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The Training of Mother Tongue Teachers in the Netherlands since 1970: A Fight between Apollo, Hermes, and the Masses?

1 Progress or not? That's the question

At first sight it appears rather challenging and besides relatively simple to identify changes in the Dutch teacher training programmes for mother tongue teachers in terms of the progress which has been realized over the past 10 to 15 years. That challenge is fostered by an implicit but rather widespread assumption that there is always progress in time; one only has to identify it. Therefore the temptation to choose 'simple' descriptive models in order to demonstrate that progress clearly and convincingly is very difficult to resist. The challenge becomes even more appealing when one realizes that the resulting progress report can be used to compare the state of the art in industrialized countries as opposed to developing countries. Or to put it differently: the challenge does not only apply to the attempt to demonstrate progress in time, but also to the attempt to demonstrate differences in terms of progress between social systems by drawing an international comparison. And both these comparisons are to do with an implicit but nevertheless competitive perspective¹.

It is not our intention to deal with the pitfalls and caveats of comparative research in detail in this paper. For brevity's sake, we only refer to our experiences in this respect within the International Mother Tongue Education Network². Nevertheless, because of the undeniable comparative orientation of this book, we feel compelled to formulate a somewhat general statement on comparative research,

especially in the field of mother tongue education (cf. also Stenhouse, 1977). In order to avoid unwanted bias and to protect comparative research in mother tongue education against the temptation of giving simple descriptions, it seems helpful to ask questions such as the following from the outset and during the process of comparison:

- " - What counts as mother tongue education in my culture? Why? How? For whom?
- What then is apparently valid knowledge? What are valid skills in mother tongue teaching? Why? How? For whom?
- What counts as valid in evaluation? What are pupils expected to do in mother tongue classes in order to be successful? Why? How?
- What is my construction of reality in mother tongue education? How can that be accounted for? (cf. Hammersley & Hargreaves, 1983: 1-14 and passim)" (Sturm, 1987: 115; and Sturm, 1988).

Our description in this essay is based on 'the reality of mother tongue education' in the Netherlands, understood as the upshot of historical and current scientific and political debates about that reality; debates in which we both are involved. First, in section 2, we shall try to sketch those debates, more or less, in terms of a fight, a struggle. We will draw the outlines of an arena in which (propagandists of) definitions of good mother tongue education are fighting each other (cf. e.g. Sturm, 1984; and Ball 1982, 1984). In that arena, we place Apollo as the symbol of a literary-grammatical definition of mother tongue and/or standard language education which has its origins in elitist education. Facing Apollo, we have Hermes as the symbol of a utilitarian definition of mother tongue and/or standard language education which, in the Netherlands, mainly developed in bourgeois education at the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Klinkenberg *et al.*, 1988). Both these definitions and especially the outcome of their fights have an influence on a 'disciplining' definition of good mother tongue and/or standard language education for the masses (Grace, 1978), which was developed with the introduction of mass education which is now related to a compulsory education that increasingly takes more years. That is why the state, beside the subject communities, plays an important, though rather covert role in the arena.

In the third section of this essay we shall delineate Dutch teacher training against the background of its historical development. We shall try to relate recent (proposals for) changes in the structure and content

to the outcomes of the fight over 'good' education and more specifically over 'good' mother tongue education.

The fourth section will deal with a recent trend in teacher training: the introduction of doing research by student-teachers as part of the regular curriculum. We try to understand that trend within the framework of the teacher-as-a-researcher movement, c.q. the teacher as a collaborator in educational research.

We will end our essay with an example of research into mother tongue education which falls within our conception of the teacher as a researcher (section 5). In section 6 we shall formulate some short concluding remarks.

2 The state and the Dutch subject community

2.1 Introduction

In a series of interesting articles, Stephen Ball has described and analyzed the origination of the school subject English in the United Kingdom and the continuous fight about its contents (cf. Ball, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1987). And what is more, he has also made it accessible for comparison. Inspired by his approach (among other things) we have conducted research into the school subject Dutch in the Netherlands, which from the earliest days, or at least from the end of the 19th century onwards has also been referred to as **mother tongue education**, probably on the model of the German use of the term and the notions that go with it. There is no doubt that the use of both these terms is marked, in the sense that they too stand for certain beliefs. As far as we know, the Dutch government use only the terms 'Dutch', 'Dutch language and literature' or 'language' in their regulations. Nevertheless, in 1981, for instance, a ministerial memorandum appeared which has the term 'mother tongue education' in its title (Pais, 1981). For an international discussion, however, the use of the term mother tongue education seems convenient.

We will not go into the results of Ball's research, nor those of our own research. We will only briefly mention a number of starting points which turned out to be fruitful both in Ball's research and in ours. These starting points will also serve to place the remainder of our exposition in a theoretical context.

Ball distinguishes between "three major perspectives which (underlie) many of the recent attempts to theorize and study

empirically the processes which define and validate school subject knowledge" (Ball, 1983: 61):

1. **The sociological perspective** "views school subjects as defined and maintained by unspecified 'dominant interests' who have power in the society". Ball characterizes this approach as "essentially a top-down, social-structure and relativistic conception of the determination of school knowledge".
2. **The philosophical perspective** "in which school subjects are analyzed as defined by and arrived from certain 'forms of knowledge'". Following Goodson (1981), Ball notes that within this perspective, the (implicit) assumption is that "the intellectual discipline is created and systematically defined by a community of scholars, normally working in a university department, and is then 'translated' for use as a school subject" (ibid.: 38). Goodson and Ball characterize this approach as the 'Establishment View'.
3. **The social interaction perspective** "in which the 'subject' is viewed not as an abstract intellectual conception, but as a changing body of knowledge produced by a social collectivity". Following Musgrove (1968), Ball proposes "to examine subjects both within the school and the nation at large as social systems sustained by communication networks, material endowments and ideologies".

Ball considers the social interaction perspective as being "viable and useful in the study of the curriculum, with school subjects seen as the 'political products of power struggles' between social groups with differing and competing vested interests and differing resources and status" (ibid.: 84). Following Ball in this respect, we think that what has been called 'good mother tongue education' in the Netherlands over the past 10 to 15 years, and what a 'good mother tongue teacher training programme' should therefore look like, must be looked upon as the result of negotiations within the Dutch subject community. Incidentally, Ball makes it clear that these 'power struggles' take part not only within the relationship-networks of the school subject community — the relations of change —, but that they are first of all determined by the conditions of change: "the existing political and economic context and, more generally, [...] the concomitant ebb and flow of the climate of public opinion" (ibid.: 84). In our analysis we consider 'the state' and its regulations as the most important defining agency of the political context, which is, as a matter of fact, a rather tangible product of the economic context. We confine ourselves to 'the state', taking for granted that the economic context and the climate of public opinion are dealt with implicitly. So we assume that in the parliamentary

democracy which the Netherlands are, these conditions of change show best in the government policy.

2.2 Conditions of change: The state

The Netherlands has freedom of education, which is guaranteed by the constitution. This means that — with minimal, formal conditions — social groups can found and organize their own schools, which are then subsidized completely by the state. This freedom of education was shaped around 1920. And so for almost 70 years now it has been kept alive as an important constitutional right in the Netherlands.

Apart from this, the government has pursued a so-called **constructive educational policy** since the early 1960s: through parliamentary channels, the government 'enforces' a national consensus on the (main) functions of education. Compulsory education (from 5 to 16 years) takes up a central position in those functions. But the educational policy of the Dutch government is almost continuously tested (either implicitly or explicitly) against the right of freedom of education.

The main policy tools which the government uses are the 'lesson table', which prescribes per type of school which subjects must be taught minimally and how many hours should minimally be spent on each of those subjects, as well as exams, which are organized by the government and take place after 11 years of education (age 16+).

Indirectly, the government pursues its policy via the so-called educational support structure. This contains test development, curriculum development, educational research, educational guidance, and teacher training programmes.

Although the government's educational policy knows only few public prescriptions in the field of the subject contents of the school subject Dutch, it does have the informal effect that a specific definition of mother tongue education receives relatively much attention.

2.3 Relations of change: The Dutch subject community

With Reid (1984) we can describe the subject contents of a school subject at an analytical level in terms of a series of topics which are dealt with in the framework of related activities and the underlying legitimations. In that sense, divergent definitions of the school subject Dutch can be distinguished, according to the meaning which is assigned to mother tongue and mother tongue education respectively. These meanings are a point of discussion within the Dutch subject

community. A description of this discussion in terms of relation networks within the subject community would not have much transparency for readers who are not acquainted with the Dutch scene, unless the institutions and persons and their relationships and networks are described in detail (see Sturm, 1984). We therefore limit ourselves here to an indication of the position of the 'state' with respect to the concepts 'mother tongue' and 'mother tongue education'.

In Gagné *et al.* (1987) we distinguished between three views of 'mother tongue' and 'mother tongue education': a primary-socializational concept, a politico-cultural concept and an educational concept.

According to the socializational concept, mother tongue education would be the teaching of and learning through language at school, aiming at the development and elaboration of the language that the pupil has already acquired and learned as his/her native or first language during his/her infancy, his/her primary socialization. As a consequence of the multilingual character of most countries, this ideal-typical definition of mother tongue education is not the existing practice, neither in regular mother tongue/standard language teaching, nor in so-called bilingual education, or ethnic minority language teaching as a school subject for immigrant children.

In most cases there is only one language taught in mother tongue education and allowed for learning in schools, namely the dominant or national standard language of the country or language area in question. As long as mother tongue education appears to be mainly or almost exclusively concerned with the politico-cultural concept of mother tongue, i.e. with the dominant standard language of the country or language area under consideration (in some cases the country of origin), and as long as no attention is paid to the 'native' mother tongues of the pupils involved, it would in fact be better to speak of standard language education, i.e. the politico-cultural concept of mother tongue education.

Given this analysis, in the Netherlands, for example, only for children in Dutch classrooms who speak standard Dutch as their mother tongue, the lessons that are scheduled as mother tongue education (Dutch) really would be mother tongue education. This statement in fact is still only half of the truth, because it does not take into consideration the implications of the educational concept of 'mother tongue' given before. Also for Dutch speaking children, the language of education is a specific variety that does not completely coincide with their mother tongue, because of its specific subject- and instruction-oriented characteristics, and because of its strong emphasis on the written language. The language of education is a technical

language that uses its own 'lingo' with respect to the subject that is taught and with respect to the way in which it is taught. Mother tongue education therefore is not limited to the subject of language. This insight leads to a 'language across the curriculum' approach. This in fact is an 'educational' interpretation of mother tongue education, meaning that not only language teachers, but also for example history teachers are involved in mother tongue education.

It will be clear by now that the official Dutch educational policy privileges the socio-political concept of mother tongue education, which, allowing for exceptions of course, mainly leads to national standard language teaching.

3 Developments in mother tongue teacher training

3.1 Introduction

The negotiations between the state and the different subject communities find their expression in an educational system. At the moment, this system looks as visualized in figure 1.

The left part of the figure shows the different types of schooling that exist in the Netherlands. The right part contains the corresponding types of teacher training institutes. Generally speaking, Basic Education (5 - 12 years) has the closest historical link with mass education, i.e. primary education which was introduced in the middle of the nineteenth century and was meant for the lower socio-economic classes. General Secondary Education 15/16+ very much resembles the education for the elite groups (i.e. the aristocracy) as it has existed since at least the Middle Ages. In the syllabus for General Secondary Education 12-15/16, there are on the one hand many elements of bourgeois education which developed at the end of the nineteenth century in the epoch of 'monopoly capital'; on the other hand, it is Vocational Education which exerts a certain influence. Vocational Education until recently was left almost completely at the mercy of personal initiatives. Only recently does the state seem to get involved in the regulation of Vocational Education.

If for simplicity's sake we leave part-time training programmes out of consideration, there are three types of teacher training: the PABO (Pedagogical Academy for Basic Education) trains for (mother tongue) education for pupils of 4/5 - 12 years of age; the NLO (New Teacher Training Institutes) for mother tongue education for pupils of 12 - 15/16 years of age and the ULO (University Teacher Training) for mother tongue education for pupils of 16 or more years of age (see the

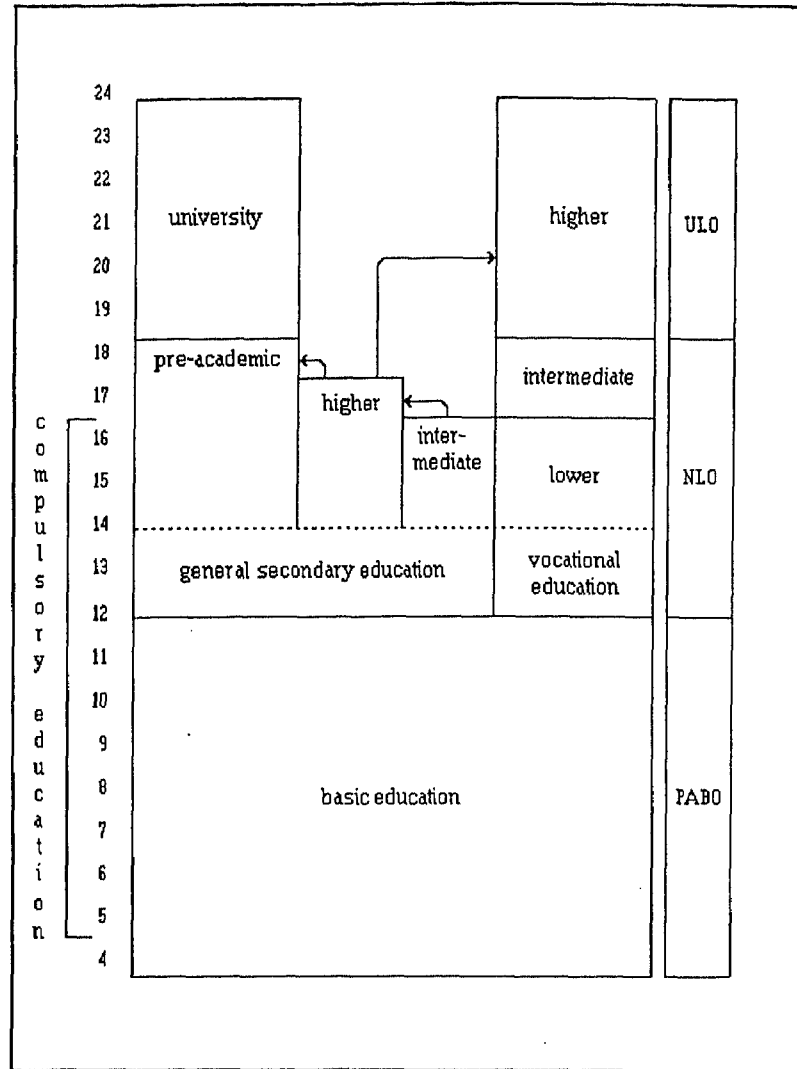


Figure 1: The Dutch educational system

right part of figure 1). The three 'age groups' are considered to run parallel to three difficulty levels in the education offered, which are 'translated' in 'heavier' training requirements for student-teachers in terms of subject content. The same tripartition exists in adult education (which has been developing fast over the past few years), but here of course the pupils' age does not play any role; the only factor is their 'level'. Nevertheless, the problem of 'levels' in mother tongue education

is not satisfactorily solved, despite elaborate discussions in recent years. Traditionally a topic is deemed to be more difficult the more it is related to the academic discipline.

All three types of teacher training have been involved in a continuous process of change over the past 10 to 15 years, under the influence of the government policy. As a matter of course that does not only apply to mother tongue education, but to the training programmes as a whole. We will not go further into this matter; we will only briefly indicate three general trends which we consider important for the subject-contential changes that have occurred in mother tongue teacher training.

3.2 The emergence of general education

Over the past 10 to 15 years a shift in the teacher training programme has taken place from schooling in the school subject-related academic discipline towards schooling in general education. At the PABO (and its predecessors) this not only means that less time is spent on the traditional topics in the school subject-related academic discipline, but also that different topics are dealt with which, from the academic discipline's point of view, are considered marginal or belonging to other disciplines (e.g. the social sciences). So apart from the canonical literature, much attention is now devoted to children's and trivial literature. Instead of selected topics of Dutch linguistics, attention is paid to language acquisition and development. More and more time is being spent on general educational problems — such as the question of how to deal with differences between pupils. In the framework of mother tongue education questions about the problems of teaching and learning to write and read occupy a central position.

At the ULO, the result is that besides the traditional, academic programme of Dutch language and literature, a general educational programme has been introduced. The principle that whoever is good at the academic discipline is or will be a good mother tongue teacher loses much of its natural persuasiveness. Nevertheless, on the one hand, the academic discipline is strong enough to legitimate its continuation in the teacher training programmes differently and to resist changes, on the other hand there appears to be relatively little systematic knowledge of mother tongue education at school available. As a result, the content of the programme is largely derived from the general educational sciences and from the hardly systematic experiences of 'good' mother tongue teachers.

The NLOs here occupy an in-between position: they conduct experiments with programmes which aim at the integration of schooling in the academic discipline and in general education. As far as we can

see now, that integration only progresses with great difficulty. In the more traditionally oriented training programmes, the academic discipline 'wins'; in progressive programmes general education is given a better chance.

3.3 Teaching as planning

A second trend which can be perceived in all three training programmes can be looked upon as a shift of emphasis from teaching as the transmission of knowledge to teaching as the planning of learning situations. Insofar as mother tongue education is viewed as the teaching of skills — in basic education that certainly is the case — this shift of emphasis poses only few problems. And what's more: it strengthens that view of mother tongue education. Thus the definition of a 'good' (mother tongue) teacher changes from a subject content know-all to an educational organizer. In general, this shift brings about a further rift between the school subject-related academic discipline and the general educational training. At the PABO, the result is that the subject content of mother tongue education in the training programme, if present at all, is shifted back; by the end of the training programme a student can choose a certain specialization in mother tongue education. At the ULO the opposite takes place: the teacher training programme in the narrow sense of the word is even formally separated from the academic study. Only after they have taken their M.A. in Dutch language and literature can students be admitted to the mother tongue teacher training programme. Here again, the NLO occupies an in-between position.

3.4 Educational research and teacher training

All three programmes tend to introduce educational research in the training programme. This development is to be seen against the background of a rather complicated interplay of forces which we cannot analyze further here and now. Apart from the 'scientification', i.e. rationalization of education in general, and apart from the status-raising effect of research on a training programme, it is important that we mention the following.

1. If the importance of the subject-related academic discipline for the mother tongue teacher training programme is no longer taken for granted, there will be 'room' for other scientific activities.
2. The student-teacher and the teacher trainer have to be able to make use of the results of educational research. On the one hand, because educational research derives much of its relevance from that use; on the other hand, because that ability is necessitated by the scientification of education. As a result, the teacher should

acquire the ability to use research results in (future) teaching practice during his/her training. By setting up and carrying out 'research to learn' by him/herself or by participating in research in progress, the student-teachers are being prepared in this respect.

3. The emphasis on education as the planning of teaching situations requires that a teacher should have highly analytical skills which s/he can acquire during their own research activities.
4. The fact that relatively little is known, on a scientific level, about school subject-related teaching-learning processes is supposed to be counteracted adequately, both during training and in teaching practice, by producing that knowledge personally.

At the moment, the ULO has progressed furthest with the incorporation of research into pre-service and in-service training, but there are as yet no national figures on this point.

3.5 Conclusions

We would like to draw the following conclusions from the data we have presented:

1. In the mother tongue teacher training programmes, the relationship between the school-subject related academic discipline and the content of the school subject itself loses its taken for grantedness. In the case of the PABO this means that the content of that discipline largely disappears from the programme. At the NLO, that discipline continues to exist, but it has to compete with the contents of general education. And at the ULO, the discipline also continues to exist, but the need to legitimate it in terms of the school subject disappears.
2. The content of the school subject can develop more autonomously, i.e. the influence of the social sciences, such as psychology and education on that content is increasing.
3. The in-service training of teachers is oriented less and less towards the school subject-related academic discipline.

4 Beliefs behind the demand for teachers as researchers

We have already indicated that a demand for 'teachers as researchers' in the field of mother tongue education has made itself felt in the Netherlands. The same seems true in the United States and the United Kingdom. It is therefore an interesting topic for international discussion: by comparing the underlying ideas and some examples of how these underlying ideas are worked out, it seems possible to gain a deeper insight into the meanings which are assigned to (mother tongue) education within nationally and culturally determined contexts. The demand for teachers as researchers is a fairly recent one. It is frequently connected with innovatory proposals concerning education which are usually presented as improvements. Perhaps, that is why its propagators are inclined to legitimate themselves. An analysis of those legitimations offers some insight into underlying ideas.

In the previous section we tried to understand the Dutch demand for teachers as researchers as one of the concomitant phenomena of the developments in the mother tongue teacher training programmes. As far as we can see, that demand is also (and at least equally closely) connected with educational research, which in its turn is connected with the government policy. In this section we try to initiate a first and global analysis of this trend. We have summarized underlying ideas from American and English literature. We will contrast these ideas with our own beliefs.

Our own interest in the topic 'the teacher as a researcher' is shaped by an epistemological concern. In our research we try to understand, in a disciplined and systematic way, what is going on in mother tongue education in the classroom. That is why we think that we cannot afford to exclude any perspective on that reality or to exclude substantial parts of the perspectives admitted into the research process. In other words, to produce scholarly understandings which are recognizable to those involved, i.e. in our case, teachers and researchers, it seems necessary to deal with teachers' and researchers' perspectives in at least the same and equal way. At the same time, it seems necessary to account for the 'whole meaning' ascribed to reality: not only 'objective' meaning but also lived meaning.

We are aware that our epistemological concern is related to a "tradition that assumes that knowledge and the knower are one [...], that [...] knowledge (and understanding) is always tailored personally [...], that [...] knowing is not just intellectual, but also emotional, physical, and intuitive in a holistic fashion, that one can be both subject and object of knowing, living simultaneously, interrelated, and with

awareness of both an inner and outer life. [...] This tradition is perhaps closer to the stereotypical knowledge of the novelist, poet, and artist: experiential, holistic, and subjective." (Dillon, 1987: 707-708).

Dillon (1987: 707) argues that there seem to be at least two basic yet interrelated questions at hand concerning the American interest in 'the teacher-researcher'. First he mentions the question 'What kinds of knowledge counts?' — which is obviously ours — and the second question seems to be 'Whose knowledge counts?'. In fancier terms, these are epistemological and political questions. The political issue is to do with, for instance, 'Empowerment' (*Language Arts* 64 (1987) 2) and 'The enhanced professionalism of teachers' (*Language Arts* 65 (1988) 4).

Nevertheless, in 'propagating' an alternative definition of knowledge as a basis for educational research, some obviously feel compelled to give their new directions for conducting research a practical rationale in terms of educational improvement and effectiveness controlled by teachers themselves. That is why these two issues usually appear to be strongly related.

To make the picture even more complex: the teacher-researcher approach is also welcomed by 'mainstream' educational research. Confronted with the problem that teachers in practice do not use research outcomes, researchers who are not epistemologically concerned with their products try to 're-educate' teachers as researchers. Naturally, as Dillon (1984: 679) observes, then, "much [...] is not a matter of teachers taking control of their own learning and becoming their own experts, but rather being accomplices in a top-down, transmission-of-knowledge hierarchy". "At best", Dillon claims, "(this) reflects a controlling, manipulative mentality and at worst a lack of trust and respect for teachers."

On the methodological level, i.e. in publications that deal with the question: 'How to do research with teachers?', we find a comparable, complicated situation. Nixon (1981), Hopkins (1985) and Mohr & MacLean (1987) are three 'handbooks' on methods; their approaches differ in several respects. Nixon (1981) presents more or less a series of case studies, some of which are conducted by teachers alone but others by teachers collaborating to some extent with researchers. Hopkins (1985) is mainly concerned with a description of methods which serve the purposes of teachers' research in classrooms. Mohr & MacLean (1987: 1) "try to show how a teacher-researcher group works, [...] and to interest the educational community in supporting such groups". Elbaz (1983), to mention an alternative example in the field, is not about a teacher doing her own research; it nevertheless presents an in-depth description of the teacher's account, i.e. the teacher's

practical knowledge. Despite the extensive collaboration between teacher and researcher, in our view the research is done by the researcher rather than the teacher.

It is rather clear that in much research it would be better to speak of 'teachers as collaborators', in order to allow for situations in which the teacher him/herself is not involved in the laborious process of data sampling and processing and the time consuming task of analysis. Teachers as collaborators are important in the phase of access to the field and especially in the phase of interpretation.

On the other side, Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) is rather researcher-oriented; nevertheless, their chapter on 'Insiders' accounts: listening and asking questions' (ibid.: 105-126) outlines an approach definitely based on the equality of researchers and the people under study. The chapter concludes that "the accounts produced by the people under study must be treated in exactly the same way as those of the researcher" (ibid.: 126). The same holds true for Woods (1986) which aims "to help equip teachers, other practitioners and researchers with [...] a particular research approach, representing currently the best hope for bridging the gap (between researchers and teachers)" (ibid.: 2). Woods' aim, related to the pre-service training of teachers, fits our aim, as we will demonstrate in the example in the last section of our paper.

In conclusion, in our view, the American contributions in the field (i.e. Dillon, 1984 and 1987; Florio & Walsh, 1978; Patterson & Stansell, 1987; Mohr & MacLean, 1987) are strongly related to teachers' autonomy and to developing teachers' expertise in order to protect them against marginalizing their roles in the educational process. Nevertheless Patterson & Stansell (1987) advocates a transactional stance toward research, contending that this stance "shares with ethnography the method of participant observation, which requires the interpersonal involvement of teacher researchers who become the primary research instrument, gathering and interpreting data from the rich source of their daily experiences with informants" (ibid.: 718-719).

Our own experience in collaborative research has taught us that at least in the Netherlands the teachers' tasks are so energy-consuming that there is usually little (psychological) room left to participate substantially in educational research. (To be clear: in the Netherlands there are no structural possibilities for teachers to return to university for some time or to be partially released in order to do research.) In coping with this problem we have been progressively convinced that the choice to extend **respondent validation** in the phase of interpretation meets our (epistemological) concerns best. That is to say that in our view ethnographic interviewing — including all sorts of stimulated recall interviewing, i.e. on the basis of transcripts of audio-

recorded classroom interaction and of elaborated field notes (cf. Burgess, 1984) — offers the best possibilities for including the participants' perspectives and whole meaning in the research process. Denscombe (1983) briefly summarizes the epistemological rationale of that approach; Elbaz (1983) seems to be an excellent example of it.

5 An example: A case study in multicultural language teaching

In the case study reported on in this section we wanted to find out what exactly a teacher of Dutch, who states herself that she is working in a multicultural way, does in the classroom when she teaches Dutch. Our main point of interest in this respect was the influence of multicultural education on the subject content of Dutch.

The case study was carried out in a multi-ethnic first year group of a school for lower vocational education in the inner city of Amsterdam. The class we worked in consisted of 6 indigenous Dutch pupils, 8 Surinamese pupils, 2 Turkish pupils, 3 Moroccan pupils and 1 Portuguese pupil. Of the ethnic minority pupils 10 were born in The Netherlands. Apart from Dutch, most of them can also speak and understand a language of their country of origin. The teacher we worked with has fifteen years of experience in teaching. She has qualified as a teacher of French and Dutch. During the past ten years or so, she has been active in the field of ethnic minorities and education. She can thus be characterized as a person who follows the literature and discussion about multicultural education fairly closely and who plays an important role in this respect at her school.

We observed and audiotaped 12 hours of her teaching Dutch as a mother tongue. As an additional source of information we used a diary that was kept by the teacher on her lessons (cf. Holly, 1986) and two semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the teacher. Furthermore we collected all kinds of written work of the pupils and we gathered the pupils' opinions with respect to the Dutch lessons that we had been observing by means of a short questionnaire (cf. Kroon & Swennen, 1986).

The teacher's ideas on multicultural language teaching are explicitly reflected in the interviews. In her perspective the pupils and their specific needs are the central point of attention and the subject content of Dutch is considered subordinate to that. In paying attention to the pupils and their needs, multicultural goals play an important role. Some catchphrases in this respect are: 'multicultural education is for all pupils'; 'relativization of norms and values'; 'emancipation'; 'to

achieve something in society'; 'to fight racism'. The teacher legitimizes this approach by stating that all children in the class are underprivileged and that therefore a relevant, i.e. multicultural perspective on the subject of Dutch is necessary. She acknowledges that her goals do not necessarily match with the current ideas on the subject matter of Dutch, but that does not bother her. 'I do not have that kind of subject perspective' she says. A bit giggly she rejects 'that stereotypical business' of figures of speech, proverbs and the like, in short 'Dutch according to the book'. This does not mean that language plays no role in her lessons. On the contrary, central attention is paid to language, facing questions such as 'What is language?', 'What good is it?', 'What is the position of the children's mother tongues?', et cetera. According to the teacher, specific technical language skills do not play an important role in her teaching. On the other hand she thinks that some techniques are important and useful to master. 'A letter of application should not contain spelling errors' she says, and therefore she practices this kind of thing every now and then. In fact she is very happy if a colleague who sometimes covers for her pays some attention to spelling. This all is still on the level of rhetorics (cf. Kroon, 1986).

The teacher can afford this perspective on the teaching of Dutch and feel very strongly about multicultural education because she knows that she is hardly limited by demands of the subject content of Dutch in lower vocational education, the school administration, colleagues, a curriculum or textbooks. Summarizing: On the level of the teacher's rhetorics, i.e. on the level of what she says in the interview, multicultural education is seen as a social necessity and the subject content of Dutch is placed second to that.

In the teaching practice of our teacher, as far as we observed it, lessons appear, both on multicultural aspects of the phenomenon of language (i.e. multicultural language awareness lessons), and on specific mainly technical language skills (i.e. the regular content of Dutch). Unlike what the teacher stated, however, the latter type of lessons does not have a marginal position at all. Six out of the 12 lessons observed are in a clearly multicultural way concerned with language, and the other six lessons are not multicultural at all. They are filled with topics that belong to the regular content of the subject Dutch. There is no relationship whatsoever between the 'multicultural' lessons (1 to 6) and the 'regular' Dutch lessons (7 to 12).

In dealing with 'language', in the first six lessons the teacher uses material taken from an experimental course 'Vreemde talen, hoezo vreemd?' (Foreign Languages, How Come Foreign?) that was developed by the Dutch National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO). This course is meant to introduce children to foreign languages, and in doing so it clearly tries to achieve multicultural aims. Another textbook

the teacher uses is 'Onder anderen' (Among Others) which deals with various aspects of the multiethnic composition of Dutch society. Both books are not specifically meant for the teaching of Dutch, but both pay some attention to language in a multicultural perspective, and the teacher picks out exactly these chapters. The texts and the assignments she uses contain, among other things, information on the emergence of language and script, the construction of a secret language (a code), sign language, different languages in the classroom, the city, the Netherlands, the world. The main aim of the lessons is giving information on the phenomenon of language, and the methodology that is used can be considered as a means to this end. There is no homework during the first six lessons and, according to the teacher's statement in the interview, that 'the effects of multicultural education are not to be tested with current procedures', no examination or testing takes place.

Lessons 7 to 12 have no clear central point of attention. There are various working sheets and activities, containing assignments on such diverse things as the meaning of abbreviations and proverbs, reading comprehension exercises using a text on 'Columbus discovering (sic) America', looking up telephone numbers, reading aloud, and listening comprehension. Most of the material that is used is xeroxed from 'Taal vandaag' (Language Today), a regular textbook for the teaching of Dutch in lower vocational education. The methodology that is used is totally dictated by the type of assignment that is used. The two final lessons consist of testing procedures: a listening comprehension test and a reading comprehension test are completed by the pupils. In these lessons no attempt is made to introduce any multicultural issue whatsoever — although for example the Columbus text, from a viewpoint of ethnocentrism, provided a good opportunity in this respect. The content of the lessons is totally limited to topics that traditionally belong to the subject content of Dutch and that almost exclusively represent what the teacher called in the interview 'useful techniques'.

If we compare the twelve lessons that we observed, it is immediately clear that there are big differences between lessons 1 to 6 and 7 to 12. These differences, of course, could be an artefact of our research. At least the teacher did know what we were looking for. Although we have some information on what happened in the lessons before and after the period of observation from the interviews we conducted, we did not see these lessons. According to the teacher, however, the lessons that we observed, generally speaking, do not substantially differ from the rest of her teaching practice. Apart from the differences, there is also a certain similarity in the two groups of lessons. This similarity consists of the 'routines' along which the 'multicultural' and the 'regular' lessons develop. These routines appear

to be by and large the same in both groups of lessons. By routines we mean 'characteristics' such as question-answer patterns, references to certain aspects of subject content, references to types of classroom behaviour and student-teacher interaction et cetera, that make lessons recognizable as belonging to the realm of 'teaching Dutch'. From the analyses of our data we have the strong impression, that as long as pupils perceive a lesson as belonging to the realm of 'teaching Dutch' (or if they, in case of doubt, manage to interpret it as such in whatever way) multicultural aspects of the lesson tend to stay obscure and therefore do not reach the consciousness of the pupils. In this manner multicultural language teaching runs the risk of becoming ineffective. If, on the other hand, pupils do not manage to recognize multicultural language teaching as belonging to the field of 'teaching Dutch' the outcome tends to be more or less the same. Multicultural language teaching in this case is not only ineffective as multicultural education, but as 'teaching Dutch' as well (cf. Kroon, 1987).

Our analysis of the observed lessons shows that multicultural language teaching does not mean that the traditional subject content of Dutch is reshaped in a multicultural perspective. On the contrary, new, multicultural topics are introduced and offered to the pupils without any reference to the regular content of the Dutch lessons, which in its turn, remains unaltered. Multicultural education and the teaching of Dutch as a subject are not integrated. Multicultural education in this way gets the status of a separate 'subject', and that is exactly the opposite of what the multicultural paradigm is aiming at and of what the teacher formulated as her ideas on multicultural education during the interviews.

A final remark that we want to make here concerns the turning point between the first six 'multicultural' lessons and the second six 'regular' Dutch lessons. This turning point is marked by an interview we conducted with the teacher. A topic that was extensively discussed in this interview was the question whether a number of activities which she carried out within her multicultural philosophy, in her Dutch lessons earlier on, could be considered as teaching Dutch. She fully endorses our statement that her lessons could as well have been taking place under the heading of sociology, and she does not consider that a problem. She is mainly concerned with achieving multicultural goals that are useful for her pupils in social reality. The question then, however, is what happens with the subject of Dutch and its specific content and goals. Precisely that question apparently started to bother the teacher in the period after the interview as is clearly shown by the content of lessons 7 to 12. 'Such an interview gives food for thought' she says to the observer at the beginning of lesson 7, 'that's why I prepared some work sheets for today'. And then the lesson starts. It is

about alphabetical order, about abbreviations and slogans. The lessons to follow contain typically Dutch topics as well.

6 Concluding remarks

In this paper we tried to provide some insight into recent trends in the training of mother tongue teachers in the Netherlands. This was done against the background of some introductory and admonishing remarks on international comparative research (into mother tongue education) from the viewpoint of interpretive research. Changes in teacher training programmes in the Netherlands were then interpreted as related to changes in the school subject of Dutch resulting from negotiations within the Dutch subject community and Dutch educational policy. In this context central attention was paid to the 'teacher as a researcher' movement, both in teacher training and in educational research, as an example of which some data were presented from a case study in multicultural language teaching.

We are aware of course that our rather short description of an extensive case study hardly contributes to developing a thorough understanding of the intricacies of mother tongue education as related to developments in the Dutch subject community and Dutch educational policy. In our research, however, at least in our opinion, we did achieve a deeper understanding of what is going on in classrooms under the heading of mother tongue education. This does not only apply to us as researchers, but to the teachers, who worked with us as 'collaborators' rather than as 'teacher researchers' and to the student teachers who as a part of their ULO course to qualify as a teacher of Dutch participated in carrying out our research as well. Getting acquainted with doing research in the school subject Dutch in the course of University Teacher Training thus, in our view, can be considered a fruitful starting point for being a teacher who understands mother tongue education and for future teacher researcher/collaborator activities.

Notes

1. This essay is a revised version of a paper, given at the '3e Réunion Internationale d'experts sur l'enseignement de la langue maternelle', Montréal, Canada, September 19-23, 1988. The main theme of the conference was 'L'enseignement de la langue maternelle: bilan et perspectives d'avenir'. Under this heading six different topics (in our case 'La formation des enseignants, première et continue') were discussed by experts who were asked to identify 'quels progrès ont été

réalisés durant les 10 à 15 dernières années dans une des dimensions de l'enseignement de la langue maternelle énumérée dans la thématique' and to judge 'si ces progrès vont se poursuivre dans le même sens ou si, au contraire, l'influence de certains facteurs ne va pas faire porter les efforts de progrès vers d'autres secteurs dans les années à venir'. In principle each theme was discussed by two experts, one from an industrialized country and one from a developing country.

2. The International Mother Tongue Education Network (IMEN) aims at historical and international comparative research in mother tongue education. The present research programme of IMEN consists of three parts: 1 systematic description and analysis of recent developments in the rhetorics of mother tongue education, mainly on the basis of documents; 2 systematic description and analysis of practices of mother tongue education, mainly on the basis of teacher diaries and so-called portraits of mother tongue education; 3 case study research in the practice of mother tongue education. One of the main aims of the Network is to hold up a mirror to all those involved so as to provide them with a comparative insight into nationally and culturally determined definitions of mother tongue education (cf. Herrlitz *et al.*, 1984a and b; Kroon & Sturm, 1987; Delnoy *et al.*, 1988). For further information: IMEN Secretariat, c/o Resy Delnoy, Lankforst 42-16, 6538 HW Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

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