finally, 'biliteracies' and 'multiliteracies', as Hornberger describes them in her own work, entail communication in two or more languages "in or around writing". While not attested to in my data, the closest equivalent - presuming that one does not want to perpetuate the great divide implications suggested by Hornberger's reference to "writing" - would be either literacy-switching - which Sipho is adept at (cf. extract 24) - or literacy (whether of the core norms or listed variety) in two different languages, for example, Zulu and English.

As for deciding the really crucial issue, namely, which literacy/literacies to develop for which purposes, I propose the following set of considerations, which I express as questions:

- (1) Is the policy in its general spirit compatible with that of the National Language Policy?
- (2) Does the policy reflect parity with the "orientations" underlying the National Language Policy?
- (3) Does the policy respect group identity and promote the value system and cultural preferences of group and individual members?
- (4) Is the policy sensitive to 'status-related pay-off'?

A schools literacy policy needs, I believe, to match the country's multilingual language policy because of the democratic ethos which it and the constitution as a whole seeks to promote. The essence of that policy is that eleven major languages (nine of them indigenous) have official language status where previously only two, English and Afrikaans (both ex-colonial), enjoyed such status. Clauses in the constitution on human rights in addition ensure that all people have the right to use the language of their choice and that no-one can be discriminated against on the grounds of their language. The constitution, moreover, requires that a Pan South African Language Board be established specifically to foster multilingualism.

A language planning concept of Ruiz (1984:16) is useful in this regard, namely, "orientation", which he defines as: "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society". Ruiz distinguishes three such

orientations: (1) a language as problem orientation; (2) a language as right orientation; and (3) a language as resource orientation. If related to South Africa's new language policy, we see that it represents a major shift, i.e., from a 'language as problem' to a 'language as right' orientation. Attempts to parallel this at the micro-literacy level, would mean that rather than: (a) construing the five literacies listed above (as the nine indigenous languages were formerly) as *problems* standing in the way of the incorporation of individuals into the linguistic, cultural and value systems which core norm news-time literacy embeds; and (b) aligning their use of the five listed literacies with predictions of low school achievement, poor discipline, etc.; the listed literacies would be construed as a basic human and civil right, for which pupils would seek affirmation. In the case of languages in this country, such affirmation is provided for through the Pan South African Language Board. In the school context, this would need to be asserted in the literacy policy statement.

At the micro-literacy level I believe it is also worth incorporating the third of Ruiz's language planning orientations, namely, the 'language/literacy as resource' orientation. In terms of this orientation the five listed literacies would be construed as resources not only for those to whom their use can be traced (cf. the numbered extracts in chapter 4), but for the literacy community as a whole, as constituted by the members of each of the classes I investigated.

On the matter of 'status-related pay-off', i.e., as opposed to what is effectively 'group-related pay-off', the issue ultimately becomes that of trying to balance the tension, as Pennycook (1996:164) identifies it, "between literacy as teaching the 'cultures of power' and literacy as practice in acknowledging and fostering diversity". In a review of three prominent texts at the time, namely, Cope & Kalantzis (1993), Lankshear & McLaren (1993) and The New London Group (1995), Pennycook detects three options. Crudely put, one is to teach the genres (literacies) of power only (i.e., core norms news-time literacy in the context of my study); the second option is to acknowledge and actively accommodate diversity - though with two cautions, each of which I quote below in the words of Lankshear & McLaren (1993:405). The first is that in doing so one must avoid discursive practices "that are compatible with dominant social, economic and political formations or congenial to the market order". The second (Lankshear & McLaren 1993:408) is that critical literacy needs to "counter the essentialization of difference" that

leads to “a facile celebration or tolerance of the multiplicity of voices of the marginalised”. The third option, according to Pennycook, is to promote “multiliteracies” as envisaged by the New London Group, though as he later concedes, this effectively amounts to a sophisticated version of the first option, namely, access to power.

My recommendation, taking into account all of the criteria mentioned, is that schools involved in early education should promote both, i.e., the literacy of power, and the literacies of solidarity, i.e., of personal and group identity. What reinforces my belief that doing so is a reasonable course of action is that the prevailing ideological milieu - to which the multilingual language policy contributes - is, at least in theory, highly supportive.

The outcome which I envisage is thus very different from what emerges from the exchanges that appear in chapter 4. Where there, there are few children who are rewarded and many who are negatively sanctioned for not meeting the set of norms for the *single* literacy which the three teachers promote, under the new policy I picture people like Sipho having their virtuosity rewarded and their world view understood, people like Zena having their literacy repertoire extended to include some that Sipho, for example, is master of, while the likes of Mervyn would be assisted to acquire expository-type literacy knowing that there is also space in the school day for the other literacies that they command. People like Sithabeli are not forgotten either. Instead of being silenced or contributing less than they can because that is all that their command of English permits them to do, they will code-switch in and out of Zulu and English - and their teachers (as well as fellow pupils) will do likewise.

Crucial to the accomplishment of such a vision, is the teacher, for, unlike the role Clark (1992) describes for herself - i.e., one who prepares (or empowers) her students for a time when they must emancipate themselves - the teachers I envisage at the pre-primary and junior-primary level *are* the emancipators. In this, which I pursue further in 6.3.3, I am at one with Canagarajah (1997:32).

6.3.3 Vested interests and the challenge they pose

The danger of seeking to alter social practices is that the effort expended can have undesirable outcomes. Two such in relation to news-time literacy - which I have already alluded to - are mentioned by Lankshear (1997), Canagarajah (1991) and McLaren

(1992). One danger according to Lankshear (1997:37) is that of co-option and of further strengthening the original hierarchies; while Canagarajah (1991:303) warns against ideological reproduction or cloning. Set against this is the equally undesirable outcome of 'escapist pluralism' (McLaren 1992) i.e., token pluralism, the effect of which is to reinforce the status quo. By contrast, what I am arguing for is a truly democratic literacy dispensation, one which involves the maximum number of literacies and is maximally empowering for the greatest number of people. In pursuit of this, or even a version of it, however, it is important to recognise the inevitability of resistance.

Put simply, attempts to change a social practice such as this thesis deals with - bearing in mind in particular what that practice *symbolises* - is likely to be met with considerable resistance. The conflict between teachers and pupils in my news-time data amply demonstrates this, precisely because, through challenging the status quo, as the children do, they seek to alter the balance of power and privilege in the group. The current literacy dispensation elevates schooled literacy practices and favours those who are able to employ them. It thus guarantees power to that sub-set of people (including the teacher), while it marginalises the others. Not surprisingly, the former group, i.e., the powerful group, both in this illustration and more generally, has vested interests in maintaining it because of what it brings them (cf. chapter 5). By a process of analogy, if conflict can be generated over core norms news-time literacy (CNNTL) and what it is a fore-runner to within the microcosm of teacher-pupil interaction in 3 classrooms, it does not take much to imagine what the extent of the likely negative reaction will be more globally.

Crucial, ultimately, are two related questions: (1) who are your change agents?; and (2) how much power and influence do they have? As I indicated in the closing sentence of 6.3.2.1, the agents of social change in the context of this thesis must be the teachers, because of the age of the pupils. Thus, unlike, the students who attended Clark's (1992) study skills course, for instance, or those from the target group in the study by Adendorff & Chick (1998), the emancipators are gatekeepers, not, as in the two studies just mentioned, powerless supplicants. To effect real change, the change agents need to include more than simply early teachers - but should embrace *all* teachers, at all educational levels. However, regardless of the numbers involved, we need to bear various mitigating facts in mind. The first, a point made by Ivanic & Simpson

(1992:146) in regard to university-level teachers, is that academics are positioned as gatekeepers by the institution in which they work, “to maintain standards ... and discriminate against candidates for degrees”. As such, they, like other teachers, are unavoidably evaluators; part of the contingent of individuals whose task it is to police the conventions of academic literacy and to regulate access to it. The second point is raised by Lemke (1990), who points out that what teachers do - he deals specifically with science teachers - is controlled ultimately by large-scale social forces of a kind that teachers are not likely to be aware of. In the case of science teachers, it is a “technocratic elite”. As my accounts in 2.5 and 5.4-5.6 suggest further, other macro-level interests linked, for example, to commerce and law, are also associated with the promotion of expository literacy. My earlier analysis (in 5.2) reveals the third point, namely, that teachers themselves have vested interests in maintaining the status quo and with maintaining the institutional edifice which Myers (1989) refers to in relation to the literacy practices expected of members of the molecular geneticist discourse community. The fourth point we need to bear in mind is the retarding influence on people’s thinking in South Africa of the autonomous model, particularly the belief that literacy is monolithic. Teachers as well as the parents of those taught have been influenced by this belief. Lastly, making the telling point - in regard, admittedly, to *students* to whom she teaches the emancipatory potential of CDA (Critical Language Awareness), not teachers - Janks (1977:23) explains that “students are willing to go along with CLA activities until they are confronted with an activity that threatens who they are or what they believe. CLA has the potential to disturb and destabilise students and to disrupt their taken-for-granted discourses”. Canagarajah (1991:304) makes much the same point regarding the unsettled reception by universities of his proposal to “construct alternate discourses”.

Perhaps a more realistic goal would be to equip pupils with an understanding of which news-time conventions are floutable and which are not (as Clark (1992) and Adendorff & Chick (1998) do) - and in encouraging them to flout the former, one would be assisting pupils in the more modest goal, namely, of renegotiating the degree to which they conform to core norms news-time literacy and, consequently, the extent to which they are free to assert their own identity as opposed to an imposed identity. What I have in mind, for example, is encouraging the pupils to flout the following core norm news-time requirements: that news-time presentations should subscribe to prescriptive (White South

African English) norms of grammatical correctness; that they should necessarily be factually correct and that they should give prominence to what is “nice”, “happy” and “moral”.

How much change is possible - a full democratic overhaul as envisioned by the micro-literacy policy that I sketched in 6.3.2.1, or the considerably more modest alternative of a looser application of core norms news-time literacy - is not clear, and will in all likelihood be determined by macro-contextual factors in the South African situation. Working in favour of the first possibility is the prevailing ideological milieu which Wade (1996:135) characterises in terms of the themes of *democracy*, *non-racialism*, *egalitarianism*, *reconciliation/nation-building* and *restitution*. All of these are wholly compatible with the greater diversity and egalitarianism implicit in a policy of enhanced multiliteracies. McLaren (1992:336) notes that “to construct a truly critical literacy, we need to make despair politically unacceptable and human emancipation and liberation pedagogically conceivable”. I would like to believe that subscribing to this is possible.

6.4 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research

This research, like any other, is limited and incomplete, the mere fact of its being a response to a restricted set of research questions being one means that ensures that it is so. But it is limited and incomplete even within the ambit of the research questions. In what follows I shall briefly outline five broad respects in which I consider it to be so, before I turn to possibilities for future research.

One limitation of this research, is its representativeness. I do not believe that all of the various pupil constituencies represented in the three classes I investigated are sufficiently well represented in the thesis. In particular, I feel I might have probed more fully the literacy acquisition during news-time of the more reluctant, more silent pupils, most of whom were black. Likewise, I might have been more alert to gendered assumptions both present during news-time and inculcated during news-sessions.

Depth of analysis is the second limitation. From the account provided in chapter 4, it will be clear that I do not describe the prosodic and other paralinguistic dimensions of news-time presentations, except incidentally. As Michaels (1981) demonstrates so richly, these suprasegmental features are an integral feature of the literacy generated at news-time. It

might also be argued that the conceptual and analytical apparatus associated with Systemic-Functional Linguistics could have contributed valuably to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Indeed one of my intentions arising out of the thesis, is to explore my corpus of news-time data from the point of view of the contextual dimensions of field, mode and tenor: the first because I believe it could help to reveal differences in the worlds of reference (at news-time) of children of different sexes and races. A mode analysis, in turn, could help in better specifying the textual features of the literacy that is targeted at news-time, in describing the literacies that are discouraged, and in exploring gender and racial assumptions through comparing the teachers' texts as they interact with different categories of pupils. Much the same would apply in regard to the contextual dimension of tenor, though it is likely to be revealing, in addition, in relation to the ideological strategies the teachers employ when interacting with different pupils.

A further dimension of this thesis - the third - that required closer investigation and reporting than I was able to provide, relates to the explanatory dimension of the critical discourse analysis provided. What I have in mind, particularly, is the degree, nature and the specifics of the influence which macro-contextual features exerted on the teachers' and pupils' news-time conduct. What is worth noting in this regard is that very little guidance is available on the collection of macro-contextual data, leading May (1998) to suggest that "in most of the literature, it seems, the collection of macro-contextual information appears to be taken for granted and/or is seen to generate out of the particular emphases of the critical ethnography" (personal communication).

Inevitably, too, the explanation I provide is partial, being limited, for example, by the constraints imposed by the need to produce a balanced chapter, of a reasonable length. The explanation is limited, too, by the extent and range of the interpretive paradigms brought to bear on the data. Various avenues of post-structuralist and post-modern critique are, for example, inadequately represented.

The fifth limitation relates to the relationship established with the participants in this study. In keeping with calls currently from various quarters for greater democratisation of the research process, I might have drawn the teachers and pupils more fully into the research process and have had the course of the research altered as a consequence. My own influence over what did take place perhaps also required greater reflection.

The limitations to which I have pointed, in addition both to the findings which emerge from this study and the implications and application to which I referred earlier in 6.3 suggest various possibilities for further research. In what follows I list seventeen of these. The first five all derive very directly from my research and are motivated by the belief that richer exploration than I have provided is possible in each case. The remaining twelve suggestions derive from my research less directly than those which precede them, items 6-13 relating largely to news-time, while items 14-17 relate to literacy more broadly.

- (1) Richer exploration of the non-verbal dimensions of news-time literacy would be valuable, such as the inscription of the children's bodies at news-time (cf. 5.2.2). To do so, video-recording would be essential.
- (2) Closer investigation of the role of the drawing task in the acquisition of news literacy and expository literacy, more generally, is likely to be revealing. I have in mind both the in-class and the at-home manifestations of the drawing and the literacy behaviour which surrounds each.
- (3) Fuller exploration of the role of politeness during news-time is needed. In 5.3.3 I contended that solidarity politeness is an ideological strategy. What other functions it performs and what role deference politeness plays are issues I do not explore.
- (4) Richer exploration is needed of pupil co-option in the literacy socialisation process as well as of pupil resistance and subversion. How one would investigate such resistance and subversion is worth pondering.
- (5) Richer exploration of the putative middle-class value system which is embedded in news-time literacy would be valuable as would exploration of its capitalist content. This, I notice, is a theme in the recent work, for example, of Lankshear (1997).
- (6) It is worth investigating whether there are differences in the socialisation into expository literacy, through news-time, of boys and girls. Martin (1989) suggests such differences do apply. His research, though, is centred in Australia and he does not investigate news-time.

- (7) A range of literacy events other than news-time were evident at the Natal Pre-Primary School and at Natal Junior Primary School. None, to my knowledge, have been analysed and described. Included are such literacy events as birthday rings, object descriptions, topic discussions, news/picture discussions and story maths, all of which are worthy of research, cf. 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.2.
- (8) I believe it would be worth researching the precursors in the home (if this is where they are to be found) of the literacy practices which children employ at news-time but which the teachers do not reward, cf. 5.3.3.
- (9) An intriguing question, again worth investigating, is whether, with increased cultural knowledge about other groups, teachers at news-time do indeed explore content more and are focused less on form than appears to be the case currently (cf. 5.7.2), i.e., is the narrowness of the teachers' focus a by-product of apartheid and the ignorance and insecurities that were associated with it?
- (10) Comparative investigation would be revealing of news-time norms and their social meaning in the pre-democracy period and once democracy is fully established e.g. after the next general elections. Will this socio-political difference be reflected in differences in the literacy that is promoted? For example, will greater diversity be tolerated, etc.?
- (11) Construction of materials designed to encourage understanding on the part of teacher trainers and trainees of the ideological embeddedness of literacy practices is needed. So, too, is research into their reception. Allied to the above is the following: if both prospective and practising teachers are to be equipped with the knowledge and skill necessary to conduct critical discourse analysis on their own, how should pre- and in-service teacher education programs be recast? What are the likely costs and consequences of doing so?
- (12) Given their high frequency, it would be revealing to investigate the function of teacher repetition and echoing at news-time, as also the forms and functions of teacher questioning, the space made for pupil questioning, and when and why this is acceded to.

- (13) From a methodological point of view it would be interesting to engage in a deliberately more collaborative, democratised, action research-type investigation of news-time employing the liberal reporting literacy suggested by Canagarajah (1996), i.e., pushing post-modernism to its limits. It would be even more revealing to do so contrastively, i.e., use the same teachers as figure in this thesis and contrast the outcome of this and that study.
- (14) A more thorough-going exploration of the sociolinguistic/literacy reflexes of middle-class culture is, I believe, long overdue. What I provide in 5.4 is a beginning, and should be seen as no more than this. Since many commentators/analysts of schooled literacy are themselves middle-class, there is an overwhelming presupposition in the literature that the literacy strategies and the associated cultural presuppositions and values are well understood. They are not, and research which documents the above is badly needed.
- (15) Research which involves the longitudinal tracking of the multiple ways in which children (clearly, not all of them) are socialised into expository literacy would be extremely revealing.
- (16) I remain unclear as to why humour was discouraged during news-time. Is it because it threatens the social order? Whatever the case, research into the matter would be worthwhile.
- (17) Systematic investigation is also called for of the degree of overlap between the literacies encouraged in powerful domains, their prevailing ideologies, and the ideological strategies employed to ensure their hegemony. I no more than broach these issues in 2.5.

6.5 Summary and conclusion

News-time may well appear to outsiders to be an inconsequential activity engaged in by young children and their pre-primary and junior primary teachers. In fact, as this thesis demonstrates, it is a literacy event through which children are selectively inducted into the literacy practices and assumptions of prestigious expository literacy. In terms of the ideological strategies employed to accomplish this inculcation, news-time (as an event) is

reminiscent of schooled literacy that was identified as the only acceptable literacy during the 'democratisation' of learning in the nineteenth century (cf. Cook-Gumperz 1986). My interpretation is that news-time practices at my research site represent a kind of re-enactment of what took place then. I see it as also driven by many of the same basic underlying motives, i.e., to entrench conservative middle-class hegemony. Quite clearly, news-time plays a major part in children's acquisition of expository literacy and, to the extent that it facilitates such acquisition, is to be valued. It is however a source of considerable alienation and discomfort for many and, especially, pupils from historically-disadvantaged groups, despite claims that news-time is a 'fun' time. There are therefore 'status-related' reasons for continuing to promote expository literacy. Equally, there are more 'solidarity-related' reasons for promoting literacies other than, and in addition to, news-time literacy. My policy suggestions in 6.3.2.1 and, before them, my suggestions for raising the consciousness of teachers and teacher-trainers (in 6.3.1.1-6.3.1.4) are ways of ensuring that teachers and pupils are both empowered by and emancipated by the literacies that they teach/encounter at schools such as Natal Pre-Primary School and Natal Junior Primary School in the future.

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APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Appendix A-1:	Two <u>Madam & Eve</u> cartoons	347
Appendix A-2:	Transcription conventions	348

Appendix B:

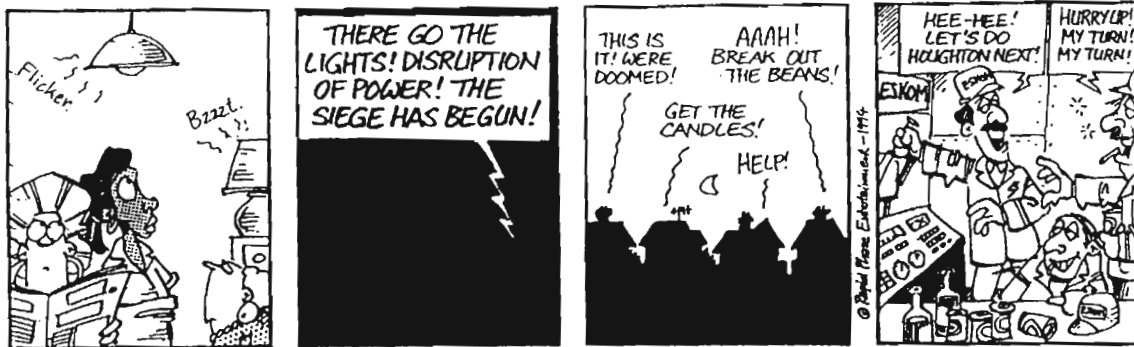
Appendix B-1:	Letter to Mrs Richards (30/8/1992)	349
Appendix B-2:	Letter to Mrs French (17/3/1993)	350
Appendix B-3:	Letter to Mrs French (21/3/1993)	351
Appendix B-4:	Outline of daily activities at Natal Pre-Primary School	352
Appendix B-5:	Letter to Mrs Byrd (29/3/1993)	353
Appendix B-6:	Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder	355
Appendix B-7:	Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd	361
Appendix B-8:	Copy of the speech bubble elicitation task	370
Appendix B-9:	Copy of the pupil questionnaire administered to the class 2 group	371
Appendix B-10:	Transcript of the interview with Mustafa, an Eager Beaver (18/11/1993)	374
Appendix B-11:	Transcription of the drawing task interaction with the Eager Beavers (18/11/1993)	376
Appendix B-12:	Eager Beaver drawings of news-time	380

Appendix C:

Appendix C-1:	News given by Mrs Byrd to the Eager Beavers (17/5/1993)	386
Appendix C-2:	Complete transcript of Anton's news (4/8/1993)	387
Appendix C-3:	Complete transcript of Grayson's news (3/5/1993)	389
Appendix C-4:	Grayson's news summary (3/5/1993)	391
Appendix C-5:	Jennifer's news summary and drawing (26/4/1993)	392
Appendix C-6:	An earlier news account by Mervyn (23/11/1992)	393
Appendix C-7:	An additional example of a news presentation which reflects moral divergence between pupil and teacher (26/8/1992)	394
Appendix C-8:	An additional example of the teacher promoting largely white middle-class values (29/9/1992)	395
Appendix C-9:	An additional example of a news account which falls short of the teacher's preference for what is "nice" (2/9/1993)	396
Appendix C-10:	All of the class 1 pupils' responses to the speech bubble task	397
Appendix C-11:	All of the class 2 pupils' responses to item 5 of the questionnaire	399
Appendix C-12:	All responses to items 2 and 3 of the questionnaire completed by pupils in class 2	401
Appendix C-13:	Evidence of a pupil mimicking Zena's style of news-giving (19/8/1993)	404
Appendix C-14:	Complete transcript of Wesley's news, incorporating extract 26 (4/8/1993)	405

Appendix A

Appendix A-1: Two Madam & Eve cartoons



Source: Francis, Dugmore & Rico (1997) Madam & Eve's Greatest Hits: Five Year Anniversary Special Edition, London: Penguin Books, 81.

Appendix A-2: Transcription conventions

. and ,	Standard pauses, the fullstop indicating slightly greater length
...	Pauses of longer duration than the above (These occur in multiples of 3, indicating increased pause length)
_____	Emphasis
()	Contextual information (italicised)
<i>(Indistinct)</i>	Recording is indistinct or inaudible
-	Interruption (including self-interruption)
[[Overlapping talk
.....	text/interaction left out
:	Elongation of sound segment, usually vowels
(?)	Aspects of the preceding transcription are uncertain
!	Articulation is intonationally marked in some way
“ ”	Speaker is quoting someone
CAPITALS	Identifies words that constitute the news summary that Mrs Byrd speaks while writing them down
T	The teacher - regardless of her actual identity
R	The researcher
X	A pupil whose identity is not apparent from the recording, or whose identity is irrelevant for the analysis that follows
Xs	A number of pupils speaking concurrently whose identity is not apparent from the recording, or whose identity is irrelevant for the analysis that follows
X1, X2, etc	Pupils speaking in sequence whose identity is not apparent from the recording, or whose identity is irrelevant for the analysis that follows.

Appendix B

Appendix B-1: Letter to Mrs Richards (30/8/1992)

Address

30 August 1992

Dear Mrs Richards

It was about this time last year that I (along with my wife and baby daughter) accompanied X (my son) for his school-readiness interview with you. I am by profession a linguist and since that time I have become increasingly intrigued by the language development of my children and their friends. In order to pursue this interest a bit further, I need authentic data.

Would you be willing to record some of the interviews you have this year with prospective new pupils? I would like to listen to them from the point of view of the language used by pre-school children about to enter formal education.

A second request: would you permit me to ask Mrs Higgs for her assistance in likewise recording some of the interaction which takes place ordinarily in her class, for instance, news time?

I would be very happy to discuss the practicalities of these requests further with you and, once I have some data, to share with you whatever interesting observations come to light.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Adendorff

(Work telephone number: 816-1131 (my office) or 816-2617 (Secretary, Linguistics Department, University of Natal.)

Appendix B-2: Letter to Mrs French (17/3/1993)

Address

17 March 1993

Dear Mrs French

I am writing to you in the hope that you will be willing to assist me in recording "News" and "Story Maths" sessions during your class 2 classes. My interest in these two activities stems from the fact that I am a linguist. I have been a member of the Linguistics Department at the University of Natal in Durban since 1981.

Currently I am interested in the language which children from different backgrounds use in the early years of their schooling in a changing South Africa. "News" and "Story Maths" appeal to me as a starting point for four reasons: (1) they involve the whole class; (2) they are characteristic junior primary teaching activities; (3) they concentrate the children in an orderly way in a restricted area (the mat), which greatly facilitates tape-recording; and (4) they are events of relatively short duration, which means that fatigue is not as factor. You may know that last year I received the permission of Mrs Richards and Mrs Higgs to record class one news sessions. I am wanting to build on them, as I shall shortly also be doing when I resume my recording at Natal Pre-Primary School, where I have Mrs Byrd's support.

What I did last year was to provide blank audio cassettes to Mrs Higgs when she needed them, and she recorded each news session (starting in September) using the school's tape-recorder. I sat in on occasion to keep in touch with who the children were and to get a sense of how things happened during the sessions. I volunteered the use of my tape-recorder last year, and do so again very happily this year if you would like it. It is biggish but easy to manage, records well and has a long cord, so obviating the need for batteries and the muddle that one often gets into over batteries.

It would be ideal if you were to switch on the recorder three or four minutes before you announce news time and maths story time, and leave it to run continuously until three or four minutes after the last child has contributed. This would mean that the children's attention would not be drawn to the presence of the recorder, and I could get a sense of the continuity (or otherwise) of the contributions.

I am very happy to discuss the practicalities of recording with you and any misgivings you might have, and will willingly share with you theoretical issues and whatever findings emerge. I undertake, moreover, to be unobtrusive and not to be a nuisance. Let me add that X (my son) has no understanding of my motives regarding the news and story maths sessions and I do not intend sharing them with him.

I hope what I have written is clear and sufficiently informative. Data-collecting is always the bane of a researcher's life but it is necessary if one's findings are to mean anything.

I look forward to hearing how you feel about this.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Adendorff

Appendix B-3: Letter to Mrs French (21/3/1993)

Address

21 March 1993

Dear Mrs French

I was delighted by your note, and am keen for the recording to start as soon as possible.

Do you have fixed times each week for news and story maths sessions? If you do, then we can set up a regular time each week when I will bring (and also call for) the recorder. If you prefer to schedule the news and other sessions more flexibly, you might prefer the school's machine. Just let me know what you would like.

I replenished my stock of cassettes over the week-end and thought that I would let you have 2 tapes at a time, one for news, the other for story maths - unless you think this will introduce unnecessary confusion. If you could give me an idea of how often you like to have news and story maths, I will be able to calculate when the tapes will need replacing.

The timing of the Easter break is very convenient, because it will allow us to do a dummy run or two. I can listen to the recordings during the break and let you know, in time for the the new term, whether any adjustments are necessary, for example, placement of the recorder. (Basically, the closer it is to you, the better, so long as it does not inhibit the children - though the demands of the two types of task will probably over-ride consciousness of the machine.)

I thought I would remain out of the picture this term, and once recording is routinized, I would come in - if you agree.

Is there any chance of my getting a class list? This will help me when I transcribe the tapes.

I am very grateful for your support.

Sincerely

Ralph Adendorff

Appendix B-4: Outline of daily activities at Natal Pre-Primary School

7.30 - 8 am	Arrival and early morning activities
8.10 - 8.30	Greeting Ring: Register Weather News Discussion Songs
8.30 - 9.45	Free Play: Garden Fantasy Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas supervised by a teacher • Children have free choice of activities and interact on a voluntary basis
9.45 - 10.15	Junior: Toilet and snack Middle and Senior: Ring:- Music/Movement Discussion/Drama Birthday etc.
±10.15 - 10.30	Junior: Ring:- As above Middle and Senior: Toilet and snack
±11.00	Senior: School readiness discussion with small groups (± 5 each)
11.15	Senior: School Readiness Group Discussion followed by small group activities Middle and Junior: Garden tidy-up
11.30	All groups move into language and story period
12.00	Children depart

Appendix B-5: Letter to Mrs Byrd (29/3/1993)

Address

29 March 1993

Dear Jill

Thank you so much for the meeting on Wednesday, for introducing me to Julia, and, once again, for your generosity in making so much available to me, and for your trust.

Having had time to think through the activities which you mentioned in relation to the school readiness group and the timing of them, as well as my schedule at work, and when I can have the car, etc., etc., I have decided to make Mondays and Thursdays my data collecting and school visiting days. Mondays I will devote exclusively to Natal Pre-Primary School. Thursdays, where relevant, I shall go along to the Junior Primary, but can also, in all likelihood, spent time at Natal Pre-Primary.

As regards your school, I plan to arrive each Monday at about 9.00 after first having given my 7.45 - 8.30 lecture. I will be giving this every week for most of the first semester. Once at the school, I was thinking of mixing with the children, etc. before attending the following:

- (a) Julia's fortnightly object description involving the whole class for approximately 25 minutes from 9.45 - 10.15. I'm not sure if you said that it is normally scheduled for this time on a Monday or not. Could it be? Could you let me know in addition when the next one is scheduled for, and also what the dates are likely to be of subsequent ones?
- (b) Julia's topic discussion. This, if I'm correct, starts at about 11.15 a.m., runs for 5-10 minutes and involves 5-6 different children, over 5 days. I can be present on the Monday and Thursday and will leave a tape for the other days. Could you let me know when the next topic discussion is scheduled for, and what the topic is?
- (c) Your news/picture discussion with the four year olds on Mondays at 11.30 for 10 minutes (i.e., close on the heels of the topic discussion). Would you mind recording the Wednesday and Friday sessions with them too, since I won't be able to be present?

Do you and Julia have a tape-recorder which you would use or would you like mine? It really isn't a problem if you need mine.

As far as cassettes are concerned, I was thinking of providing a C60 for each object description. One side per session is probably all that will be necessary. A C120 would probably be the answer for the topic discussions. Again, you would probably not need more than one side over the 5 sessions, and the fact that a side is an hour long will mean that you won't have to change the cassette over. Lastly, one side of a C90 per week should be fine for you, Jill, and will again mean that no-one needs to worry about whether there will be sufficient tape. Please don't let the cassettes become a burden to you. I will monitor their use and replace them. I will also leave an extra one or two with Liz, if she is willing, just in case.

Can I ask you for a classlist for the group which Julia teaches, and for the group of 7 which you take? I would like, please, to cover any expense that this puts you/the school to and, indeed, any other expenses which I am responsible for this year. Could Liz keep a record, or would you prefer some other system?

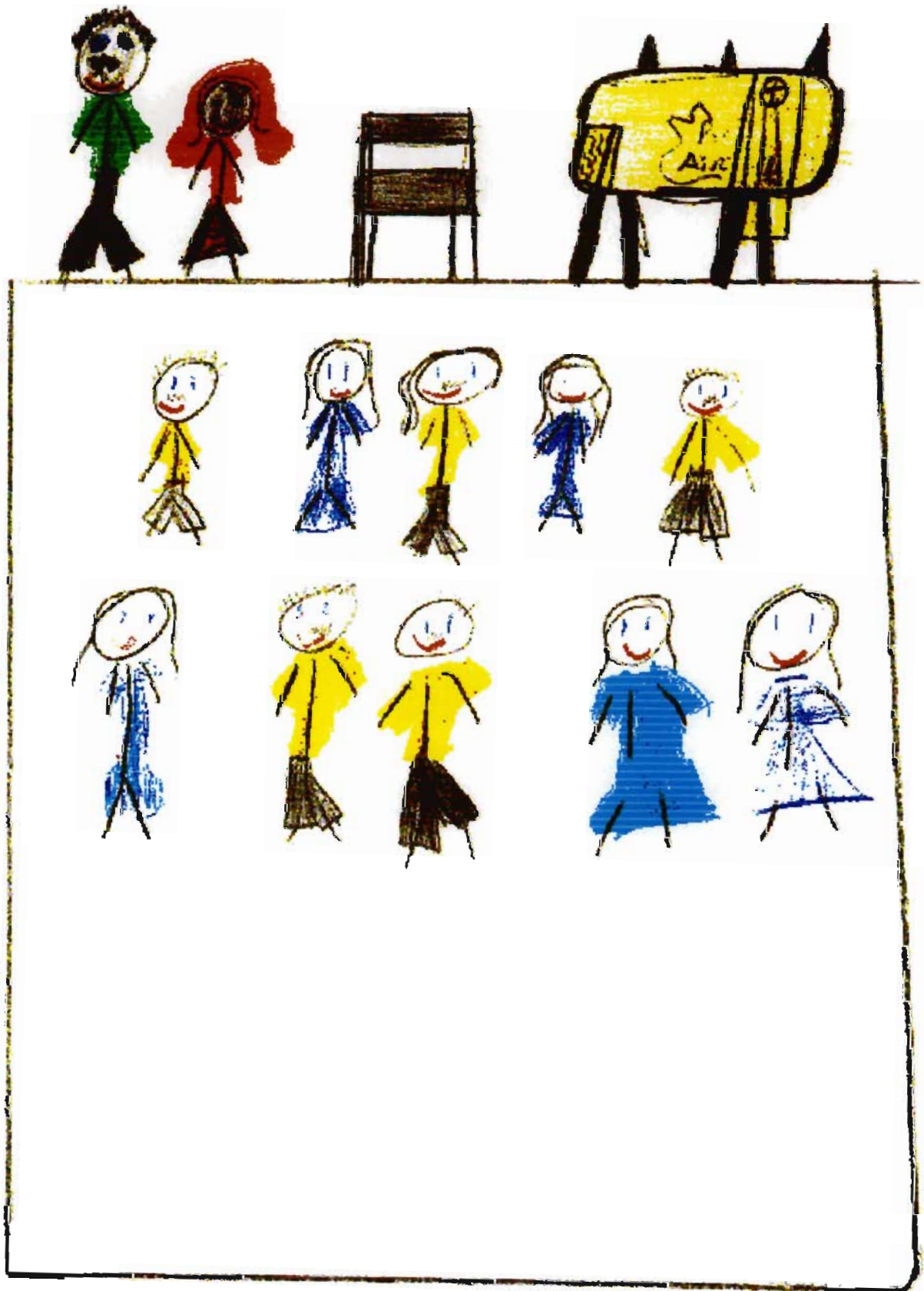
Two more points. If I can be of any help whatsoever on the days when I am at the school, please do not hesitate to call on me. I owe you a great deal, and this might be a small way of repaying you. Seeing me actively involved in mundane and other ways, in addition to my being the guy with the tape recorder, might also be good for my credibility, generally, with the children. Lastly, I undertake, as I indicated during our meeting, to use the recordings with circumspection, and not to reveal the identities of those involved.

Thank you again for your support. I am looking forward to beginning in earnest in the new term.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Adendorff

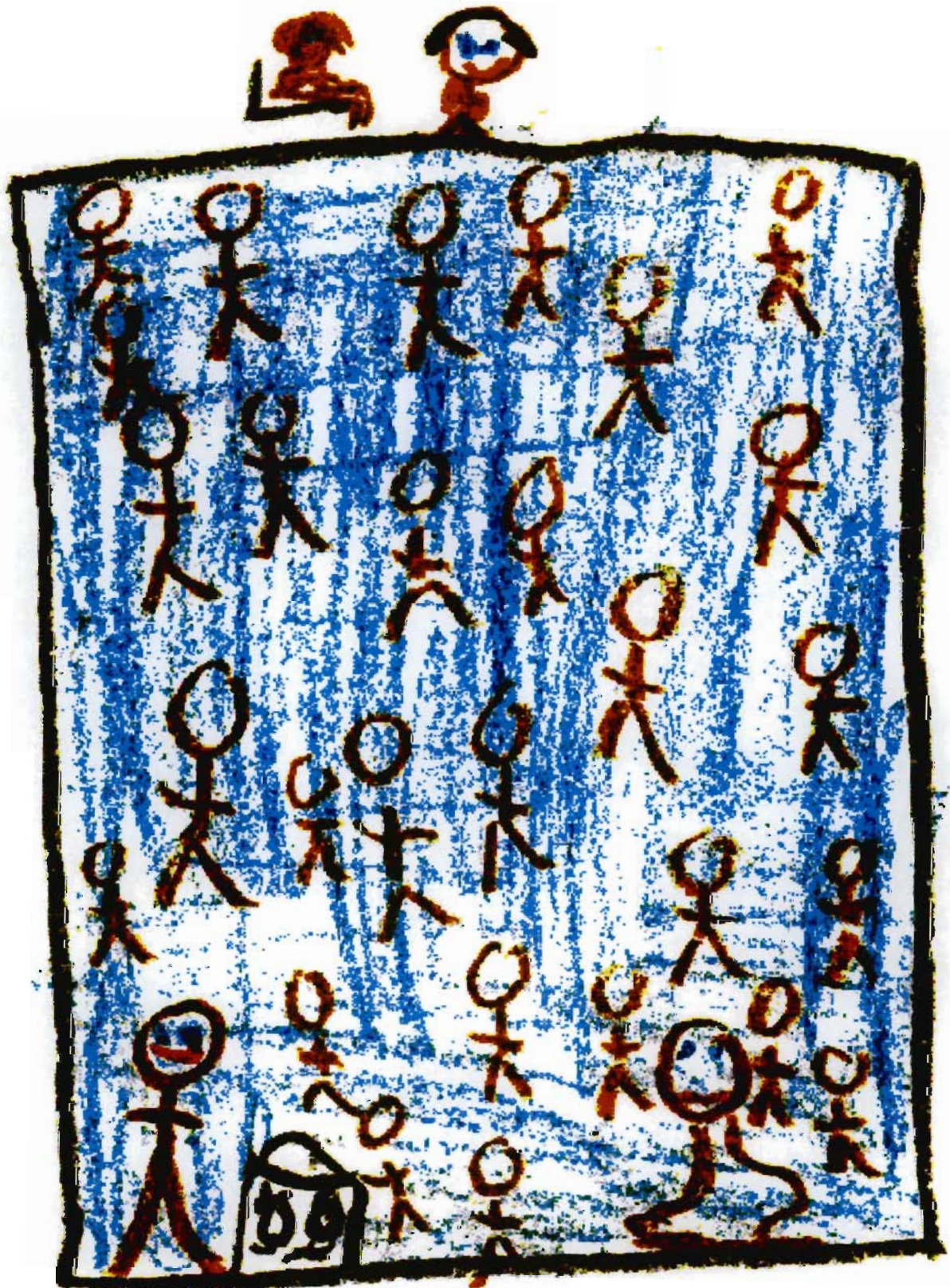
Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (1)



Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (2)



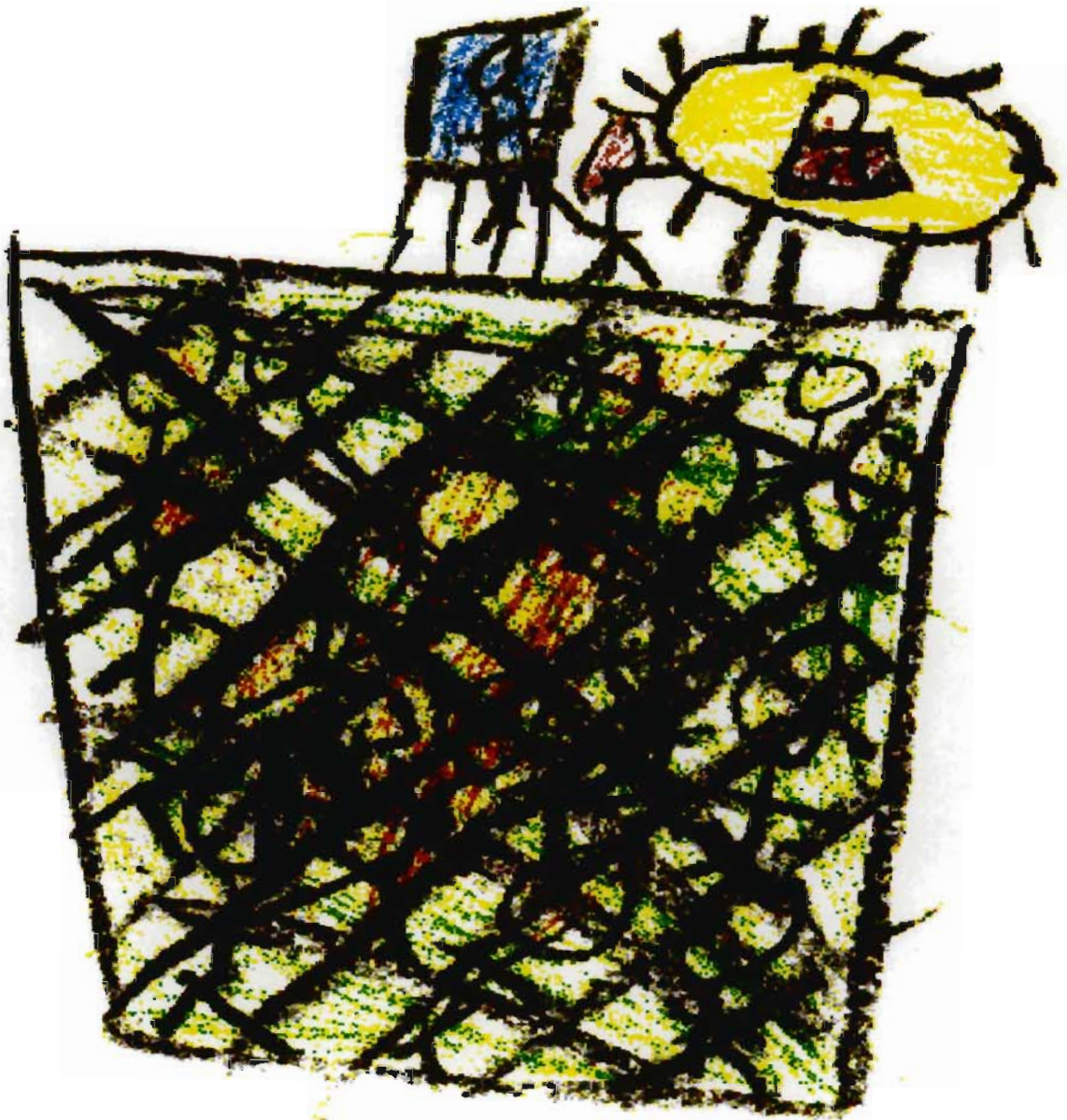
Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (3)



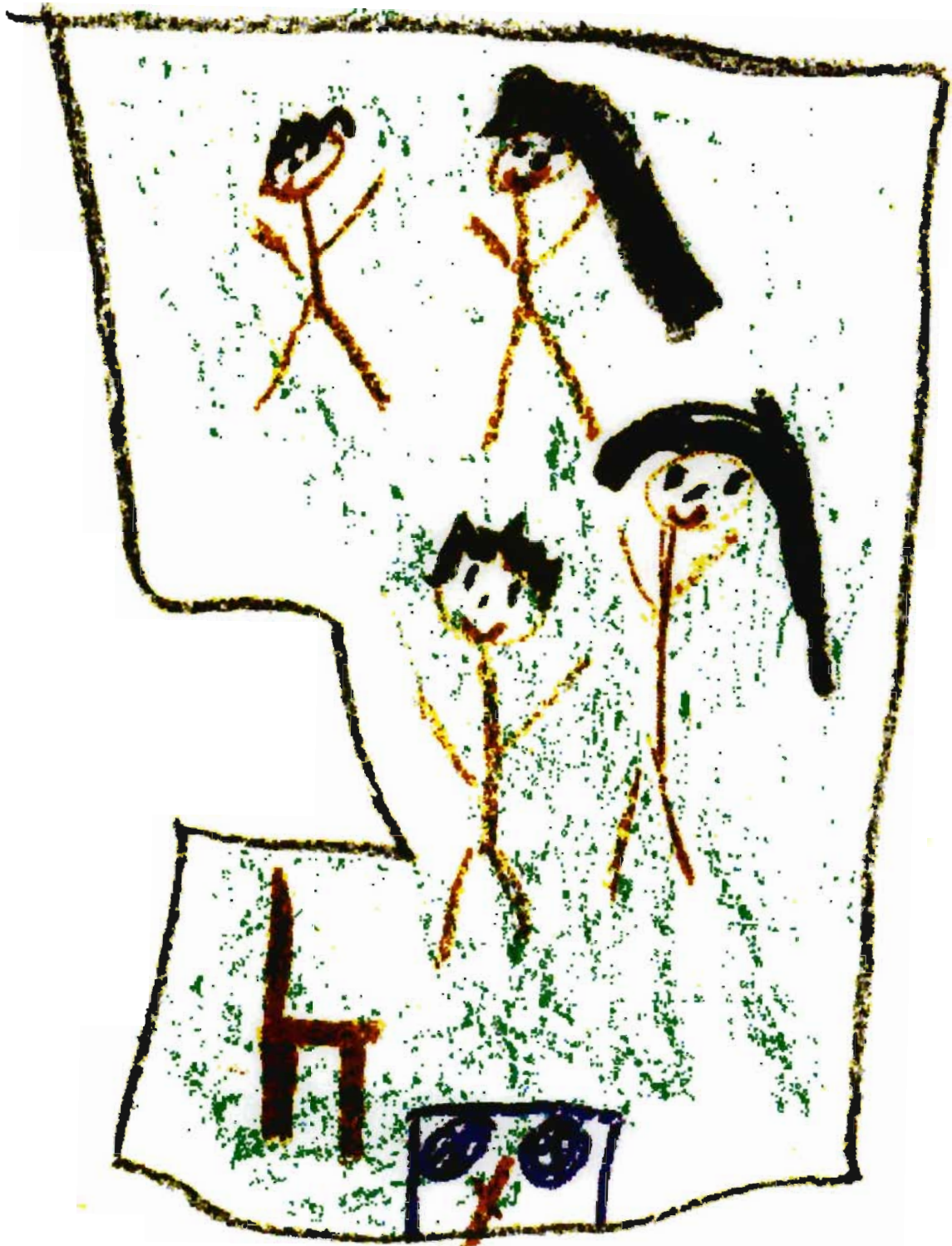
Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (4)



Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (5)



Appendix B-6: Class 2 drawings of news-time which include the tape recorder (6)



Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (1)



The big girl says :

" We give news so that
 WE. give. NEWS. in
 CLASS. one. to talk
 properly. and our
 teacher. can. no
 what we have done
 at home and to tell the
 children that we
 no how to talk
 Loud

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (2)



The big girl says :

" We give news so that we
 can see how they
 speak and we can
 help kiy

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (3)



The big girl says :

" We give news so that
 we can tell other
 children our news ..
 it is fun to tell ..
 our news .. you hafta
 put your hand up and
 wate for the teech to
 call you .

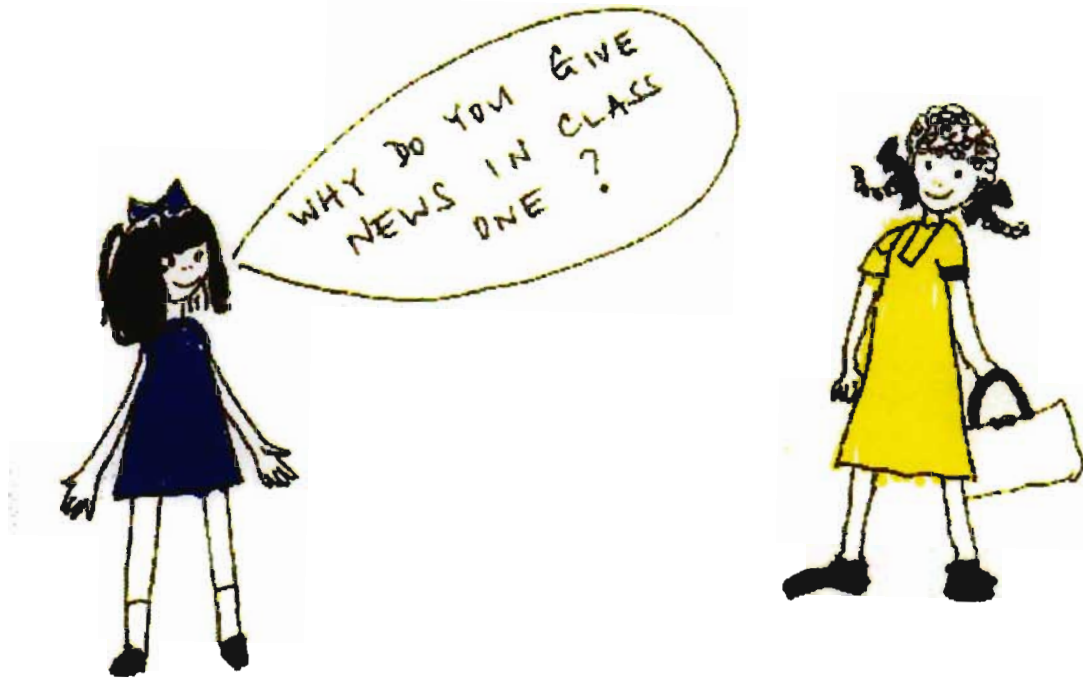
Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (5)



The big girl says :

"We give news so that we
 to the children what
 happen to us in
 the holiday and if
 you hurt yourself.

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (6)



The big girl says :

“ We give news so that we give news so children can help us if we have a problem

.
.
.

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (7)



The big girl says :

' We give news so that we
 give news so the
 other child can
 listen to it so they can
 do some things
 like it

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (8)



The big girl says :

" We give news so that we
 can tell the children
 what we did and ...
 show our news ...

Appendix B-7: Class 1 responses to the speech bubble elicitation task shown to Mrs Byrd (9)



The big girl says :

" We give news so that other
 people can know what
 is happening to us

Appendix B-8: Copy of the speech bubble elicitation task



The big girl says:
"We give news so that.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix B-9: Copy of the pupil questionnaire administered to the class 2 group

YOUR NAME :

1 (a) Do you like telling news?

YES

NO

SOMETIMES

1 (b) Tell me why?

2. What do YOU like to talk about at news-time?

3. What does MRS FRENCH like you to talk about at news-time?

4. What things does Mrs French NOT like you to do at news-time?

5. Why do we tell news at school?

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS

Appendix B-10: Transcript of the interview with Mustafa, an Eager Beaver (18/11/1993)

- 1 R: Today is special because I want you to give me your news all on your own and then
 2 after you've given me your news, if we can talk a little bit about news.
 3 R: Now tell me Mustafa, um, do you, do you like giving news?
 4 M: Yes.
 5 R: To Eager Beavers? Why do you like giving news to the Eager Beavers?
 6 M: It's nice.
 7 R: Why's it nice?
 8 M: I like it.
 9 R: Mm...why do you like it?
 10 M: Because I like it, it's nice.
 11 R: Mm.
 12 M: Because I draw something that it's nice.
 13 R: Umm...and do you think they like to hear your news?
 14 M: Yes.
 15 R: And, Mustafa?
 16 A: Yes?
 17 R: Whose news do you like to listen to most of all?
 18 M: Lloyd.
 19 R: Whose?
 20 M: Lloyd.
 21 R: Mm. Why?
 22 M: 'Cos his news is funny.
 23 R: *(Laughs.)*
 24 M: Lloyd.
 25 R: Is Lloyd in your your- he's not an Eager Beaver?
 26 M: No, school-readiness time.
 27 R: School-readiness time...and the other children in Eager Beavers?
 28 M: The other children
 29 R: Do you like to hear Grayson's news?
 30 M: I like to hear Travis's news.
 31 R: Ah ha, what's special about Travis's news?
 32 M: Because it's funny.
 33 R: So you like news that's funny?
 34 M: Lloyd said, once Lloyd saw a lion and he saw a mamba and the mamba did cut the
 35 tree and the tree fell on the Momma!
 36 R: *(Laughs.)*
 37 M: It fell on him right here.
 38 R: *(Laughs.)*...And what does Mrs- what does, Mrs Byrd like listening to your news?
 39 M:My?
 40 R: To Mustafa's news?
 41 M: To my news.
 42 R: Mm.
 43 M: *(Coughs.)*
 44 R: Mm?
 45 M: Don't know.
 46 R: Can you remember, what does Mrs Byrd say to you when you giving your news?
 47 M: Um...she said to us if its Monday we can colour news...then she writes down.
 48 R: Mhm.
 49 M: She writes down our news.
 50 R: Yes?
 51 M: Tell your news, then she writes down...then on Monday we...colour our news.

- 52 R: And colour your news in? And then what do you do with your- with the picture that
53 you draw for Mrs Byrd?
- 54 M: Mm, sometimes leave it here, and sometimes take it home.
- 55 R: Mhm, and do you show it to your sister?
- 56 M: *(Nods.)*
- 57 R: What does she say?
- 58 M: She says "Ah, it's ugly".
- 59 R: It's ugly!?
- 60 M: She says it's nice.
- 61 R: Oh. *(Laughs.)* And do you show it to your mommy and your daddy?
- 62 M: My daddy, he's at work that time.
- 63 R: Mm...but when he comes home, do you show it to him?
- 64 M: No.
- 65 R: No, do you just show it to your Mom?
- 66 M: Yes.
- 67 R: And what does your Mom say?
- 68 M: Nice.
- 69 R: Ah...
- 70 R: What are the things that Mrs Byrd doesn't like you to do when you giving news?
- 71 M: Fight.
- 72 R: Fight!?
- 73 M: And when someone else is talking, then you mustn't talk.
- 74 R: Oh. Why do you think that is?
- 75 M: Because that's rude.
- 76 R: Oh. Do any of the Eager Beavers talk when you're trying to talk? Mm?
- 77 M: *(Nods.)*
- 78 R: And you don't like that?
- 79 M: No.....
- 80 R: So, so why, Mustafa, do you think children give news?
- 81 M: So the teachers know
- 82 R: Mm.
- 83 M: and then they write it down.
- 84 R: So the teachers know your news, and then they can write it down?
- 85 M: Yes.
- 86 R: Is there any other reason for having news?
- 87 M: Uh uh.
- 88 R: Mm. And you like to give news, hey?
- 89 M: Yes.

Appendix B-11: Transcription of the drawing task interaction with the Eager Beavers (18/11/1993)

- 1) Sa: It's Monday today (*spoken with a "singing" voice*).
 T: Is it Monday today?
 Xs: Yes.
 T: Why?
 M: Because we telling news (*elongates the vowel in "news"*).
 M: We telling news, but I tricked you today.
 M: Why?
 T: What day comes before Monday?
 X: Um.
 M: Tues-, Wednesday, Tuesday?
 Sa: Saturday.
 S: Wednesday.
 T: What day comes before Monday?
 Sa: Sunday.
 T: Sunday, yes...and was it Sunday yesterday and did you stay at home or did you come to school?
 Sh: Come to school.
 T: So? I've tricked you, haven't I?
 Xs: Yes (*spoken with reduced volume, and in unison*).
 T: Ok, so that you know what we going to do today, I'm going to ask you to draw your picture with only one colour.
 M: (*Indistinct.*)
 T: Now, listen, Mustafa you not listening...you've had a turn to tell Mr Ralph news, now I don't want a news picture today, 'cos you've had a turn to tell news. You know what you going to do this time, you going to draw a picture of the Eager Beavers when they busy telling news.
 M: (*Sound effects.*)

- 2) T: Okay? What you going to do for me, Mustafa?
 M: Draw (*indistinct - and spoken very softly*).
 T: You not going to draw your news, you not going to draw your doggies or your kitties or when you went to the beach, I want you to draw a picture of...you and me sitting in this room doing news-time, ok?
 X: Why [can't?
 T: [we've never done that before.
 S: Why can't we tell about [our?
 G: [I've done that at my home
 T: Have you? Right. But this is special today, because it's not Monday, you see. On Monday's the day when we write the news down, today's not Monday, it's different...There we are Saxony (*T passes her a large sheet of paper for her drawing*)...don't start yet.....You can, start. What you going to draw?
 M: Ah ah ah what we doing now.
 T: Yes, you going to draw Eager Beavers...[you going to draw
 S: [I'm just tracing my name again.
 T: No, I don't want you to draw your name again, I want you to draw a picture of the children telling Eager Beavers.
 Se: Here's ring, here's the big circle where you sitting.
 T: Ok, look, he's doing the right thing, but your picture doesn't have to look like his. You do your own way...I want a picture of [you.
 G: [you

T: telling news to me with the Eager Beavers, so draw your friends, draw me, draw me with [my
 X: [I'm drawing
 T: koki
 S: I'm drawing the floor.
 T: Ok, draw a picture of Eager Beaver time.
 G: And here is you.
 T: And is my face happy?
 G: Um.
 T: Why's my face happy?
 G: 'Cos you smiling.
 T: That's good, but why am I smiling, Grayson?
 G: Because we, we are doing the right thing.
 T: Okay. Am I happy when you tell me news?
 Xs: Ye:s.

.....
 T: Do you enjoy doing news?...What's the best part about telling news to Mrs Byrd?...Saxony, what's the best part about news time here?
 Sa: Um, we do Christmas things.
 T: When we did Christmas things, ja, but what's the best thing about news time? When I write your name down and I write what you say? What do you like the best about that?
 Xs: Drawing.
 Sa: Writing our names out (?)

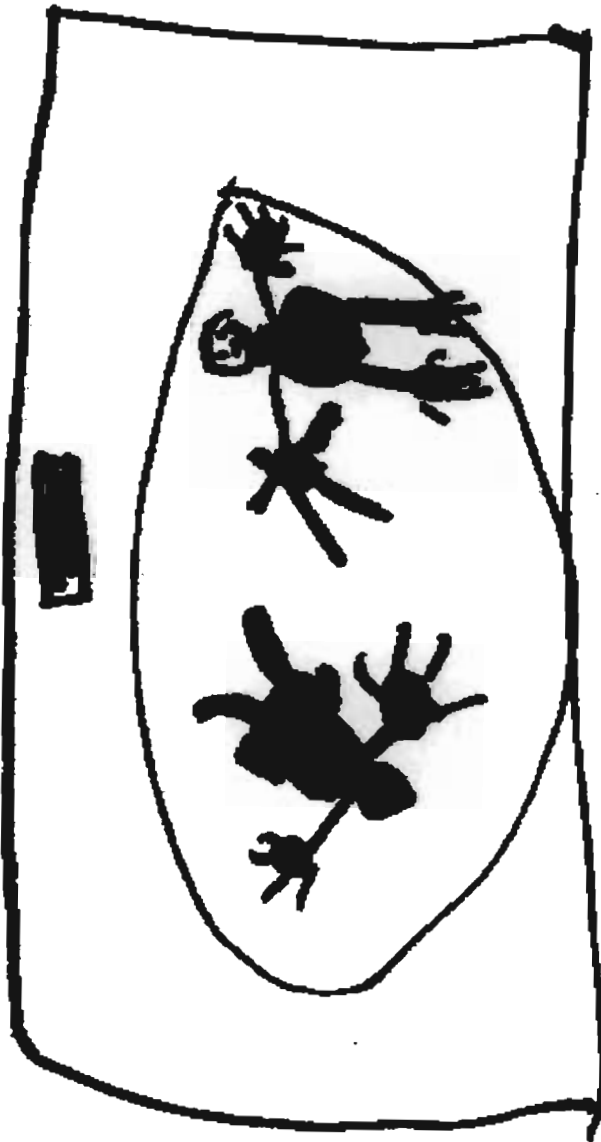
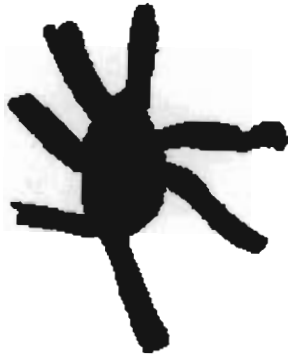
- 3) T: I see Shivani's people are all happy. Do they like coming to news-time?
 Sh: *(Nods.)*
- 4) T: Travis, when you take your news pictures home, what do you do with them? Do you put them anywhere special? Where do you put it?
 Tr: We stick it on the wall.
 T: That's nice, in the kitchen or in your bedroom?
 Tr: Um, in the loft.
 T: Oh good, that's a good place...and does anybody see them there and read your news?
 Tr: Mm.
 M: Where do you put it Travis?
 T: He puts it in his loft.
 M: What's a loft?
 T: It's a room that's got a upstairs ladder or a steep staircase that goes up.
 X: Now.
 T: Is the loft your playroom?
 Tr: No, outside is my playroom.
 T: Oh!
 G: There's the hands, and there's you crossing your legs *(G is referring to his own drawing.)*
 T: Oh nice, look at that!
 X: And..
 T: Where do you put your news pictures, Mustafa?
 M: Downstairs.
 T: Downstairs, on the wall?
 M: No in my, in my drawer.
 T: And who looks at them when you get them, when you take them home?...Who looks at them when you take them home, your news pictures? *(T asks this question over two children who are counting.)*

- M: My Mommy.
T: Does your Daddy read your news?
- 5) T: Grayson, where do you put your news pictures when you take them home?
G: I put them on my wall and my Dad and my mother reads them.
T: That's nice.
- 6) Sa:and my Mom and my Dad and my baby they don't know where I hide it, and I hide it in.....and they can't find it in there.
T: What? Your news pictures?
Sa: Ja.
T: Then why do you hide them away?
Sa: Then they don't see it.
T: Don't you like them to see it?
Sa: I do but (*Indistinct*).
T: Oh, so you just trick them?
Sa: Yes.
T: And does Mommy read them?
Sa: No, only when I bring them out
T: Oh, okay. And when Mommy reads them, what does she say?
Sa: I don't know...
- 7) T: Grayson?
G: Mm?
T: How does your heart feel when Mommy and Daddy read your news?
G: Happy.
T: Why?
G: Because I like it when they tell my news.
T: And do you think their heart's happy when they read your news?
G: Yes...
T: Travis, how does your heart feel when your Mommy reads your news?
.....
- 8) T: And Mustafa, when your Mom and Dad read your news, how do you feel?
M: Fine.
T: Is it a nice feeling inside?
M: Yes.
T: How do you think Mommy feels when she reads your news?
M: (*Indistinct*.)
- 9) T: Saxony where do you put your news pictures when you take them home?
Sa: I give them to my Mommy.
T: And does she read them?
Sa: Yes
T: And what does she say?
Sa: She says "that's nice".
T: Oh, and how does your heart feel when she's busy reading?
Sa: Quite pleased.
T: And how do you think Mommy feels?
B: Happy.
T: Does Daddy ever see your news pictures?
Sa: Only when he comes home from work.
T: And then what does he say?

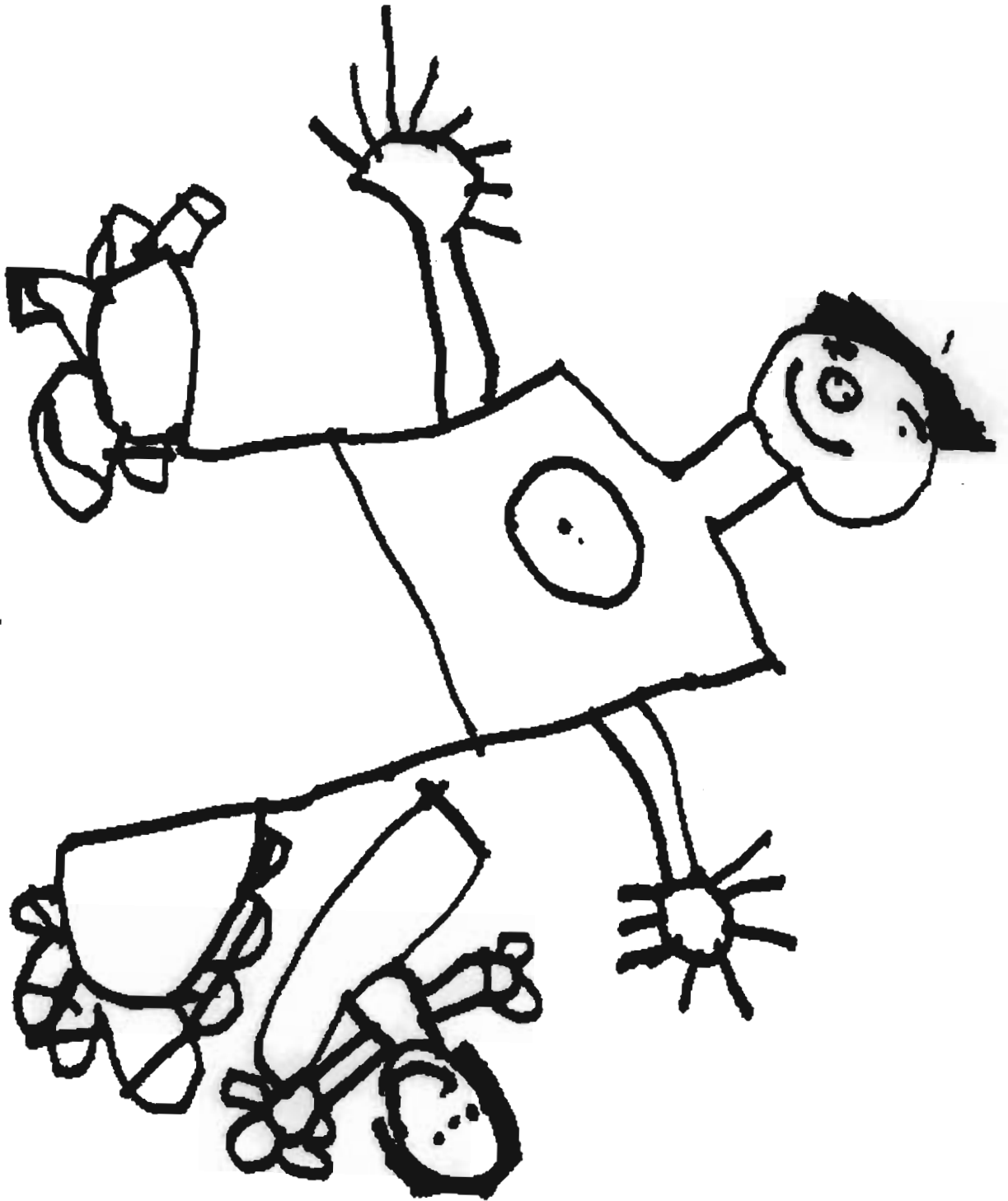
Sa: He says "that's nice" also.
 T: Have you ever shown your news pictures to your Granny?
 Sa: No.
 T: No, not...has Granny never seen your news?
 Sa: Uhuh.
 T: And any other visitors?
 Sa: *(No audible response.)*

- 10) R: Mustafa?
 T: Mustafa, Mr Ralph?
 R: Is there a difference between a story and telling news?
 M: *(Nods.)*
 R: What is the difference?
 M: Because telling news you have to write, and story you have to read.
 R: Ah, are there any other differences?
 M: No.
- 11) T: Saxony, what would you tell Simon (*S's younger brother*) about news? If he said "What's news, Saxony"?.....What would you tell Simon you do at Eager Beavers time?...What is news?
 Sa: Um, it's Eager Beavers.
 T: And what, and what do we do at news time?
 Sa: I don't know *(said in a singing manner)*...We draw and we write.
 T: And what do I write?
 Sa: You write what we do, what we say.
 T: That's right. *(The background to much of the above is fairly loud talk, in which Grayson is prominent.)*
 T: So news is, writing down what the children did?
 Sa: Yes.
- 12) T: Mustafa? Mustafa, if Fatima said to you "What's news?"...Listen to me, if Fatima said "What's news, what do you do when it's news time and what is news at your Eager Beavers?"...What will you tell Fatima?
 M: Fatima doesn't say "What's news?"
 T: But if she did, what would you tell her?
 M: Mm, what my news is *(spoken under his breath)*.
 T: But if she wants to know what it is, what, what is news? What is news time all about? What do you do when it's news time?
 M: Colour, and tell your news
 T: And what is that news that you tell?
 M: All about the news
 R: Can you tell about anything? Is news about anything? Mustafa?
 M: *(No response.)*

Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (1)



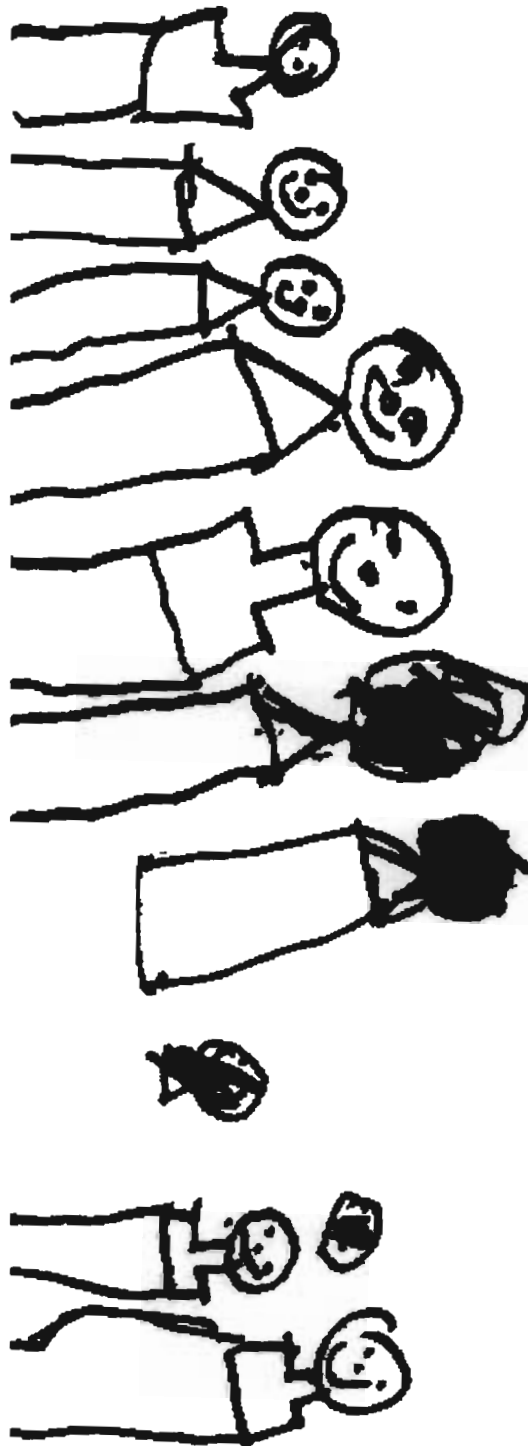
Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (2)



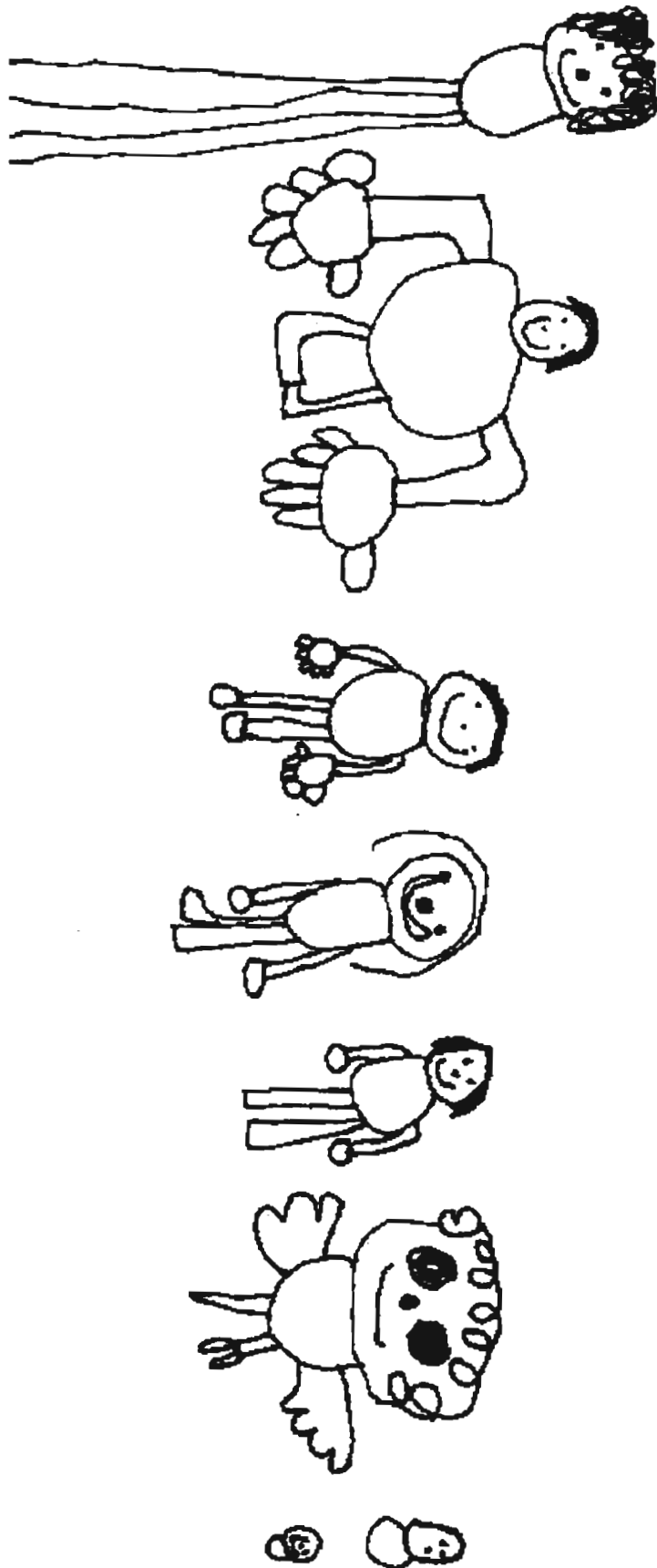
Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (3)



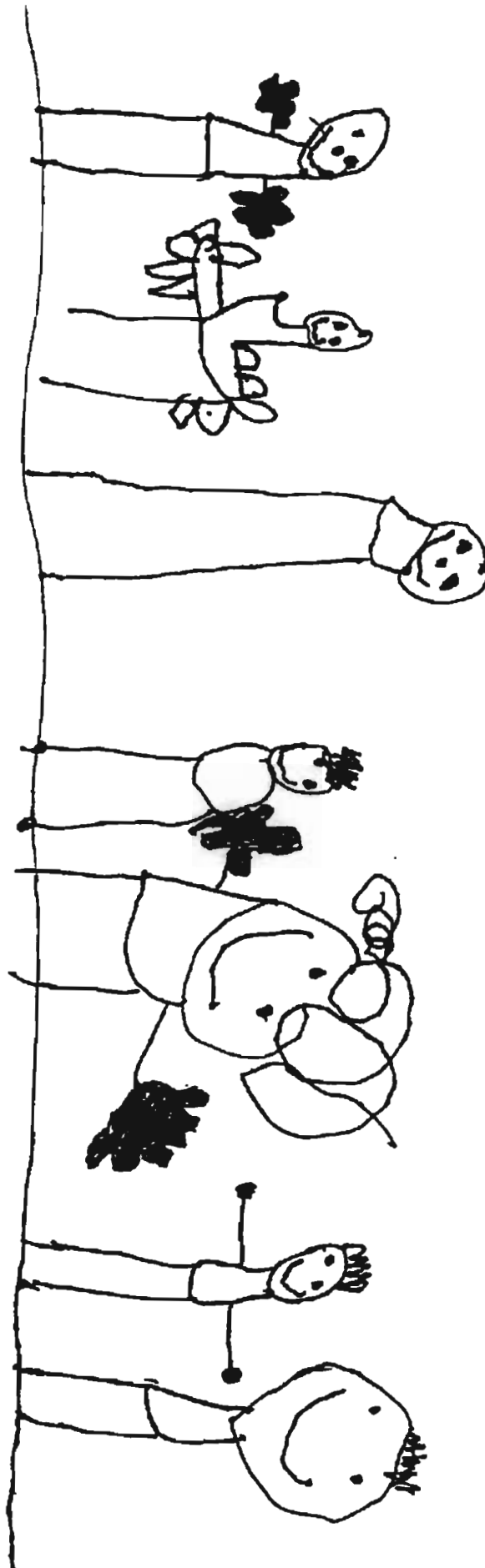
Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (4)



Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (5)



Appendix B-12: Eager Beaver drawing of news-time (6)



Appendix C

Appendix C-1: News given by Mrs Byrd to the Eager Beavers (17/5/1993)

Relevant contextual information is that Travis (Tr), an Eager Beaver, invited Mrs Byrd (T) to give her news after all of the Eager Beavers had given their's and were starting to illustrate their news summaries. S (Saxony) is also an Eager Beaver. Her comments are expressions of identification/solidarity with what Mrs Byrd says, and are not necessarily statements of fact. Grayson (G) is also prominent in the exchange. His comments refer to what he is drawing at the time to illustrate his own news. What he says is unrelated to Mrs Byrd's news.

- 1 Tr: What do you want to tell for news Mrs Byrd?
 2 T: What do I want to tell for news, okay....Um...On Saturday it was, my little boy Wilbur's
 3 big walk at his school. So, after lunch, we had a sleep, and then we woke up, and we
 4 went to Durban Pre-primary where my boy goes to school. And my boy had to walk
 5 rou:nd and rou:nd and rou:nd and rou:nd and round and every time he went round,
 6 they gave him a tick on his card. Do you remember when we had that here last year?
 7 Sa: I knew that
 8 T: And when the big walk was finished we played games. You could throw the bean bag
 9 into the clown's mouth, or you could fish, and you- there was a jumping castle, and
 10 then we had boerewors roll.
 11 G: That's what the roof looks like
 12 T: And we went home, at dark time
 13 G: Up and down
 14 T: Up and down (*T echoes G. What she then says is indistinct.*) So that's my news...It was
 15 fun, we were tired after that.
 16 Sa: That's nice, I also did that.

Appendix C-2: Complete transcript of Anton's news (4/8/1993)

- 1 T: Right, very still while Anton tell his news. Fortunate, come on. Yes. Anton?
 2 A: Um.
 3 T: Don't tell me you haven't got anything (*gentle, teasing tone*).
 4 A: We went, we went to the Comores.
 5 T: To the Comores! Tell these children where the Comores are!
 6 Xs: I know, I know.
 7 T: Are they down the road here in Durban?
 8 X: No! (*Considerable hubbub in the room.*)
 9 T: So, what are the Comores? (*Hubbub continues.*)
 10 A: Ah, then we went to Johannesburg...and then we went (*Indistinct.*)
 11 T: How did you get to the Comores?
 12 A: (*Indistinct.*)
 13 T: By plane? Could you have gone to the Comores by car?
 14 A: No.
 15 T: Could you have gone by train?
 16 A: No.
 17 T: Do you know why you couldn't have gone by car or train?
 18 X: There's most probably a sea or something.
 19 T: Ah...that's right. The Comores are islands in the middle of the sea so you couldn't get
 20 there by train or car so that's [why -
 21 X: [or boat
 22 T: or boat. Right, when you got there, what did you do?
 23 A: Um. We made a lot of friends.
 24 T: Did you make a lot of friends? When did those friends come from? Were they friends
 25 from South Africa?
 26 X: White?
 27 T: Were they from Durban?
 28 A: Some from Durban, some from...
 29 T: You hadn't known them before?
 30 A: Yes.
 31 T: So they were new friends. Then what did you do all day long?
 32 A: I played with them...(*becomes indistinct.*)
 33 T: Nice loud voice. You played with them all the time. Face the children. What sort of
 34 games did you play, or did you go swimming? Did you swim there?
 35 A: Yes.
 36 T: Was it warm?
 37 A: I went on a paddleski.
 38 T: Were you good at it?
 39 A: (*Nods.*)
 40 T: And your friends, did they go too?
 41 A: Yes.
 42 T: Alright then. Do you want to tell us some more?
 43 Xs: (*Make a lot of noise.*)
 44 T: Are you listening, you boys at the back?
 45 A: I made friends with one girl.
 46 T: Aha! So girls aren't too bad to play with are they?
 47 A: I didn't play with girls.
 48 T: You just made friends with her? Did you like her?
 49 A: Ahm: (*signalling uncertainty non-verbally.*)
 50 T: A little bit?
 51 A: Just for a friend.
 52 T: Just for a friend. Good. Warwick! Right. And then? How long were you there?
 53 A: For one week.

- 54 T: For a week! (*T signals her delight at the prospect.*)
55 X1: [(*Gasps.*)]
56 X2: [Anton!]
57 X3: Your'e lucky
58 T: Who? Who wants to ask something?
59 X: Anton, were your friends, um, were they Indian or were they white? Were they white?
60 A: ...(*Indistinct.*) They were South African.
61 T: They were South African and we are all South Africans. At the Comores they don't
62 always all speak English there do they? What do they speak?
63 Xs: (*Murmur.*)
64 A: French.
65 X: Like the French rugby players.
66 T: These children all spoke English?
67 A: (*Inaudible response.*)
68 T: If they had spoken French could you have understood them?
69 A: No! (*Laughs.*)
70 T: Thank you, Anton. Right.

Appendix C-3: Complete transcript of Grayson's news (3/5/1993)

- 1 T: This is for a little boy whose granny was visiting, visiting him, but now she has gone
2 back to Mauritius. Right, what do you want to tell me Grayson?
- 3 G: Mm...
- 4 Se: Grayson came to my house.
- 5 T: Let's give Grayson a turn to talk.
- 6 G: My dog always sleeps and he eats and also he plays with my toys and he takes one bone
7 away from me but it's a toy bone.
- 8 T: A toy bone? Is it your toy bone or is it his toy bone?
- 9 G: My toy bone. And he's got a ball, when I throw his ball, he goes and fetches it, even if I
10 throw a stick for him he will go and fetch it.
- 11 T: That's a kind dog! So you've got him well trained. What else can he do? Can he do
12 tricks?
- 13 G: When I do a trick my dog stands on two feet on his leg
- 14 T: Ah: that's very cute! And, can your dog sit, if you tell him to sit?
- 15 G: *(Nods.)*
- 16 T: Can he give paw?
- 17 G: Mm. And also my little dog can do that, and mommy dog.
- 18 T: Do you know- I don't know- do you know Anusha in the yellow group?
- 19 G: Yes?
- 20 T: Do you know what they taught their doggy to do?
- 21 G: Mm?
- 22 T: They taught their doggy to sit and shake hands like Mrs Byrd.
- 23 G: And my dog
- 24 Se: *[(Laughs.)]*
- 25 T: *[(Laughs.)]*
- 26 G: And my [dog
- 27 T: [Do you think that's funny Seth?
- 28 Se: Yes, can your dog also shake hands?
- 29 G: *(Non-verbal response.)*
- 30 T: Right.
- 31 Xs: *My...(Indistinct.)*
- 32 Se: My dog just stands on one foot.
- 33 T: On one foot?
- 34 Xs: *(Lots of concurrent talk, indistinct.)*
- 35 T: No, no, it's Grayson's turn.
- 36 G: *(Provides sound effects.)*
- 37 T: Grayson, do you know when I was a little girl, I had a pony, and my pony could give
38 paw, if you stood in front of the pony...and I can't remember what you had to say but
39 give one leg up, and then I used to give the pony some carrot. You see that we can
40 teach animals tricks.
- 41 G: And also some time when I go in the boat my Grandfather drives the boat and the dog
42 drives on my head, my little dog and that two other dogs are in the boat doing a
43 handstand.
- 44 Se: *(Laughs loudly.)*
- 45 T: Not in a boat! I wonder if they really do a handstand?
- 46 X: Are you going to write that on?
- 47 T: Would you like me to? Okay, tell me what would you like me to say?
- 48 X: You know what, [my
- 49 T: [No, it's now Grayson's turn.
- 50 G: Um, when I go in my hou:se the dogs just follow me and follow me.
- 51 T: Right.
- 52 G: Even if I sleep then my dogs sleep in my bedroom because that is where they beds are...
53 The little dog sleeps under my bed, that's where I put his bed, and the two other dogs,

54 the Dad sleeps on the floor outside the bed, the Mom sleeps under the bed with the
55 baby.
56 T: That's very nice. Grayson says: MY DOGS FOLLOW ME AT HOME.....[THEY
57 G: [and they
58 play in the speedboat
59 T: SLEEP...
60 Se: And then they speed off the boat
61 T: IN, MY
62 Se: Then they fall in the water
63 T: Right.
64 G: They they speed, then my dogs fall in the water and [then I just
65 Se: [and then they speed off the boat
66 outside
67 T: [You've got
68 Se: [On an island
69 T: Seth, you've got to listen, you've got to be sure that you're not cruel to your dogs, okay.
70 You got to make sure that what you doing to your dogs is kind.
71 G: But, but, I, teach them to not hurt
72 T: Okay. Grayson says: MY DOGS FOLLOW ME AT MY HOME. THEY SLEEP IN
73 MY ROOM. THEY ALSO GO IN THE SPEEDBOAT.

Appendix C-4: Grayson's news summary (3/5/1993)

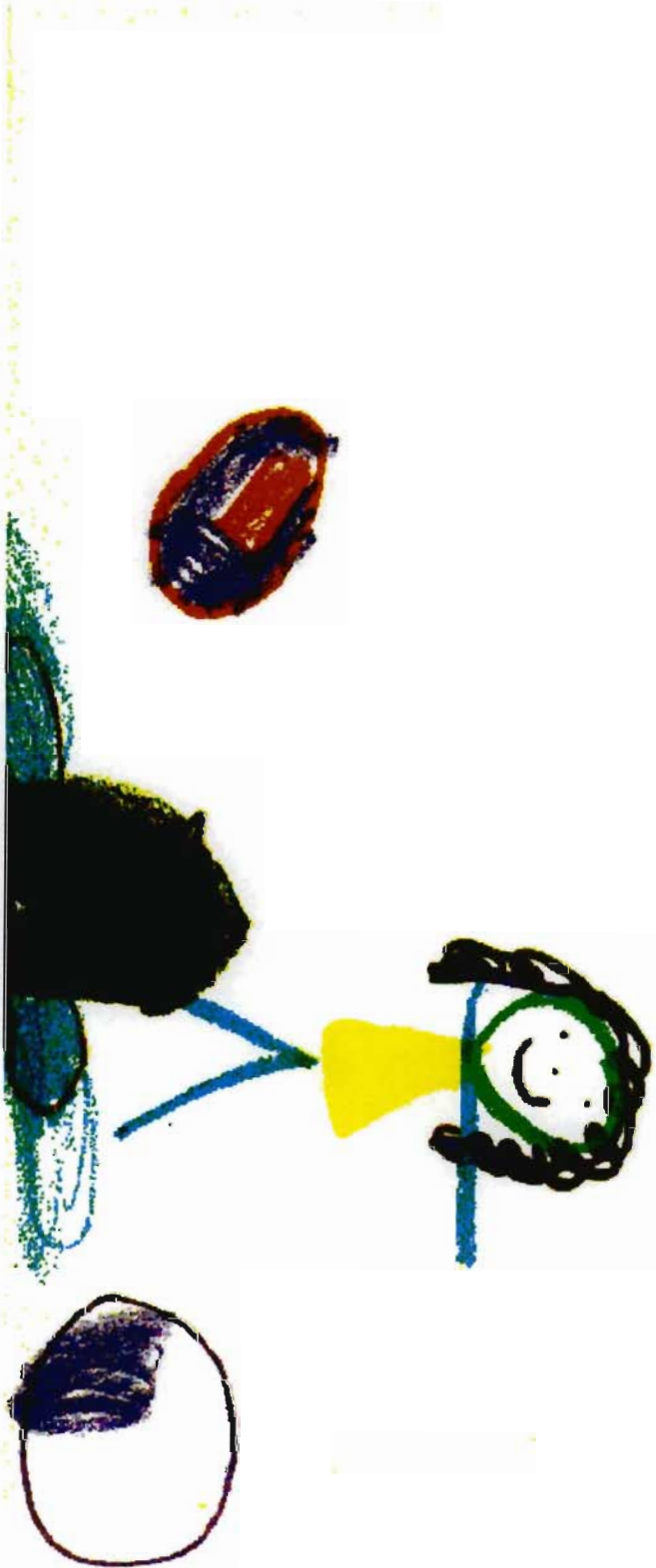
3/5

My dogs follow me at my home. They
sleep in my room. They also go in the
speedboat. The dog chased the monkeys

away.

Appendix C-5: Jennifer's news summary and drawing (26/4/1993)

I went to the beach. I made a sandcastle.



Appendix C-6: An earlier news account by Mervyn (23/11/1992)

- 1 M: I've got someone sleeping at my house.
 2 T: Who?
 3 M: In my bed.
 4 T: In your bed? Who?
 5 M: My friend.
 6 T: Whose your friend?
 7 M: A:h Alex.
 8 T: Alex, where does he stay normally?
 9 M: In Cape Town.
 10 T: In Cape Town. Is he on holiday?
 11 M: (*Nods.*)
 12 T: And how old is he, Mervyn?
 13 M: A:h I don't know.
 14 T: Well is he your age, or is he bigger, or
 15 M: He's bigger.
 16 T: Go'n put those in your case please, darling (*addressing the previous news-giver*).
 17 M: He's bigger.
 18 T: He's bigger than you and he's in your bed? And where you sleeping?
 19 M: I'm sleeping in my sister's bed.
 20 T: And where's your sister sleeping?
 21 M: M: Her bed.
 22 T: [As we...
 23 M: [My sister's got her...bunk bed.
 24 T: Oh a bunk bed. So that's where you are. Oh well that's fun. Do you sleep up or down?
 25 M: Ah, up and down.
 26 T: Oh up and down. Oh! Do you take turns?
 27 M: Yes. But er if I get home when I get get home today I'm gonna squirt my friend with
 28 my squirt gun.
 29 T: Ah ha.
 30 M: Hee hee.
 31 T: Alright. You can have fun then. Glen, have we had you, darling?

Appendix C-7: An additional example of a news presentation which reflects moral divergence between pupil and teacher (26/8/1992)

- 1 T: Dudley, have you got something? Come on then.
2 D: In the morning my mother phoned, um, her firm to tell her boss she's not going in to
3 work.
4 T: This morning? Is she not well today?
5 D: She is. But she doesn't want to go to work.
6 T: Ooh my. Do you do that sometimes if you don't feel like coming to school?
7 D: Umum (*signals denial further by shaking his head*).
8 T: Ooh, I hope not. I'm glad you want to come to school. How, how are Patty and Snow
9 Queen doing? (*T is referring to D's kittens*).
10 D: Fine.
11 T: Are Snow Queen's eyes open wide now?
12 D: Uhuh. (*Shakes his head*).
13 T: Not yet? One of these days you'll have to bring them again to show us. Ah, thanks
14 Dudley.

Appendix C-8: An additional example of the teacher promoting largely white middle-class values (29/9/1992)

- 1 A: Today when I, a, today after school I'm going to my friend's house.
2 T: Oh, are you? And what are you going to do there?
3 A: I'm a play t.v. games and I also play with my gun...
4 T: Are you? You mustn't play too many t.v. games. If you go and play with someone, you must
5 go and play out in the garden. You mustn't go and sit [in
6 A: [they don't have a garden.
7 T: Don't they? Where do they live?
8 A: Flat.
9 T: Oh dear. Alright. Because I know lots of you little children when you go and play with each
10 other, you sit in front of the t.v., and that's not playing, is it? No, you must go and play
11 outside and get some lovely healthy fresh air.
12 M: Every time I play...usually I play Wesley's t.v. games then I go outside and play with him.
13 T: That's fine Matthew, as long as you spend some time playing outside.
14 M: Ja my daddy always comes when when we are playing outside.
15 T: Does he? That's good.
16 A: We have a garden but, but it's too bushy.
17 T: Is it too bushy? Oh...well, that's alright. Haley, have you had a turn yet? Come darling.

Appendix C-9: An additional example of a news account which falls short of the teacher's preference for what is "nice" (2/9/1993)

- 1 A: In the morning when I was getting dressed my granny that wees went and- to the
2 bathroom and she wee'd on the floor.
3 Xs: Ah!
4 A: and then she took my baby sister's face-cloth and she wiped her wee with [it
5 Xs: [Ah!
6 A: so my baby sister had to get a new face-cloth
7 T: Oh my!
8 Xs: (*Hubbub.*)
9 T: Do you help your granny?
10 Xs: (*Hubbub.*)
11 T: Boys and girls! Wesley! Wesley, that part is rather funny, of using the face-cloth
12 Xs: (*Hubbub.*)
13 T: Remember, remember, we spoke about people when they get very old sometimes they
14 don't really know what they're doing.
15 A: (*Starts to speak again.*)
16 T: You've got something else?
17 A: Yes.
18 T: Sorry, she wants to start something else
19 A: Um, sometimes when she goes to the toilet, when she wants to poo, she poos on the
20 floor.
21 Xs: (*Loud exclamations and shrieks.*)
22 T: Right. Now, let's see if we can have some happy news. (*Loud volunteering by a*
23 *number of children, after which the teacher nominates the next speaker.*)

Appendix C-10: All of the class 1 pupils' responses to the speech bubble task

Pupils were asked to write what they think the big girl says in response to the little girl's question:

“WHY DO YOU GIVE NEWS IN CLASS ONE?”

They wrote their responses on the dotted lines which followed the following prompt:

The big girl says:

“We give news so that

The number prefixed by a capital P designates each pupil i.e., P 09 = pupil number 9. The pupils' original spelling is preserved throughout.

- P 01 *We give news so that we can tell other children and our teachers and it can be more exciting than any thing.*
- P 02 *We give news so that we give news in class one to talk properly and our teacher can no what we have dun at home and to tell the children that we no huw to talk loud.*
- P 03 *We give news so that we tell our news to tell wot they can on how to do it.*
- P 04 *We give news so that we give news to the children because we get exsiting news.*
- P 05 *We give news so that we give news so the other children can listen to it so thay can do sum things like it.*
- P 06 *We give news so that we give news so children can help us if we have a problem.*
- P 07 *We give news so that we can tell other childrin our news it is fun to tell our news to the childrin.*
- P 08 *We give news so that so that the children know how fun it is.*
- P 09 *We give news so that our frens can lish to it and they lik our news because it is excitng and so sumtims they go and biye wht we gair for our news.*

- P 10 *We give news so that we tell our news because it is interesting to see what other children ob.*
- P 11 *We give news so that we to the children what happen to us in the holiday and if yuo hurt yourself.*
- P 12 *We give news so that we can see how they speak and we can here kliy.*
- P 13 *We give news so that because you can tell them where you have been.*
- P 14 *We give news so that other people can no whot is hapning to us.*
- P 15 *We give news so that we can tell them our news is to sher. I lik it it is fun.*
- P 16 *We give news so that we tell the children our news because you have fun on the weekend bont you have fun.*
- P 17 *We give news so that we can see the othe children news and the othe chilren news is so istrid and the teechs teechss the othe children to speec softy.*
- P 18 *We give news so that we can see what sum children do at the weekend we share our news with the class the class likes it and we learn how to talk lowd.*
- P 19 *We give news so that we can tell our parents and grandpa and teachers how we speak loud and clear.*
- P 20 *We give news so that we can tell the children wat we did and sher our news.*
- P 21 *We give news so that other children can sher ther news so we no wut they do and wer they go so wen you go to class 1 you will now wiy you tal news and it is icsiting.*
- P 22 *We give news so that we can tell other children our news it is fun to tell our news you hafto put your hand up and wate for the teech to call you.*

Appendix C-11: All of the class 2 pupils' responses to item 5 of the questionnaire

Item 5 asked pupils the following:

“WHY DO WE TELL NEWS AT SCHOOL?”

The answers which follow preserve the pupils' spelling and punctuation. The prefix (eg. P 01) again distinguishes one pupil from the next.

- P 01 *We tell news to make some fun because people mite be bord and when they hear it is news time they happy again.*
- P 02 *We tell news at school because some of us want to improv our loungwage and if it is funny we want to mack people gigile and never forget.*
- P 03 *We tell news so that we can share news with ather children.*
- P 04 *We tell news at school because it is exciting.*
- P 05 *Beacuse it is fun and exiting to tell news I love it.*
- P 06 *because people wood lik to no your news.*
- P 07 *Because we like too.*
- P 08 *To make us happy at school time.*
- P 09 *so that we know what other people like doing.*
- P 10 *We tell news at school for fun.*
- P 11 *Just for fun.*
- P 12 *because it is nis to sher.*
- P 13 *I don't know why mbe we must lene words.*
- P 14 *I like to tell my friends.*
- P 15 *because Mrs Fowler tels us to tel news at school and we like it too.*
- P 16 *because we like to talk news.*
- P 17 *We tell news because it is iksiting and fun.*

P 18 *we tall news because we talk properly thats why.*

P 19 *We tell news so the other children know what you do.*

P 20 *because it is fun.*

P 21 *So Mrs Fowler knows our big or small problems.*

P 22 *We tell news so that other people can know what we did.*

P 23 *We have news so we can here fun things that we tell about.*

P 24 *I do not now.*

P 25 *The teacher wants us to.*

P 26 *so athour children now what happens in our familys.*

P 27 *we tell news becauce so we know whats going on.*

Appendix C-12: All responses to items 2 and 3 of the questionnaire completed by pupils in class 2

Note: P1, P2, P3..etc designate each of the pupils who responded to questions 2 and question 3 of the questionnaire.

Question 2 read as follows:

What do YOU like to talk about at news time?

Question 3 read as follows:

What does MRS FRENCH like you to talk about at news time?

- P1 (q2) *I like to talk about things that people never no about like people here have never heard about larver and other things.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes me to talk about nice things like when I went to the comores when I wend paddill sceaes and have a nice time.*
- P2 (q2) *I like to talk about chritsmas and were I went and I like to tlak about wat I like doing at home.*
 (q3) *Mrs French dosnt mind us talking about anny thing and Mrs French likes us taking about intesting things and if you enjoyed what you were doing.*
- P3 (q2) *I like to talk about wild life and plants and animals and nature and lots and lots of difrent pats of the world.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about lots and lots and lots of difrent things.*
- P4 (q2) *I like talking about funny things and special things and spcific stuf.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about exciting news.*
- P5 (q2) *I like telling about what I done on the holidays it is fun.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about what we done on the haldays to.*
- P6 (q2) *I like talking about some that has ben haping at home that was so fun not a agl storys like the reyil Jungle book.*
 (q3) *She likes us to tall about Diwali and Eid.*
- P7 (q2) *I like to talk about the week ends when I go to my friends house.*
 (q3) *She like us to tell our oun news.*
- P8 (q2) *We like to talk about our news.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about things that she tells us to do.*

- P9 (q2) *I like to talk about my dogs and my party and my friends and my family and my holidays.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about interesting things.*
- P10 (q2) *I like talking about my holiday news.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about nice news.*
- P11 (q2) *I like talking about funny news because it makes people laugh.*
 (q3) *She likes to talk about fun news.*
- P12 (q2) *I like to tell secrets.*
 (q3) *about happy things.*
- P13 (q2) *about my mom's birthday.*
 (q3) *nice news not ugly news.*
- P14 (q2) *I like to talk about England because it's exciting.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about Diwali and Christmas.*
- P15 (q2) *I like to be funny and tell funny things.*
 (q3) *She likes me to tell about what we do in the holidays.*
- P16 (q2) *I like to talk about my friend. She is a very nice friend. I like her because she is my best friend.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about yesterday what we did.*
- P17 (q2) *I like talking about the things I got from my mom.*
 (q3) *When you got it and what did you do to get it.*
- P18 (q2) *I like to talk about my toys and what they can do.*
 (q3) *Mrs French tells me to talk loud when I am talking my news.*
- P19 (q2) *I like to talk about a play I went to or a birthday party I went to. I also like talking about what happened in the weekend.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about what you did in the holiday or weekend.*
- P20 (q2) *I like to tell my news at news time.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about Eid.*
- P21 (q2) *I like to talk about happy things.*
 (q3) *Happy things and our problems.*
- P22 (q2) *I like talking about new things that I get.*
 (q3) *Mrs French likes us to tell interesting news about what we did.*
- P23 (q2) *I like talking about when I am visiting somewhere nice.*
 (q3) *She likes us to talk about something exciting.*

P24 (q2) *I like talking about guns, knifs boms, killing, dinimus, blud. It is nice. My friends are Garth, Khalil, Dudley.*

(q3) *I do not now.*

P25 (q2) *I'd like to talk about anything. I love love love love love to tell happy very very happy news.*

(q3) *I realy don't know.*

P26 (q2) *I like exiting things.*

(q3) *Mrs French tells us to tell her things about our news.*

P27 (q2) *I like to talk about old things and new things like my new form changs that I bought yesterday. I have not told eney one and I wo'nt tell eney one untill you see this.*

(q3) *Mrs French likes us to talk about uxiteing news.*

Appendix C-13: Evidence of a pupil mimicking Zena's style of news-giving (19/8/1993)

- 1 T: Um, Haley, have you got anything? Um, Charmaine? Charmaine, have you- where's
2 Charmaine?
- 3 C: Here.
- 4 T: Have you got anything? Alright Jacqui?
- 5 J: No.
- 6 Xs: *(Call for a turn.)*
- 7 T: Alright. Vanitha' I'm going on the list. Vanitha?
- 8 V: No.
- 9 T: Oh! Bronwyn? Shamitha?
- 10 S: No.
- 11 T: Right. Gareth! Gareth. Ah. And we've got to Zena. She'll have to be the last one.
- 12 Xs: *Aah! (Children are expressing their disappointment.)*
- 13 T: Just calm down everyone.
- 14 Z: The other day I was, um, looking through the newspaper to see if there was at the
15 movies, if there was, they were having Champions or Ninja or *(Indistinct.)* I forgot
16 which other programme it was. So then, um, we found it (?) Er, my Mom and I were
17 looking at some other articles and we found these two articles. This one is about a
18 school who was going to the, um, *(Z consults quietly with the teacher)* Treasure Beach.
19 In my, um, cousin's newspaper they even showed what they were looking for.
- 20 T: Oh?
- 21 X: What were they looking for?
- 22 T: Remember, we spoke about Treasure Beach when we were talking about the sea. Near
23 Brighton Beach and the rockpools there? I tell you what, we'll put it up here and then
24 the others can have a look during the day.
- 25 Z: Then I went, um, ah, to see the newspaper about it and I started looking all over the
26 newspapers and I found that one. It's a picture of a rotting whale and er, it stinks. It's
27 rotting and that's why the boy's [holding his nose.
- 28 T: [holding his nose.
- 29 Xs: *(Hubbub in class.)*
- 30 Z: I found this one last night [of, um, *(Talking continues.)*
- 31 Xs: [Last night *(Spoken with lengthened vowels and nasalisation,*
32 *imitating Z).*
- 33 Z: Tony Watson with some of the boys from our school.
- 34 T: Who's Tony Watson?
- 35 X: A rugby player.
- 36 T: Aha. And there's boys from our school here.
- 37 Xs: *(General talk.)*
- 38 T: We'll put it up here and then you people can have a look at that later on.
- 39 Z: Tonight my mom's friend is coming. She, she's come for a holiday from London so
40 she's coming to have, um, supper with us tonight. And after madressa when I go home
41 then I'm going to watch KTV and then go and pick her up. She has one small, a small
42 daughter the same size as my cousin and the same name.
- 43 T: Hhm. What's the name?
- 44 Z: Aisha and then she has a bigger daughter who's about ten or so and her name is Zela
45 *(Class members comment on the similarity of their names)* and she has another boy
46 who's about the same age as me and his name is *(Indistinct.)*
- 47 T: Are you looking forward to that? Alright, thank you.
- 48 Xs: *(Considerable hubbub.)*
- 49 T: Right.

Appendix C-14: Complete transcript of Wesley's news, incorporating extract 26 (4/8/1993)

- 1 T: Right. Ah, Wesley. Lynn! Look at Wesley.
 2 W: Right. When I went to the caravan park we, the first day we unpacked everything then I got
 3 on my bike out and I rode to see if I could, could see my friend Lloyd, and he wasn't there so
 4 the next day I went and I got my bike to see if Lloyd was there and then he was, so then, um,
 5 um- but on the first day um Tanya was there, one of my friends- and James and Sandy and
 6 um, me, and me and Lloyd went to the Ocean View arena.
 7 T: So is this caravan park near the sea?
 8 W: Ja. And that side was Ocean View and then we went to Ocean View to see the
 9 witchdoctor.
 10 X: *(Gasp.)*
 11 T: ...And- what did the witchdoctor do?
 12 W: He wasn't there on that day.
 13 T: Oh.
 14 W: But then my friend Lloyd, he went, he went there another day without me and he um
 15 saw the er, the witchdoctor.
 16 X: *(Says something indistinctly.)*
 17 W: What?
 18 X: *(Speaks indistinctly again.)*
 19 W: What did the witchdoctor look like?
 20 X: Yes.
 21 W: It's not a he, it's a she and um she had a cloth around her head
 22 Xs: *(Babble.)*
 23 W: But the, uh, she had lucky charms. She had, she, but when, when we- the part I saw, I
 24 saw when we were peeping through a window and we saw the- she had this monkey
 25 hanging up, see-
 26 T: A real monkey? Alive?
 27 X: Where?
 28 W: In a cage. She took it out, we saw her. She took it out. She took the hand off and the
 29 head off.
 30 T: While you were watching?
 31 Xs: *(Murmur.)*
 32 W: No. She used this for lucky charms.
 33 Xs: [Yuk, Yeugh!
 34 T: [Can I just ask...
 35 W: There was this arm still hanging up there.
 36 Xs: *(Exclamations of disgust.)*
 37 T: No, just a minute- Andile, Siphso, just a minute, um, Fortunate, what, what do you say in
 38 Zulu for a witchdoctor? What's the word?
 39 S: A Zulu witchdoctor.
 40 T: No, what's the Zulu word for witchdoctor? Do you know?
 41 S: I've forgotten that name.
 42 T: Nkululeko! Could it be...don't they say she's a sangoma?
 43 X: Ja, sangoma.
 44 T: Sangoma, that's right. Because some of the...the sangoma's are very very clever when it
 45 comes to natural medicine. They use medicines that they find in the [forest,
 46 X: [from the barks of trees,
 47 from berries, from leaves. *(Voices in the background.)*
 48 T: Uhuh, no, we don't want to hear you Gareth. So some of them are very good. Others,
 49 perhaps, are not quite as good but we can find out all about them. Sorry, let's listen to
 50 Wesley. Gareth! It's not your turn. Last thing.

- 51 W: And um. Then we went, there's where the most exciting part was. Um, we went to the
52 beach, that was the second exciting part and also we went to camp out in the night every
53 night. We went to the sea and found lots of cowries and um, we found lots of shells and
54 stones and um, what's that, precious, precious stones.
- 55 T: Oh lovely.
- 56 W: And when I was at the Ocean's view, there's some camp people and there were, ja, there
57 were camp people but when I was there with my friends there were these people making, um,
58 surfboards and everything. Getting ready to go there and there were, there were all big men
59 and some teenagers and blue tattoos on them. Snakes.
- 60 X: Yugh!
- 61 T: Right, thanks Wesley. (*Considerable talk ensues amongst those on the mat.*)