CHAPTER VI

THE MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF DATA: CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS

6.0 Introduction

In the last two chapters we have undertaken an analysis of the data looking at the two Central Questions of the study, using the seven dynamic sub-headings (sub-headings 2) described in Chapter III (3.4.3).

This analysis was basically a contrastive analysis of Theory I, Theory II and Operations, that yielded the two hypotheses of the study, which, in keeping with the interpretative and idiographic mode of analysis, 'emerged' from the data. The hypotheses emerged as did an ER Pedagogy, through a qualitative analysis of data, which has been undertaken with as much rigour as would retain the 'fabric-like' quality of the phenomenon under study.

In the last two chapters the two Central Questions of the study: a) How does ER 'work' in the curriculum (Q.A); and b) What is the usefulness of an ER course in the curriculum (Q.B), yielded Hypotheses A and B respectively. a) That factors in the curriculum impede or act as constraints to the optimal implementation of ER, and b) that there is some initial instructional value in the ER course for the low achievers.
In this chapter, the concluding chapter of this study, we will briefly round up the analysis, by looking at the data in curricular terms. This exercise is necessary in order to emphasise the relatedness between particular ELT issues, and larger curricular ones (1.2.1). Though curricular forces have been fundamentally linked with the ER classroom in the preceding chapters, here we focus specifically on larger curricular macro-structures.

In 1.2.1 the curriculum was imaged as an organism, balancing between equilibrium and stability and innovation and change. It was suggested that the tilt the curriculum made could be interpreted as its maintaining on one hand, a stability or a status quo, and on the other, change, or innovation. It was further suggested that change, envisaged in the curriculum, is to be understood as being 'incremental' in nature. Such an image of the curriculum, could be described, it was felt, as a 'conservative' one.

The image of the curriculum described above, carries certain assumptions that need clarification before the analysis of data.

(1) When we talk of the 'conservative' nature of the curriculum image posited in this study we mean that change is envisaged as occurring within the curricular system, not outside it. A more radical perception of change would remove the concept of the institution of education completely, to be replaced by a non-formal type of learning. The institution
of schooling will be questioned in a radical perspective, though it is recognised that learning in natural situations and circumstances is not adequate for transactions today. Although it is important that a constant critical surveillance and self-awareness be maintained in the business of education, it is not desirable or possible to do without the institution of schooling altogether. Reference has already been made to the teaching/classroom construct, which exists, we hold, even with the most radical educators (e.g., Neill, Rousseau Freire, Illich etc.), and which cannot be dispensed with, since learning is a basic phenomenon of biological growth and opportunities and environments. Chapter II has discussed the whole issue of schooling, a basic construct necessary in a discussion of organised learning.

We also regard, we have said, change as being a factor, constantly in tension with the factor of stability. This can be described as the tension inherent in a curriculum. Radical change is guarded against by this process, so that, in a very real sense, the Institution of Education is also being protected from a usurpation that can occur only with a radical change of structure that is essentially political in nature. Those who would so usurp might regard change within the system as conservative which is why this term has been accepted as a 'label'.
(2) The 'incremental' nature of change posited here, indicates further that change comes from within the organism of the curriculum. This notion of change carries with it the basic learning concept of the schema, here seen in curricular terms; the +1 notion of change contributing to what is already known. Thus, Piaget's description of learning as a movement of disequilibrium or felt unease or upheavals, followed by a search for equilibrium that is effected through an assimilation and accommodation process, is one which can be attributed to the curriculum also. Change in other words, is defined as growth, seen in learner-centred or organic terms.

However, just as learning theory finds difficulty in implementation within the curriculum, so that theory is qualified constantly by the constraints of curricular forces (this has been demonstrated as occurring in ER as a case in point), so also it can be expected that change that is theoretically 'good' for the curriculum, will be limited by its own processes.

If change then, occurs from within the organism at the grass-roots level we could describe the process of change as being essentially a 'bottoms-up' process, rather than a 'top-down' one which is the usual pattern of introducing change (Chapter III). The 'bottoms-up' approach to change however, can be described as being in many ways a 'radical' approach. For a bottoms-up approach, by referring as much
to the lower echelons of the educational hierarchies as to the higher ones, would, in implementation, shake up strong-holds of power in the system. But a grass-roots approach to change, cannot, however, be undertaken without the consent and willing participation of all (including the existing power-bases) so that resistances to change would only be minimal. The top-down approach to change, on the other hand, by not accessing the lower hierarchies, will ensure a fossilised sort of stability that can be described as a status quo, and lack of change in many cases. Resistances to innovations are bound to occur if change is imposed from above i.e., from without the organism. It can be said then, that a 'bottoms-up' or grass-roots approach to change is more practically cognisant of change mechanisms in implementation and more honestly concerned with the occurrence of change.

A discussion of the grass-roots approach, referred to in this study, would however, need to be preceded, by a description which is of what this approach, in our proposals and data, supposed to substitute, i.e., the top-down approach to change.

The top-down approach to change, discussed already in terms of national policy, in Chapter III, will be clarified further here with an analysis of the dynamics of the change factor and its counterpart, the stabilisation factor. Thus the question of which way the curriculum tilts in this case,
towards change or stabilisation will be undertaken concurrently with a discussion of first, the top-down and then the grass-roots approaches. In this way, the question of which way the curriculum tilts would indeed be a means of evaluating a curriculum, not in value judgements but in descriptive terms. By positing the question of the tilt in the curriculum, it is possible to see the intentions and potentialities of a curriculum.

In terms of our data, we could say, first that both change and stabilisation factors are strongly in evidence.

6.1 **The Change Factor**

1. The change factor is seen in the structural and organisational innovations undergone by the college. These changes are examined as occurring a) in historical terms, over time (Reid, 1986) and b) at a moment in time. This dual perspective is important, since actual change in the curriculum occurs slowly and over time. However radical a syllabus statement might be, the whole organism of the curriculum, teachers, students, administrators, etc., cannot be expected to change attitudes with syllabus statements (especially those statements that are made with a top-down orientation). Such attitudes, as we have claimed in this study, is what is to be considered in actual operations. To look at change as occurring in a moment in time (in Theory II) and to look at Operations (again,
our contrastive analysis needs to be employed here) i.e.,
over time, in 'historical' terms, is arriving at, in a very
real sense on how new 'knowledge' is adapted to and is
adapted by the schema of the curriculum, or how change is
'assimilated' and 'accommodated' in use.

How then has change been apprehended in our data?

In 1977 about six colleges were granted autonomy from the
University. This resulted in an overall change, right from
1977, in terms of curriculum structure, and syllabus.

(1) The college decided to adopt a semester pattern,
with a certain number of credits required per semester. The
English Department offered 34 courses at the inceptional stages,
six of which were language courses. This was in place of the
traditional four year Bachelor's course, where a public exam
was held after the first, second, and fourth years.

(2) Streaming of classes into A, B and C streams was
introduced in English courses.

(3) The General English Course was taken quite seriously
and in keeping with the then current ELT changes, it was decided
to adopt a communication-oriented syllabus. This adoption was
significant, because aside from Bombay University, which also
at that time was undergoing revolutionary changes, like a
skill-based paper without prescribed textbooks, no other
institution was adopting at that time such a structural change,
on such a large scale in India.
The initial change was basically that Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading and Written Communication were being focussed on in definite systematic ways. Of the three units, the Extensive Reading programme even in 1977, and now in 1986, has remained a unique one attempted and tried out over this period of time in this institution. ER specifically was seen to mean independent reading. Before autonomy, the Supplementary Readers (see Chapter III) served the purpose of ER. After autonomy, a whole list of books appeared, many of them classical in nature, displaying the then strong literature bias in the Department. In 1986, the position of text selection has changed. In A stream, for example, the long list of best sellers, have very few classics included, so that now one teacher, at least, is asking for more classics.

The lack of availability of texts, however, gives to C stream, simplified and abridged books that are classical in nature. Over the years, student suggestions (after they have been processed by the teacher's filter grid) have been included and lists have changed. Independent reading, was seen to be the focus of ER. In a teacher-dominated framework this was indeed revolutionary. Changes in Theory II, therefore, were visible and significant especially in ER.

What can be said about the nature of changes described here?
The initial thrust for change for autonomy came through a University policy. The semester pattern, and the changes in the ER programme in particular, came through the influence of experts (British Council, and CIEFL, Hyderabad). The change was based on theoretical supports like the just published Notional Syllabus, and an enlightened Head of Department. It was initially, therefore, a 'top-down' approach - the most common process of 'change' initiation.

Initially therefore, the teachers had very little to do with the change of the course though students it seems did give opinions. The ER Course was introduced, and the teachers, though not happy initially undertook discussions, thinking and implementation. However, on-going changes and decisions, materials development etc. (which the college still produces on its own), now involves the whole department, supported by expertise from outside. Decisions made at staff meetings are ratified by the Boards of Studies (which includes all members of staff), and is approved by the Academic Council (made up of Heads, one member of staff, and about four students).

These modifications of Theory in Operations, explain the hidden curriculum of ER, and why innovations, posited as solutions, remain surface cosmetic ones, which do not touch the root causes for a course operating in ways it does.
The modifications to theory can be identified importantly as the balancing force to innovation and change; that of the need to maintain a stability. Thus, it could be said that if ER as perceived in optimal, learner-centred and Theory I terms, is put into practice in the curriculum, the curriculum structure as it stands, will be destroyed to a great extent, if not completely. Not accessing the hidden curriculum would, it could be said, help balance the tilt against that exerted by the sort of change that a curriculum, interested in survival, cannot maintain. A top-down process of change does maintain 'stability' factors in the curriculum therefore.

On the other hand, it could be said that a top-down approach is satisfied with surface solutions and that by not accessing the hidden curriculum will neutralise change (radical in terms of the survival of the curriculum) as envisaged in theory.

We can say of the case, then, that the factor of change having been brought in initially by outside agencies, involves resistances in the academic community, which would have surely contributed to the course as it now exists. In untold and undefinable ways the course as planned is very different from the course as implementation.

One important finding of the data analysis is therefore that the revolutionary description of ER in the curriculum, a structural and organisational change, different from other
more traditional ER programmes, was not matched by a corresponding fundamental and organic change within the curriculum. For example, though ER demands less teacher domination and control, our analysis of T-S-Ints shows this does not happen either in the classroom, or at the selection level, or at the reading, student-text interactional level. The old system fitted into a new structure (as seen in ER implementation) has not been too successful in the translation of a theory into practice. Goals have not been realistically approached, but have rather been changed. Assessment, the greatest power-wielding tool that the teacher possesses is still the single most important factor of classroom activity in ER.

The 1977 change was primarily, therefore, an organisational one – but not an organic or fundamental one. The semester system, content areas changed, but teaching roles, as evaluator, transmitter of knowledge have not, and the student position as passive learner without any recognised negotiating powers has not.

Thus, very little change besides a 'cosmetic' change has come about since 1977, in ER. Stated objectives and requirements have remained the same, and only recently have C stream students been seen to need training in ER skills. But even this needs development. Programme development therefore, has become more democratic, involving both students (in text selection) and teachers (planning) to an extent.
But since original changes emanated in a top-down process, and since even with more democratisation, the process is still top-down (e.g., teacher filter being used for student selection of texts), the impact of innovations is considerably toned down contributing effectively to stability.

6.2. The Stability Factor

An analysis of our data (Chapters IV and V) therefore showed that the 'ought' and 'is' factors were different, that Theory II was contradicted often by teachers in ER implementation. Thus change as visualised in planning has been modified in practice.

The modifications, undergone in ER implementation arose mainly out of resistances. Change occurs against resistances, which in this case was identified as teacher resistances (wanting assessment, maintaining teacher control, withdrawing or giving different kinds of feedback) or administrative resistances (grade requirements, central syllabus requirements, accountability required from teachers etc.) or student resistances (negating learning, asking for marks, drawing contracts that are primarily organisational in nature).

These resistances are the silent and covert ways of the individual will of participants coming into conflict with the policy decision and the majority vote. They can be described as the continuing after-effects of top-down decisions
which did not consider change as occurring from within the curriculum, and did not consider the grass-roots level enough.

Which way does the curriculum tilt? The data analysis, summed up in Hypothesis A and Hypothesis B would in a weighing-up between the two hypotheses, reflect to an extent, the question of this 'balance' in the curriculum. That is, while on one hand, it was found that the value of ER, in optimal, theoretic terms, was lessened or spoilt by forces in the curriculum (Hypothesis A), it can be said on the other hand, that there is some value of the resultant ER course for the low achiever (Hypothesis B). Thus, ER in optimal terms or Hypothesis A, offers factors for change which in being neutralised, can be interpreted to be that change is neutralised. This negative statement could be balanced however by Hypothesis B which, taking ER as it is in the curriculum, with all its constraints, could be interpreted as veering towards stabilising the curriculum. Indeed, that the data shows that the curriculum does seem to be a means of maintaining and legitimising social systems and constructs (Lacey, 1978; Ball, 1986; Rosen 1986) as concluded in the observations on streaming and the C streamer, only strengthens the notion of stability of the curriculum.
Hypothesis A then is stated in negative terms, whereas Hypothesis B is stated in more positive terms, but qualified to an extent. Given the structure of the case it would seem then, that the radical nature of the innovation described is being strongly balanced by a strengthening of old infrastructures. Thus, the objectives of ER are not being realised, though these objectives seem optimal for ER. However it can be categorically said that since ER is in the curriculum ER objectives cannot be realised.

In order to see change in more than surface, cosmetic terms, then, it is necessary to examine the interests and motivations of the hidden curriculum. Its analysis, we said in 1.2.1 is a way of transforming what has hitherto been considered in non-academic terms, as being something of little value, with what can be used for effective change. If the resistances are known then they can be worked with for more productive results.

6.3 Change at the Grass-Roots Level: The Bottoms-Up Perspective

As an alternative to the top-down process of change, therefore, there is the bottoms-up approach that involves the lower 'rungs' of students and junior lecturers, as part of the decision-making process. In 'micro' terms, this approach can be seen in the classrooms, as a learner-centred approach. In
'macro' terms, the bottoms-up approach involves a collaboration of all teachers through discussion in decision-making. It means 'autonomy' (not a 'laissez-faire') to the individual participant in a course (Chapter III).

That the lower echelons of the hierarchical ladder are being considered (albeit in 'controlled' ways) in decision-making has been noted. This is a positive step, demonstrating in actual practice, how change in operation can successfully incorporate the lower hierarchies. Indeed, an observation of the evaluation seminars reflected the 'open' nature of the workings of the department, showing why it is the only department in English at the tertiary level, which has implemented its innovative syllabus over a period of more than ten years. A forum for discussion has been provided, where all teachers (and through them, all students) can participate in on-going decisions.

This forum speaks of the recognition for grass-roots participation, that can be expressed in this college, because it is autonomous, and has a control over its own programmes. This demonstrates how productive it is for change, if participants have a say in what is to happen. It can also be demonstrated here, then, that this college is attempting to access the hidden curriculum, so that we could say that the 'ought' factors here, are coming much closer to the 'is' factors.
The structures of seminar forums, and workshops etc., however, in turn have their own inner 'is' factors, that again could influence outcomes. For example, it was observed that smaller groups discussed possibilities of change in more detail and more frankly than the larger group; that smaller groups could more easily ignore the controlling hierarchical structures than the larger group. Further, it was observed that whereas more participation came from more individuals in smaller groups, only a few chosen, and a few articulate people could speak in larger groups.

The implication here is that the smaller groups provide details that have to be 'lost' in summary and generalisation, for action to be undertaken. Indeed this is what the curriculum is concerned with, organising disparate and personal agendas under a common umbrella. If this organisation could be more negotiable however (and this is the point here) and more empathetic to participants who are 'being organised' so that these participants too become organisers, this curriculum structure would, it is claimed, be more relevant and of more significance to different participants.

Though it could be said that the case is more democratic in the apprehension of how change occurs, it is also clear that an established 'democratic' approach in negotiation could even more successfully cover the 'hidden curriculum'
emanating from the silent majority, which is neither powerful nor articulate. This would ensure a hidden curriculum where the distinctions between policy and actions would be wide. In our T-Int and St-Int it was clear that unstated assumptions were being held by both students and teachers, and that the ER course was functioning the way it was because of the 'coping' strategies that participants had to adopt in its implementation, resulting in a great deal of contradictions.

To bridge the gap between planning and implementation then, a step not trivial in nature, it is necessary to adopt small group discussions, and further, a face-to-face discussion to contribute to a voicing of attitudes of both students and teachers. This exercise would in turn develop the old structures to assimilate and accommodate new ideas on a more individual level. Discussion helps articulation of perceptions and unconsciously-held insights and even this movement, it is suggested, is one factor in change. Such movements would, moreover, be autonomous in nature and voluntary, where the 'will' of every individual is involved in change.

Such an approach, each teacher rationalising and theorising from discussions after actual experiences, presents a more practical acceptance of resistances in the hidden curriculum, which is the operational aspect of implementation.
Thus, ideas generated by the teacher in this research, have been described under five headings (see 5.3, Table 5.1) as: structural/organisational, methodological, content, administrative and curricular. These are concrete suggestions posited by the teacher, of the ' +1 ' step variety. That is, all suggestions, made against practical resistances, can be considered implementable in nature. Each field, with its own variations in commitments would best know what this +1 factor in implementation (in planning) could be.

It is clearly demonstratable, then, that the grassroots approach, described as optimal in ER and in ER in the classroom is also optimal in operationalising autonomy (as described in the Kothari Commission, 1966). As it does with the language learner moreover, the +1 factor capitalises on what the teacher already has, what is his or her own knowledge to lead to more practical syllabus theorising and objectives. It is a more practical acceptance of resistances in the hidden curriculum.
6.3.1 The Research Method

How do ideas held by individual teachers, however, get translated into functional currency? One way of transmitting the views of the 'silent majority' that is more clearly voiced in group discussions and in face-to-face discussions, is by the who utilisation of researcher/in the role of a catalyst or therapist helps 'release' what the teacher has. An outside 'researcher', for obvious reasons, can contribute a great deal to releasing hidden held assumptions, as was demonstrated in this research.

The asterisks in Table 5.1 reflect, significantly, points the researcher contributed in the discussion, as new 'ideas'. That they occurred rarely indicates that most of the theorising, a rich and varied list as Table 5.1 shows, came from the teachers themselves. The researcher was only a catalyst for this, an outside factor here, who has brought in a theory from outside the curriculum for consideration. Theory has also however come from the teacher as well. Many ideas, further, were those contributed by other teachers in earlier interviews, so that it could be said that the researcher in the matter of ER issues, served as a bridge between different members of the department, who had obviously never had occasion or time to sit and discuss the issues involved in ER. Verbalising ideas also helped form them; many ideas expressed by teachers came through discussion and were crystallised and formed in talk. Few ideas were already formed outside the context of discussion. The importance of focussed talk in teaching is demonstrated therefore in this research.
The teachers themselves, have ideas therefore which, discussed individually with the researcher, is through the research process bound to have spin-offs for change. These notions, since they come from within the curriculum are practical steps of attainment, feasible, given the structure and all its resistances to change.

6.4 Conclusion

A particular educational community has its own problems, and its own solutions, but for coherence and articulation, some organisation as well. If we are serious about change, we will not impose change completely from 'outside' ignoring the academic community totally, but work with participation in its most democratic sense. The movement of action will be bottoms-up approach. The movement is also one of the 'assimilation' of new ideas to old structures, and 'accommodation' of old structures to new ideas. Thus the reactions of the teachers demonstrated a dynamic and fluid aspect of the research methodology in this study where a major reformulation has taken place: a theory, replete with all "good things" of learning, became operational as a construct - i.e., theoretically speaking, through the discussions with the teachers. Though it is still theory, our discussions revealed the constraints presented by a curriculum.
Changes of structure, which are visible are important and necessary; but without an accompanying organic change, are of little value, in terms of change. But change may not be exactly what a particular educational community wants.

If methodology does change with a grass-roots approach (as it would if 200 texts were introduced into the ER course for example), the teacher-student power balance would also change necessarily. Is this however desirable to the academic community? This is the pivotal question. If the curriculum tilts strongly towards stability, it will not be desirable; if it tilts towards change, it will be so. The radical nature of Theory I suggested in this study it seems, will be difficult for institutions to accept easily even in theory since whole structures of control and power will be demoralised.

But practice will involve the acceptance of the participants to the idea of sharing in decision-making, so that while old structures break down, they will not be unwanted kinds of change.

The study reveals the following, therefore: 1) the motives of the hidden curriculum, and further, 2) it demonstrates how far removed theory is from practice (even as plan) in the curriculum, and (3) hence the limitations of a curriculum. We need to be consciously aware of such limitations if we need to be
more efficient in using planning as thrusts or indications as towards a direction rather than a blueprint of action. 4) It demonstrates, further, the dynamics of change; to what extent a new idea can be assimilated by personnel involved, and how new ideas can be accommodated into an old system. 5) It demonstrates the feasible positions the ELT expert or researcher as change agent can assume in curriculum changes, and how changes (in the CLT Paradigm) can thus become more operational. Theory discussed outside the curriculum and in vacuum will remain ideas, and outside operations in the classrooms, and outside the hidden curriculum.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Study

We have analysed and tried to describe the quality of an ER course in the curriculum, by comparing it to a theoretical definition which encapsulates what is optimal in successful reading. The observations made were: 1) that the value of reading is decreased or spoilt by curricular forces, and 2) that the limited nature of the ER course that results, does offer some initial instructional support to the low achiever in English.

The implications the study has for ELT studies is that it would be possible to locate and pin-point areas of resistances to change, using the bottoms-up or grass-roots and 'illuminative'
approach in research, as used in this study, in order to:
1) make more realistic objectives, in keeping with recent
learning theory that input is not equal to output, so that
these realistic objectives offset much of the cynicism
accompanying ELT activity today; (2) examine afresh the
purposes and function of ELT in the curriculum; 3) and thus
examine the 'boundaries' and subject classifications of
different areas of ELT. Are these valid distinctions? Do the
ends justify the means? How would recent learning and language
acquisition models re-graph old 'subject' areas?

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