Pedagogy, Culture & Society, Volume 10, Number 3, 2002

Britton and Bernstein on Vygotsky: divergent views on mind and language in the pedagogic context

MOIRA INGHILLERI
Goldsmiths College, University of London, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT In recent influential work in language and social cognition relevant to pedagogical contexts, references to Basil Bernstein's work are notably absent, despite renewed recognition of the significance of his continued contribution to theories of classroom practices, sociolinguistics and the sociology of education. This article discusses several historical and ideological factors that have contributed to this lacuna. It reconsiders the organisation of the intellectual field of English education in Britain during the 1970s within which Bernstein's theorising about language took place. Within that field, it pays particular attention to the divergent readings of Vygotsky by James Britton and Bernstein with respect to power and the discursive regulation of 'legitimate' meanings in the pedagogic context. Finally, it considers the relevance in the post-Vygotskian field of social cognition of Bernstein's early attention to the relationship between social/institutional factors and individual functioning.

Introduction

In a number of recent influential contributions to sociolinguistic research relevant to educational contexts, the social dimension of language and cognition has been foregrounded in an attempt to re-establish a role of the mind in relation to the world and to social practices (Gee, 1990, 1992, 1999; Wertsch, 1991, 1998; Wertsch et al, 1995b; Light & Butterworth, 1992; John-Steiner et al, 1994). Two recent volumes entitled *Genres and Institutions: social processes in the workplace and school* (Christie & Martin, 1997) and *Pedagogy and the Shaping of Consciousness* (Christie, 1999) present classroom-based studies of mathematics, science and English teaching which attempt to bring together systemic-functional linguistic theory and Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse in considering how language features in a theory of human consciousness.

Common to all of these works is the claim that the patterns of meaning which shape, maintain and/or extend the boundaries both of individual 'thought worlds' and the social/symbolic order are formed and reformed through language in context. In some of these works, emphasis is placed on the divergent and sometimes conflicting sets of principles found across diverse social and cultural contexts which govern individual behaviour and which can and do position individuals unequally with respect to the acquisition of material and symbolic resources.

Amongst the work cited above, however, the Hallidayan approaches to language study (see Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Painter, 1999) are alone in explicitly linking their work to the sociological theory of Basil Bernstein, despite recent recognition of the enduring significance of Bernstein's contribution to the sociology of education and sociolinguistics (see Atkinson, 1985; Atkinson et al, 1995; Sadnovik, 1995). Bernstein's work has been re-evaluated in the light of contemporary research and theory in the fields of linguistics, sociology and education within both structuralist and post-structuralist frameworks. However, in the area of language and social cognition, including that which Mercer has labeled 'neo-Vygotskian theory' (Mercer, 1994) – an area of interest which featured significantly in Bernstein's earlier work – references to Bernstein's work are notably absent even where his influence is self-evidently present (though see Daniels, 1994).

Two familiar factors have contributed to this omission: first, the organisation of the intellectual field of English education in which Bernstein's early theorising about language took place and in which James Britton, perhaps inevitably, predominated in influence over English language studies, and second, the political positioning of Bernstein's research through its association with deficit models of language acquisition and socialisation (see Inghilleri, 1996). However, more pertinently for the contemporary context, it is in the detail of Britton and Bernstein's relationship to Vygotsky's ideas that the relevance of Bernstein's theoretical work to post-Vygotskian approaches becomes apparent.

'Equality of Outcome' and the Intelligence Debate

During the post-war period in the United Kingdom one of the principal motives for the change in focus on language and communication had been, of course, the question of equality of outcome in education for students from divergent socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. This concern over language and equality of outcome, moreover, merged with another debate already taking place in the United Kingdom regarding the relationship between social class and intelligence or cognitive ability. The 'intelligence' debate in the United Kingdom centred around the question of whether intelligence was innate and inherited or

whether it was principally determined by and/or affected by the environment. The principal figure representing the former view was famously the psychologist Sir Cyril Burt, who conducted numerous well-publicised empirical studies which he offered as evidence for the belief that heredity and not environment was the major factor determining varying levels of intelligence within and between different social classes. Although Burt admitted the environment as a minor factor in shaping or constraining cognitive development, the general findings of his research were that the major component of intelligence (which he defined as an innate, general, cognitive mental capacity) was connected to an individual's genetic constitution, that this was biologically inheritable, and that it was the differential distribution of genotypes that accounted for lower performances on general intelligence tests amongst the working-class population (Burt, 1937, 1943, 1955).[1]

An alternative line of investigation emerged in the 1950s which challenged Burt's and others' privileging of heredity over environment as the explanation for students' educational success or failure. More sociological in orientation, it arose out of research in the area of post-war social mobility (see Glass, 1954) and was interested in the role of education in affecting more 'subtle' forms of social selection following its restructuring (see Himmelweit, 1954; Floud, 1956). This research called attention to social factors contributing to educational inequality, such as family size and home conditions, as well as psychological issues, for example the kinds of motivation and aspirations that working-class students and their families had with respect to their education, or that teachers encouraged in their working-class students. Although the research did not go so far as to claim that the material and 'cultural' features of the home environment should be regarded as social determinants of intelligence (Floud, 1956, pp. 143-144; Halsey, 1958), in underlining the importance of environmental and behavioural factors, research of this kind began successfully to challenge the widely held view that innate ability was the sole relevant factor in educational outcome.

It was from within this same tradition that the work of Basil Bernstein emerged in the 1950s. His work went further, however, both in challenging Burt's assumptions about cognition and in relating the features of the home environment to educational attainment (see Bernstein, 1958, 1961). Bernstein suggested that the distinctive, socially-derived modes of cognitive functions (e.g. perception and reasoning) that obtained between social classes developed through and were sustained by the medium of language:

> It is proposed that forms of spoken language in the process of their learning, elicit, reinforce, and generalise distinct types of relationships with the environment and thus create particular dimensions of significance. Speech marks out what is relevant – affectively,

> cognitively and socially – and experience is transformed by that which is made relevant. (Bernstein, 1961, pp. 288-289)

Bernstein's focus on language offered a more penetrating interpretation than previous sociological studies for the relationship of the environment to measurements of intelligence. According to his theory, unequal outcomes on IQ tests of verbal ability between social classes, for example, could not be explained solely through some general innate factor, nor seen simply as outcomes of problems of assimilation or attitude. They were, instead, a consequence of the distinctive forms of language which students acquired through socialisation within a particular family and/or class background. Bernstein thus foregrounded language as the key to environmental influences on cognitive performance. It was, he claimed, the principal means by which individual and social attitudes and behaviours were formed and made manifest.

These early formulations of Bernstein's theory served two important functions. They contributed to the aim of work in the sociology of education to highlight how social factors intruded on educational processes and they provided sociological, linguistic and psychological insights into the function of language in the learning process.

The Intellectual Field of English Education

By the 1970s, the renewed interest in language in the field of education was informed by several related areas of theoretical interest. At the centre of English teaching during this time was a focus on the role of language in cognitive and emotional development, due in large part to the influences of James Britton and Harold Rosen, both of whom were at the University of London Institute of Education, which provided an important institutional site for the dissemination of new ideas to the teaching profession (Britton, 1967, 1970a, 1970b; Barnes et al, 1969). Bernstein's investigations into language and social class were by then also well-known through the development of his sociolinguistic code theory at the Sociological Research Unit located at the Institute and the related empirical research that began to emerge during this period (see Lawton, 1968; Bernstein, 1973).

Meanwhile, also developing during this period was the new, interdisciplinary field of sociolinguistics, as work in the area of language and culture came to be known. In Britain, sociolinguistics came to the aid of the 'language paradigm' [2] of English as a school subject, especially through its contribution to several important interrelated themes: the notion of linguistic relativity; the relationship between language, culture and thought; and the question of the viability and/or desirability of 'cross-cultural' and 'cross-lingual' communication.

While each of the above elements in theoretical development must be viewed as independent of the others, together they generated the

intellectual field of English education in the 1960s and 1970s and the shape of the conceptual/political framework from which the language paradigm was constructed.

The Fateful Split between Competence and Performance

Amongst the participants to the language debates, Britton and Bernstein both credit Langer, Cassirer, Sapir and Vygotsky with being important influences on the formation of their ideas (Britton, 1970b, 1987; Bernstein, 1971, 1993). Both Britton and Bernstein viewed language as a form of symbolic behaviour, as the medium by which ideas and beliefs as well as images and sensory data were transformed into verbal concepts. As Langer expressed it, 'Language is conception and conception is the frame of perception' (Langer, 1957, p. 126). Also evident in their writings is Sapir's notion of the heuristic function of language: the capacity of language to interpenetrate with experience. Language, suggested Sapir, not only represented experience, it also discovered and interpreted meanings for its speakers that they had not derived from first-hand experiences (Sapir, 1949, pp. 1-44). But although both Britton and Bernstein may have shared the view of language as both a symboliser and moderator of experience, their interpretations of the significance of this view with regard to education differed considerably.

Britton emphasised the creative and interpretative function of language in his work, seeing it as fundamental to students' cognitive and emotional development. In his influential book *Language and Learning* (Britton, 1970b), for example, he endorsed the idea that through talk and personal writing, students developed their natural capacities to extrapolate from personal experiences and construct patterned, mental models of the larger environment in which they lived and which were necessary for abstract, higher-order thinking. Britton and the followers of the 'personal growth' model focused almost exclusively on the cognitive and affective modes of representation which projected onto experience and were transformed into (and by) language. Their concern was to develop the innate potential that all children shared for making sense or meaning out of their environments. The emphasis was on the creativity and imagination that individuals demonstrated in constructing, categorising and classifying their way towards an experienced world view.

Although Britton acknowledged a social and cultural dimension to modes of representation in this early work (Britton, 1970b, pp. 19,116), his developmental model effectively *detached the social from the affective and cognitive domains*. The social became, in essence, the 'world' or the 'environment' within which experiences happened; it was presented as autonomous and real, as something 'out there' within which experiences occurred. This positioning of the social as active yet apart in Britton

involved a choice on his part to remain focused on what for him was most meaningful and relevant: the relationship between 'structures of feelings' and symbolic forms. However, it can also be traced to the 'cognitive revolution' in psychology in the 1950s, when interest shifted from behaviourist-inspired observations of overt responses to environmental stimuli to cognitive-oriented explorations of the unobservable mental processes that guided actions. One important result in education of this new interest in the workings of the mind was the influence of Chomskian linguistics which formalised the Saussurean theoretical split between 'competence' (what an individual knew 'inside') and 'performance' (what an individual did 'outside') (Chomsky, 1965, pp. 3-4; Bruner, 1986). One of the implications of this was that, in terms of a child's cognitive development, it was permissible, even desirable, to view the mind independently of the social world. Hence, while culture happened outside the child's mind, cognitive and emotional development occurred inside.

But what had been introduced as a theoretical split within linguistics between competence and performance was recontextualised within the intellectual field of English education to universalise, and in effect, de-socialise, innate (linguistic/cognitive) competencies. Competence was championed over performance as proof of all children's universal – understood as equal – potential for developing essential competencies (Chomsky, 1964; Piaget, 1971; Hymes, 1972). Competence became viewed as, not genetically or socially, but rather mentally governed by an internal logic of the mind, and the development of various competencies was understood to occur naturally across stages of growth through similar mental operations and with similar results for all children.[3]

Against the geneticist account of innateness, Britton supported the view that all children could and did acquire the same capacity to represent both particular and universal aspects of experience because all were innately endowed with this capacity. From this, however, Britton and the personal growth model also assumed that meanings were the same for all children because of this shared capacity and because the 'world' in which meanings were generated was the same. In removing 'competence' from any social or cultural sources (and thus rescuing it from the geneticist account, which paradoxically needed the social world to sustain its position), Britton and the personal growth model were left with the 'world' as the unifying source for the patterning of meanings and their linguistic (or non-linguistic) representations. In this account, however, although the mind was released from geneticist interpretations of innateness, there was no mechanism for differentiating between the mind's capacity for meaning-making and the actual meanings which were produced (Britton, 1970b *passim*).

Bernstein's work *did* raise the questions which Chomsky and developmental cognitive psychology left to one side. Bernstein attempted

to demonstrate how the mind interacted with the social and cultural to generate both different orderings of meanings and different forms of language. For Bernstein, however much creativity and imagination entered into this process, it nevertheless was both generative of and generated by the social in all its forms.

For Bernstein, the importance of Sapir's heuristic view of language was not primarily, as it was for Britton, its suggestion that language had the power to discover meanings for its speakers. What was important for Bernstein was that Sapir revealed language as a shaper – for better or for worse – of our experiences in and of possible worlds. Sapir himself would not have agreed with Britton's posing of an objective 'world' within which the merger of experience and language occurred, freely and naturally, through the mind. The connection between language and culture was made by both Sapir and Bernstein in terms of constraint; the possibilities of language's discoveries were necessarily limited by the culture and *vice versa*. Sapir, for example, makes the following point in his account of the heuristic function of language which Britton omits:

> Language is at one and the same time helping and retarding us in our exploration of experience, and the details of these processes of help and hindrance are deposited in the subtler meanings of different cultures. (Sapir, 1949, p. 8)

Bernstein, moving beyond Sapir, argued that linguistic and cognitive development was subject to the influences of power and discursive regulation found within distinctive cultures, social groups and social structures. Bernstein, unlike Chomsky, sought to locate competence (reattached to performance) within the restraints of power relations and their resulting differential unequal positionings. Bernstein insisted on the idea of competence as simultaneously cognitively inscribed and socially constituted. This problematised the popular view that all children were 'equally', because innately, competent by making competence a social rather than merely a cognitive aspect of the mind. The fact that the perception of the environment was patterned along sociological and cultural lines meant that the acquisition of different orders of meaning was not necessarily equivalent or equal. Different perceptions and interpretations which students held of their worlds as well as the forms of language which these generated could be limiting or innovating, constraining or creative, depending on the social circumstances surrounding their production and/or reception.

Britton's Vygotsky/Bernstein's Vygotsky

The attention given to Vygotsky by Britton and Bernstein was a natural extension of their interest in the ideas of Langer and Sapir discussed above, although their take-up of Vygotsky was distinctive. Vygotsky, like

Sapir, emphasised the interpenetration of language and the environment, but went further by actually describing how classifications of experiences were brought about in and by language. For Britton, Vygotsky contributed first a psychological and later a social dimension to his interest in the relationship between language, the environment and the development of thinking in children (Britton, 1970b, 1987). Vygotsky presented language as a regulatory device that assisted children in sorting and ordering their experiences of the world, enabling them to develop new forms of thought and more complex forms of behaviour. For Britton, Vygotsky's suggestion that a child's monologic use of language ('speech for oneself') served as a form of self-orientation with respect to the environment, assisting the internalisation of experiences (Vygotsky, 1962), supported the promotion of language for learning. In terms of the personal growth model, Vygotsky's observation that speech for oneself evolved into 'inner speech' revealed how the transformation from language to thought was accomplished.

In later writings (Britton, 1985, 1987), Britton focused more on Vygotsky's (and Luria's) articulation of the social nature of cognition, and how sociocultural conditions generated tools or 'auxiliary symbols' for learning in individuals which influenced new forms of behaviour (see Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, pp. 114-117). Britton interpreted this idea of the importance of the social conditions of learning as meaning that a child's consciousness was shaped in interaction with others in Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development'.[4] In the liberal discourse of the personal growth model, however, 'social' simply came to mean 'interactive', and the zone of proximal development was interpreted as a site of benign interactive processes. It constituted the discursive space in which a child's consciousness met a more mature adult consciousness, enabling the child to internalise gradually various forms of shared social behaviour. The zone was perceived as the 'cognitive world' in which both particularistic and universal meanings originated and took shape for the child. The adult mediated these 'shared' meanings both by encouraging the expression of individual consciousness and by 'lending' consciousness to the child, helping the child become a member of a particular 'culture' or 'community' (Britton, 1987). For Britton, such communities were microcosms of the 'world'; they too were autonomous, objective environments within which interactive (social) learning took place:

> Taking community in a micro sense, it is likely that we all live in a number of communities. As teachers, we are responsible for one of those – the classroom. It is clear we have a choice: we can operate so as to make that as rich an interactive learning community as we can, or we may continue to treat it as a captive audience for whatever instruction we choose to offer. (Britton, 1987, p. 26)

In their reading of Vygotsky, Britton and the followers of the personal growth model continued to assume that the generation and patterning of meanings that occurred in interaction were transferable from the 'world' onto micro contexts such as the school and the family. Hence the source of students' and their adult mediators' meanings was never investigated beyond the immediate environment (e.g. school-based knowledge) or the individuals themselves. Neither was the asymmetry of the relationship between teacher and student within the zone addressed; rather interactive learning was assumed to rid the classroom of the issue of the imbalance of power. Vygotsky was essentially recontextualised into a pedagogic theory that offered a rationalisation for language-based, interactive learning in the classroom. The zone demonstrated how children acquired the ability to regulate and refine their individual behaviour through language interactively with adults and/or peers, while the individual child remained the sole creator and innovator of his or her own meanings.

For Bernstein, in contrast, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development would not simply be viewed as a neutral (or potentially neutral) site for the creation or exchange of mutually interpretable meanings. While Britton might have assumed that the presence of nurturing adults (teachers, parents, etc.) was all that was necessary to ensure successful interactive communication, Bernstein emphasised the diverse cultural sources (and resources) of both the meaning-makers and the meanings that were made (Bernstein, 1971, pp. 123, 176; 1972, pp. 135-151; 1996, p. 147; and see Atkinson, 1985, p. 14). Bernstein's understanding of consciousness as sociologically and culturally patterned would suggest that within the zone, conflict and/or strategic negotiation over meaning would naturally occur.

Furthermore, for Bernstein, the zone would be the cognitive representation of a social world, and hence the meanings as well as the 'tools' that were employed or made available within it – the social context of learning – would be subject to the uneven social regulation and distribution of the content and framing of the knowledge to be acquired and/or transmitted. The regulation of experiences by language was mediated by adults transmitting what, Bernstein argued, were the 'codes' or organising principles of the social world(s) in which they themselves were located (Bernstein, 1975, pp. 85-156; 1990; 1996, pp. 17-38). Hence, adults were not simply enablers or facilitators but potentially shapers or, to greater and lesser extents, determiners of children's consciousness, for within the zone of proximal development, it was possible for an adult socialiser to bring meanings (and the rules for their articulation) that were not shared by the child and *vice versa*.

Like Vygotsky, Bernstein perceived that words and meanings constituted and were constitutive of the historical and cultural basis of individual minds. Bernstein, however, raised the issue of the external

(and internal) constraints on the generation and ratification of 'legitimate' meanings in both micro and macro communicative contexts. For Bernstein, the fact that language was grounded in culture meant that it was necessarily subject to the influences of power and discursive regulation. Britton's Vygotsky, however, remained outside Bernstein's view of culture as a site of contestation over meanings. For Britton, the zone of proximal development became a site of social and discursive freedom, a cognitive space where the 'shared' meanings of a culture were discovered, articulated and made valid. Britton effectively neutralised social/cultural linguistic communication by suggesting that meanings were universally available in the 'world', discovered rather than tacitly acquired, and openly exchanged and negotiated in interaction with others.

In the end, English education looked towards Britton and the personal growth model to define its agenda for the 1970s. Bernstein's conclusion that the educational process produced socially uneven products, due in part to different sets of sociolinguistic codes operating between students and schools, was not acceptable (or expressible) within the terms of the model. Instead, what was foregrounded was that, at the individual cognitive level, all students, regardless of class/cultural background, were equally, because innately, competent. The model sought to activate the role of the learner (the reader, the writer, etc.), focusing on the process of acquisition rather than on the (disparate) products that resulted.

While there was much gained from this developmental approach, the tendency within the personal growth model to separate innate potential or competence and actual performance did much to obscure and/or deny the role of class and culture in language and learning.[5] In the end, the personal growth model established a definition of culture in English education as 'environmental', something 'out there' in the world, distinct from Bernstein's conception of culture as 'social', something simultaneously 'in here' in the mind. The notion of cognition as a social activity was loosely interpreted as shared behaviour and learning in interaction with others, both of which assumed similarity and equality of input as well as output, regardless of social/linguistic background. By developing the view in education of the social world as detached from the cognitive one – however much it appeared to honour difference over deficit – the crucial issue of meaning was eliminated from discussion, and with it serious consideration of the external/visible social processes at work on the internal/invisible development and structuring of human consciousness.

Contemporary Accounts of Social Cognition

Contemporary approaches to the relationship between mind, language and the social continue to draw on Vygotsky and his concern with social

mediation and the internalization of the social context of learning. Wertsch and other researchers (see Wertsch et al, 1995b) employ methods adapted from Vygotsky's notion of mediation – including semiotic mediation – as a key to understanding human action. They argue strongly that mediational means 'provide the link or bridge between concrete actions carried out by individuals and groups, on the one hand, and cultural, institutional and historical settings on the other' (Wertsch et al, 1995, p. 21). And like Bernstein, they view mediation in terms of both empowerment *and* constraint:

> We can never 'speak from nowhere', given that we can speak (or more broadly, act) only by invoking mediational means that are available in the 'cultural tool kit' provided by the sociocultural setting in which we operate ... this does not mean that we are mechanistically determined by, or are mere puppets of, the mediational means we employ, but it does mean that constraints of some kind always exist. (Wertsch et al, 1995a, p. 25)

With a similar focus on the social nature of meaning, Gee argues that 'any human action is meaningful and recognisable only within some Discourse' (Gee, 1992, p. 110). He suggests the notion of Discourse(s) as semiotic 'apprenticeships' or social practices through which social members are enculturated into ways of speaking, thinking and interacting. Discourses are embedded in a variety of social institutions, including the family and schools, and subconsciously acquired by individuals through exposure and practice:

> Discourses are mastered through acquisition, not learning. That is, Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction [...] but by enculturation ('apprenticeship') into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. (Gee, 1992, p. 114)

Gee is more explicit than Wertsch in analysing the potential *limitations* of a Discourse for its members in terms of social and ideological determinants, noting when and where the mastery of a particular Discourse (or lack thereof) creates differential access to political power and/or social goods, including school-based knowledge. For Gee, the inherent ideological nature of Discourses thus implicates them in questions of social and cultural inclusion and exclusion, as well as in whether or under what conditions an individual or group is able to reflect on, criticize or change the status of a Discourse operating within and through social institutions, including educational settings.

In raising such questions regarding the interrelationship between language, the social and the constitution of the subject, the potential remains for issues to be raised about social, psychological or even biological determinism. Delpit's recent cautions with regard to Gee's

work on Discourse, for example, echo similar critiques made of Bernstein's work in an earlier period when she writes:

> Gee's argument suggests a dangerous kind of determinism as flagrant as that espoused by the geneticists: instead of being locked into 'your place' by your genes, you are now locked hopelessly into a lower-class status by your Discourse. (Delpit, 1995, p. 154)

There is a reading of their respective positions, however (see Gee, 1990, pp. 164-193), that suggests a dynamic rather than a static account of this relationship. Underlying the view that patterns of meaning and their linguistic realisations or Discourses originate in the social structure (where 'thought worlds' collide) is the idea that language has a social/material as well as a social/symbolic base. What is refracted and reflected through language is the social/symbolic order and individuals' relationship to it. Where this relationship remains dynamic, albeit subject to constraint, individuals are always potentially aware of their and others' social/linguistic behaviour. In dialogic encounters (whether intra- or inter-individual, or intra- or inter-cultural) individuals can and do perceive the role that divergent or conflicting values play in both sustaining and altering 'cultured' meanings. This suggests the possibility, at least, of the transcendence of social/linguistic constraints or the development of strategies to counter such constraints, not the maintenance of social/linguistic orderliness. Moreover, it assumes a social world where creativity and constraint with respect to cognition have to be and can be taken together without contradiction.

Despite the controversial entanglements of Bernstein's ideas in the development of twentieth-century sociolinguistics, his conceptualisation through Vygotsky of the relationship between the individual and the social has nonetheless generated relevant theoretical and methodological tools to account for the influence of social/historical factors beyond face-to-face interaction.[6] Further and more explicit critical dialogue between contemporary post-Vygotskian approaches and Bernstein's contributions to the question of individual and group consciousness formation may result in important insights germane to the complex of issues involved in the interrelationship of the macro and micro variables involved in this process.

Correspondence

Moira Inghilleri, Department of English, Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW, United Kingdom (ens01mi@gold.ac.uk).

Notes

[1] Although this research has since been discredited (see Kamin, 1974; Eysenck & Kamin, 1981), it remains relevant to the present discussion beyond its historical significance, insofar as in establishing the idea of a

genetically derived 'innate', universal, general intelligence, it contributed to the confusion that would later appear in the deficit/difference debate between a genetically derived and a socially derived cognitive inheritance. Bernstein's identification of different cognitive capacities between working-class and middle-class students, for example, was conflated by many with the geneticists' claim for different innate capacities. The result was that the meaning of the terms in the context of academic and educational debates over competence became practically indistinguishable.

[2] This phrase refers to the frequently observed 'paradigm shift' in English teaching in which language and linguistics became the focus of teachers' and researchers' attention by the 1960s and 1970s (see Inglis, 1971; Shayer, 1972; Mathieson, 1975; Abbs, 1980; Allen, 1980; Ball, 1982; Burgess & Martin, 1990).

[3] The social was only reinstated in order to account for observable differences in individual performances, but the reasons given for socially constituted differences were always external not internal to the individual child. Explanations were initially sought from research in the sociology of education for its insights into the material and cultural conditions that contributed to unequal attainment amongst students. Later, the 'new sociology of education' emerged and the problem was seen more in ideological terms, as originating in social institutions (see Young, 1971).

[4] Britton's increased attention to the importance of the interactive element of language and learning was no doubt part of the general shift from sole focus on intra-individual to interest in inter-individual learning that was brought about by a revision of Chomsky within education in the 1970s (Moon, 1988, pp. 173-174).

[5] For an informed account of the strengths and weaknesses of the personal growth model and its relationship to the development of the English curriculum, see Burgess (1985, 1988, 1993).

[6] On the theoretical and methodological importance of Bernstein's work in social science research, see the various contributions in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: theory and practice,* 2001, 4(1).

References

Abbs, P. (1980) The Reconstruction of English as Art, *Tract,* 31, pp. 4-31.

Allen, D. (1980) *English Teaching Since 1965: how much growth*? London: Heinemann Educational.

Atkinson, P. (1985) *Language, Structure and Function: an introduction to the sociology of Basil Bernstein*. London: Methuen.

Atkinson, P., Davies, B. & Delamont, S. (Eds) (1994) *Discourse and Reproduction: essays in honor of Basil Bernstein*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Ball, S.J. (1982) Competition and Conflict in the Teaching of English: a socio-historical analysis, *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 14(1), pp. 1-28.

Barnes, D., Britton, J. & Rosen, H. (1969) *Language, the Learner and the School*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bernstein, B. (1958) Some Sociological Determinants of Perception: an inquiry into sub-cultural differences, *British Journal of Sociology,* 9, pp. 159-174.

Bernstein, B. (1961) Social Class and Linguistic Development: a theory of social learning, in A.H. Halsey, J. Floud & C.A. Anderson (Eds) *Education, Economy and Society*. London: Collier Macmillan.

Bernstein, B. (1971) *Class, Codes and Control,* Volume 1. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (1972) A Critique of the Concept of Compensatory Education, in C. Cazden, V. John & D. Hymes (Eds), *Functions of Language in the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Bernstein, B. (1973) *Class, Codes and Control,* Volume 2. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (1975) *Class, Codes and Control,* Volume 3. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (1990) *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse: class, codes and control,* Volume 4. London: Routledge.

Bernstein, B. (1993) Foreword, in H. Daniels (Ed.) *Charting the Agenda: educational activity after Vygotsky*. London: Routledge.

Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: theory, research and critique*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Britton, J. (1967) *Talking and Writing*. London: Methuen.

Britton, J. (1970) *Language and Learning*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Britton, J. (1970a) Their Language and Our Teaching, *English in Education,* 4(2), pp. 5-13.

Britton, J. (1985) Research Currents: second thoughts on learning, *Language Arts,* 62(1), pp. 72-77.

Britton, J. (1987) Vygotsky's Contribution to Pedagogical Theory, *English in Education,* 21(3), pp. 22-26.

Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burgess, T. (1985) The Question of English, in J. Miller & M. Meek (Eds) *Changing English: essays for Harold Rosen*. London: Heinemann.

Burgess, T. (1988) On Difference: cultural and linguistic diversity and English teaching, in M. Lightfoot & N. Martin (Eds) *The Word for Teaching is Learning: essays for James Britton*. London: Heinemann Educational & Boynton/Cook.

Burgess, T. (1993) Returning History: literacy, difference, and English teaching in the post-war period, in B. Green (Ed.) *The Insistence of the Letter: literacy studies and curriculum theorizing*. London: Falmer Press.

Burgess, T. & Martin, N. (1990) Teaching English in England, 1945-1986: politics and practice, in J. Britten, R.E. Shafer & K. Watson (Eds) *Teaching and Learning English Worldwide*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Burt, C. (1937) *The Backward Child*. London: University of London Press.

Burt, C. (1943) Ability and Income, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 13, pp. 83-98.

Burt, C. (1955) Evidence for the Concept of Intelligence, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 25, pp. 158-177.

Chomsky, N. (1964) Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, in J.A. Fodor & J.J. Katz (Eds) *Readings in the Philosophy of Language: the structure of language*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Chomsky, N. (1965) *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Christie, F. (Ed.) (1999) *Pedagogy and the Shaping of Consciousness: linguistic and social processes*. London: Cassell.

Christie, F. & Martin, J.R. (Eds) (1997) *Genres and Institutions: social processes in the workplace and school.* London: Cassell.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (Eds) (1993) *The Powers of Literacy: a genre approach to teaching writing*. London: Falmer Press.

Daniels, H. (1994) *Charting the Agenda: educational activity after Vygotsky*. London: Routledge.

Delpit, L. (1995) *Other People's Children: cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Eysenck, H.J. & Kamin, L. (1981) *Intelligence: the battle for the mind – J. Eysenck versus Leon Kamin*. London: Macmillan.

Floud, J.E. (Ed.) (1956) *Social Class and Educational Opportunity*. London: Heinemann.

Gee, J.P. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: ideology in discourse*. London: Falmer Press.

Gee, J.P. (1992) *The Social Mind*. New York: Bergin and Garvey.

Gee, J.P. (1999) *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Glass, D.V. (Ed.) (1954) *Social Mobility in Britain*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Halsey, R.H. (1958) Genetics, Social Structure and Intelligence, *British Journal of Sociology,* 10, pp. 15-28.

Himmelweit, H. (1954) Social Status and Secondary Education since the 1944 Act, in D.V. Glass (Ed.) *Social Mobility in Britain*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hymes, D. (1972) On Communicative Competence, in J.B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds) *Sociolinguistics.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Inghilleri, M. (1996) Language, Culture and the Quest for Commensurability. PhD Dissertation. London: University of London.

Inglis, F. (1971) How to Do Things with Words: a critique of language studies, *English in Education,* 5(2), pp. 74-84.

John-Steiner, V., Panofsky, C.P. & Smith, L.W. (Eds) (1994) *Sociocultural Approaches to Language and Literacy: an interactionist perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kamin, L. (1974) *The Science and Politics of I. Q*. Potomac, MD: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Langer, S. (1957) *Philosophy in a New Key*, 3rd edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lawton, D. (1968) *Social Class, Language and Education*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Light, P. & Butterworth, G. (Eds) (1992) *Context and Cognition*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Luria, A.R. & Vygotsky, L.S. (1992) *Ape, Primitive Man and Child: essays in the history of behavior*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Mathieson, M. (1975) *The Preachers of Culture*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Mercer, N. (1994) Neo-Vygotskian Theory and Classroom Education, in B. Stierer & J. Maybin (Eds) *Language, Literacy and Learning in Educational Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Moon, C. (1988) Reading: where are we now? in M. Meek & C. Molls (Eds) *Languge and Literacy in the Primary School*. London: Falmer Press.

Painter, C. (1999) *Learning through Language in Early Childhood*. London: Continuum.

Piaget, J. (1971) *Structuralism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Sadnovik, A. (Ed.) (1995) *Knowledge and Pedagogy: the sociology of Basil Bernstein*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Sapir, E. (1949) Language, in D. Mandelbaum (Ed.) *Edward Sapir, Culture Language and Personality: selected essays.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shayer, D. (1972) *The Teaching of English in Schools, 1900-1970.* London: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. (1962) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wertsch, J. (1998) *Mind as Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wertsch, J., del Rio, P. & Alvarez, A. (1995a) Sociocultural Studies: history, action and mediation, in J. Wertsch, P. del Rio & A. Alvarez, *Sociocultural Studies of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J., del Rio, P. & Alvarez, A. (1995b) *Sociocultural Studies of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (1991) *Voices of the Mind: a sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Young, M.F.D. (Ed.) (1971) *Knowledge and Control*. London: Collier Macmillan.