The Power of the Code: 
publication and research paradigms

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ABSTRACT Top-ranked international journals typically require authors to write in English and this can present problems for speakers of other languages. The authors use this concern with linguistic codes as a metaphor for the dominance of particular research paradigms and the consequent difficulties of recognising heterodox paradigms. The importance of international journals is recognised but, through deconstructive and destabilising analyses, the authors consider the implications of this for academics using non-traditional approaches to research. The orthodoxy of positivistic research is considered in terms of traditional quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. The authors then address the importance of critical pedagogies and the problem of having appropriate research paradigms acknowledged in the top-ranked journals which signify the norms of educational research. The article focuses on educational research in the Netherlands, but has significance for all academics who do not speak English as a first language and for those who use alternative research paradigms.

Introduction

At one level, this article is a narrative about the engagement of Dutch scholars with international journals and, more specifically, English-language journals. It takes as its starting point the need for Dutch teacher trainers and teachers as researchers to obtain recognition as researchers through the publication of their work. This need to publish in English-language journals immediately highlights the problem of linguistic capital (see, for example, Smeyers & Levering, 2000), and so our Netherlands-based focal point is relevant to all non-native speakers of English seeking the wider dissemination of their work. However, our concern here is not with linguistic colonialism (which may be dressed up as globalisation to appear more benevolent), and this is not a complaint about the need to meet international standards of quality whilst writing in a foreign language (although we recognise that this is a significant concern for many scholars). Instead, the codification of language is used as a metaphor for the codification of traditional research paradigms. The narrative is used to make visible their power and cultural values, and to consider their influence on publication.

Dutch scholars are required to publish their work in order to obtain their employment-based compulsory credits. Educational research is a relatively small field in the Netherlands, and so there is a need to publish in international journals. The requirement to meet employment conditions therefore demands the acknowledgement of the dominant research paradigms of these journals; and the wider and habitual recognition of those paradigms perpetuates their authority. It is not
unreasonable to assume that journal editors will seek input from Dutch reviewers if papers deal with education in the Netherlands. This is problematic for alternative scholars seeking to publish work framed by non-traditional research paradigms, as the relatively small cohort of potential Dutch reviewers is further reduced to the cohort who may be sympathetic to these alternative paradigms.

Our argument is that traditional research paradigms have become too formulaic and that their mechanistic implementation therefore fails to represent and illuminate the realities of those with whom we conduct our research. Just as language has standard and non-standard forms, with varying degrees of cultural and symbolic capital accorded to them, so too does research have standard and non-standard forms. Non-native English speakers have to change their language to be heard on the international stage via international journals, but how far does the metaphor extend? Alternative scholars (by which we mean those using non-traditional, non-positivistic and non-formulaic research paradigms) should not fear the Foucauldian power (Foucault, 1989) of traditional research paradigms, but they need to recognise it and assert the power of constructive conflicts (Davies, 2004) in order to tell counter-narratives that are possessed of authority. This requires a form of academic rebellion (Byrne, 1998; Gilliers, 1998; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Mason, 2008) that recognises the validity of alternative research paradigms. However, such authority is measured out, at least in part, through publications in peer-reviewed journals, and that predicates a problem.

The metaphoric use of language to engage with the problems of what is deemed orthodox and acceptable in academe (that is, that which is considered worth publishing in the international journals which are posited as the index to the highest-quality academic work) necessarily raises the questions of what sort of journals researchers want to get published in and why. What does this say about status? In the context of educational fields, what does it say about the tensions between being true to oneself and one’s understanding of and engagement with the pedagogic world and the need to represent it? It calls attention to the paradigmatic epistemologies (which also concern methodological and representational issues) that frame the ways in which we seek to know and represent the educational worlds in which we work. How can one’s work be recognised as both rigorous and authentic when it is conducted through an alternative paradigm? How can subjugation be represented with(out) that subjugation being assumed (and perhaps tainted) by those representing it?

Context

Research in the Netherlands is typically conducted within the frameworks of what are referred to as Paradigm I and Paradigm II research. Paradigm I research is quantitative and driven by hard science; Paradigm II typically references traditional forms of qualitative research. Positivism is the hallmark of Paradigm I research but it also stains the work of scholars conducting Paradigm II research if they are not critical of their own ways of researching and of the unjust situations they research. The term ‘traditional’ is used here to denote the two frameworks, but they can also be thought of as ‘scientific’. Although this term is used to signify rigour in the Netherlands, our concern is that these traditional frameworks have become too formulaic and they can therefore be considered ‘scientific’ in a pejorative sense when their mechanistic use fails to represent the realities of those we work with in our research.

Paradigm I knowledge is positivist. It presupposes generalised principles obtained from scientific methods, which it considers to be the only defensible and justifiable objective base for action. Paradigm I knowledge focuses on the language of organisation and the grammar of practice. However, the scientific narrative of Paradigm I is too theoretical and intellectualised, and the knowledge it generates is too limited. It has, therefore, lost its legitimisation (Letiche et al, 2008). Paradigm II knowledge is practitioner knowledge and uses discourses of understanding and of action (Letiche et al, 2008). Thinkers in the American humanistic organisation tradition (such as Agyris, Schön, Rogers, Senge and Bruner) have stressed the importance of knowledge in action, giving epistemological priority to praxis rather than theory. What counts in Paradigm II research is how social knowledge functions in concrete situations (so it would include, for example, concrete situations in groups in schools but would exclude abstract theories). Paradigm II knowledge is,
therefore, important for people who think that change agents and trainer activities are important. However, such knowledge is institutionally and epistemologically unstable: there is no archetypal model practitioner but many practitioners in many different circumstances.

Paradigm III research seeks to articulate the rigour of Paradigm I and the empathy of Paradigm II research to make the empathetic rigorous and the rigorous empathetic. Paradigm III knowledge focuses on the significance of the contemporary and radical networked society of knowledge-based activity. It is more adaptive, personal and situational than Paradigms I and II. It aligns with critical praxis and represents knowledge derived from the concrete activity space (that is, it is knowledge in use). Paradigm III knowledge tells us that narrativity is exclusively a human enterprise generating the social unity of the dialogic. The dialogic is not necessarily dialogue, but refers to the interactive nature of human cognition and knowledge, and it can therefore be antagonistic, brutal, impertinent and alienating, as well as nurturing. The dialogic exists inside interrelationships and is a quality of social exchange and interaction. It is therefore located between organisation and disorganisation, coherence and noise, harmony and divergence. The narrative of Paradigm III knowledge is important for people who see learning as something context-specific and always connected with situational, organisational and work factors. This narrative is social, often unpredictable and extremely personal. Paradigm III knowledge keeps its distance from generalisation, deontology and structural positivism. Instead, it stresses the specific and embraces relativism, postmodernism and the rejection of generalised truth claims, thus emphasising the importance of *la parole* (Letiche et al, 2008).

We contend that Paradigm I and Paradigm II philosophies cannot work in the pedagogical world because of their presuppositions. Their blind spots, or aporia (Derrida, 1982, 2004a), enable the belief that education and pedagogy concern simple, singular, one-dimensional, linear events which one can easily understand as cause–effect and goal–means systems. These philosophies, however, are no longer appropriate (if they ever were) as a means of understanding education. They do not fit easily with the existence of oral cultures of education, which are in opposition to the written cultures that politicians and managers (and scholars working in the traditional and positivistic paradigms) demand of teachers through, for example, written tests. Nor can they comprehend the meaning of performativity and performative pedagogies (Letiche, 2011), or of complexified critical pedagogies (Steinberg et al, forthcoming) in the educational realities of today. They avoid those things that give significance to the changing role of the performative pedagogue – subjective descriptions of pedagogical situations and their explanations and interpretations; reassurance given to teachers and parents; engagement with and understanding of poor pedagogic work; and so on. Whereas Paradigms I and II give predictions and guarantees couched in pseudo-scientific language, the deconstruction and destabilisation of pedagogic texts (texts in the Derridean sense [Derrida, 1997, 2001, 2004b]) offer an awareness of the complexities of Paradigm III research (Letiche, forthcoming).

Deconstruction and destabilisation can provide insight into meanings that may otherwise remain hidden, and the fate of Paradigm III research can provide insight into the power structures of the field of international journals. The rigour of Paradigm III research may not be recognised by those who ground their views in the indisputable norms and criteria of other paradigms, and the linguistic codes that delimit communication within them. Peer reviews (a term which suggests, but does not always mean, the reviewer shares the would-be author’s ethical understanding) are not the same as discussions and debates with colleagues and critical friends. They offer less room to apprehend the dynamism of ethical perspectives, particularly if those perspectives are from oral cultures and testify to performative and postmodern critical pedagogical attitudes. However, they do offer space for scholars working in Paradigms I and II to reassert the academic power of their world views. Yet, those world views tell us nothing about performative, postmodern and complexifying critical pedagogies. This is why these dominant frameworks must be opposed with a new language that can challenge the hegemony of written cultures. This is why we need a new language and a new code that is congruent with the kind of total language (which includes spoken and non-verbal languages, such as body language and attitude) used for communication (and non-communication) in schools.

The development of written culture as a mass activity in pedagogic fields is reified through the publication of articles in journals. Yet the ethics and norms of these writing cultures mean that pedagogues and researchers risk, perhaps counter-intuitively, becoming less reliable and less
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authoritative in the accounts they give of those with whom they work (or we could say, with reference to researchers, those upon whom they conduct their research). They have to make ethical and normative choices when considering pedagogical solidarity (Kincheloe, 2008). But whose side are they on? To join the official academic field of quasi-scientific research (that is, research in the traditional and positivistic sense) is to join the Anglo-American culture, with its own understandings of rigour and representation. Peer-reviewed activities are important, and we do not deny that. Reviewers (supported by the safety net of editors and editorial boards) may know what they are talking about, but their language is paradigmatically framed. Scholars from other cultures are also undertaking pedagogic research (Steinberg, 2009), but they do not always speak the same metalanguage as those reviewing their papers. The effects of colonisation on so-called minorities are well known. However, the colonisation of the international journals by researchers using Paradigm I and II frameworks is less obvious, because the linguistic codes of those journals conceal the subjugation of Paradigm III research with claims that it lacks scholarly rigour. So, the sharing of research through publication (or, rather, through the submission of papers for publication) is unequal, and we therefore need another language to tell alternative narratives with authority (Boje, 2001).

Research and Reporting in the Dutch Context

Research in the Netherlands is considered a serious and rigorous activity. The quality of research is measured according to internationally recognised standards, which means that the work of Dutch scholars is typically peer reviewed using Paradigm I criteria. However, in education, Paradigm II criteria are also used. As the field of education in the Netherlands is very small, Dutch educationalists have to publish their scientific papers in international journals to earn their compulsory credits, and there is a clear preference that A-rated journals should be targeted. Paradigm III perspectives, such as postmodern critical pedagogies, are not very common in the world of Dutch educational research, and are therefore likely to be mistrusted by those working through Paradigm I and II frameworks. Such scholars (including those Paradigm II scholars who approach their work in a mechanistic way) think it is possible to be acquainted with the world and to master it in an objective, universal, scientific and technical way. Nor is there room for rigorous philosophical or epistemological discussion, because scholars in the positivistic tradition are concerned with the logic of technique. Inevitably, if not intentionally, this means that they try to control and to manipulate understandings of the world: ‘the dream of the perfect power and control of the world’ (Lepers, 2009, p. 23). The desire to understand and, through that understanding, to possess is a phantasm. Nonetheless, it is also the ideal of those operating within traditional positivistic paradigms, such as those educators who want easily counted measures of educational outcomes.

According to Baudrillard, the positivist scholar has two needs: the need to regress to a lost mythological past, the unblemished birth times or prehistoric times, and the need for authenticity (Lepers, 2009). Baudrillard traces the shift from craftsmanship through industrial and Fordist production to the mass production of consumer goods, which leads to original denotations becoming separated from their contexts as the sign replaces that which it signifies. Whilst it could be argued that journal articles are crafted (particularly in the sense of the producer taking responsibility for the complete object rather than endlessly reproducing a fragmented part of the whole), the overall process of academic publication is heading towards the hyperreal. The notion that the quality of a journal article can, and should be, measured by its content has, in the headlong rush to produce easily countable metrics, collapsed and been replaced by the notion that quality can be measured by the ranking of the journal in which it is published. We do not wish to suggest that the two measures are wholly unrelated, but there is a significant distinction between them (we would also suggest that many, if not most, readers have a collection of high-quality articles that have gone unrecognised as such because they have been published as book chapters or in lower-ranked or unranked journals). Instead of having to read a whole article to ascertain its quality, and therefore the quality of its author, the heuristic reading of the journal title may be considered a suitable index to the quality of both the article and its author (for example, when one submits an academic curriculum vitae in pursuit of a job or promotion). Original meanings are copied, lost and
then erased in the hyperreal – which is why researchers operating within the framework of Paradigm II may believe they are challenging, rather than assuming the positivism of Paradigm I research. This paradigmatic shift typically reifies the neo-authenticity of particular world views and denies the validity of alternate epistemologies.

For positivist scholars, the focus on a finality measured out and divided along class lines is an important end point of their explanations and their predictions of daily reality. In order to satisfy the operation of forced rational models, they use, according to Baudrillard, models reaching back to one grand subject – the subject of knowledge (Baudrillard, 1994, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2009a, b; see also Lepers, 2009). In these neo-authentic worlds, students become mass-produced consumer items assembled on the production lines of factories called schools. However, it is not merely that which they study and aspire to that becomes simulacra (Watts, 2009): the students, too, become originless models. In our superabundant and over-wasteful consumer society, they can be discarded like so much rubbish once they have been used for research purposes because they are merely the embodiment of data.

So, what does one reveal (and what is concealed) when one is happy, excited or even proud that a paper has been accepted for publication in a journal that is recognised as being high status or having (as it is understood in the Netherlands) scientific authority? Do the demands and criteria of such a journal benefit those involved in that research? Or do they have advantage only for the author and his or her own position as a scholar seeking recognition on the international stage? The latter way of thinking and acting reveals, we suggest, a typical Western masculinist working method. It gives the executor visible power (Foucault, 1989) and is a way of working that can also be discerned in the colonisers of society, politics, culture and research (Smith, 1999). The accepted way of achieving recognition is mainly of importance to scholars seeking to become members of the academic society. It is of less importance to those upon whom the research is conducted. The research quality criteria are no more tuned to personal styles of scholastic inquiry than they are to diverse target groups (Abma, 1999; Abma & Widdershoven, 2006). Students learning this kind of research activity do not learn how to perform democratic, authentic and open research. They learn how to perform the traditional dance of positivistic research, research fitting into Paradigm I and Paradigm II frameworks. These formulaic approaches to research produce, and are produced by, positivistic paradigms, and the inevitable mechanisation displaces the craftsmanship of research, with researchers no longer being responsible for their craft. The authenticity of their work is compromised by the presumptive production of key parts – the important questions that have already been answered and are therefore not addressed. Educational research conducted within these paradigms is in danger of becoming a simulacrum.

But is this traditional way of conducting and reporting research necessary and inevitable? Are there viable alternatives – alternatives outside the delimitations of the positivistic world view – which can engage with the pedagogical realities of a world that cannot be reduced to numbers? In order to find such alternatives – which can be imagined if we imagine the boundaries of traditional research frameworks – we have to break open the methodological and philosophical discussions about research. More than this, we need ongoing (we could even say lifelong) discussions to apprehend the never-ending absence of certainties and simple situations. We have to demonstrate our pedagogical solidarity (Kincheloe, 2008) with those with whom we work, without being either overprotective or paternalistic. Durable alternatives cannot be generated through the reinvigoration of the premises of positivism. The grand narrative of one paradigm cannot simply be replaced by the grand narrative of another, nor should we construct counter-stories in the format of a new grand narrative (this would generate a hyperreality akin to the simulation of Paradigm I research by Paradigm II research). The building and rebuilding of pedagogy is a lifelong project, so we have to deconstruct and destabilise pedagogical texts constantly. We need to ask questions about the performativity of pedagogy, and we need to ask questions of the language we use: Who does it speak to, of and for? Which pedagogy – or pedagogies – do we want?

**Scholarly Subjugation**

The capitalistic ideology underpinning Paradigm I research (and which can also be discerned in Paradigm II research) makes the scholar more important than her formulaic story. Yet, according
to Barthes (1972, 1974, 1975, 1994), it is not the author who is speaking, but the language. The author cannot adopt or assume the importance of her formulaic story because she has created distance between herself and the original event about which the story is written (or, more precisely for Barthes, about which her story writes, for it is the language of the story that has the power and authority). This distance is redefined as objectivity, and the author talks of its reliability and validity. However, this objectivity generates concepts that have no connection to the original event and that are not part of its language.

We posit that the telling of the original event will become more powerful if the formulas of Paradigms I and II are dispensed with and the story is told, instead, through the language of Paradigm III. Such stories are built around what we could call the ‘sympathetic data’ that makes it possible for authors and their readers to understand other people. This may incorporate the nomadic inquiry of Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a, b) concerning the collection and analysis of sympathetic and transgressive data, such as emotional data, dreams, sensual data and implicit and embracing response data. Subjectivity is produced within dynamic processes and, if there are no fixed meanings, then all knowledge is contingent and we must therefore think carefully and differentially about data. This places a considerable responsibility on authors (and their readers) to constantly review and reconsider their epistemologies. However, this responsibility also requires authors (and their readers) to search behind the simulacra for the authentic event.

Rejecting the formulas of Paradigm I and II research is therefore a valuable (we could say necessary) exercise for inquiring and activist researchers, teachers and students. However, it is never easy because – in this context of writing for an international audience – these formulas frame what is generally considered acceptable for publication, and it is no simple or inconsequential matter to reject the terms and conditions of one’s employment. So, we are not only dealing with the ritual dances of the traditional and managerial worlds, but also with the mechanistic (we could say compulsory) methods required of scholars operating in these traditional paradigms. Yet, the compulsion (which carries the prescribed authority of obligation) is nothing more than a simulacrum – the copy of a model that does not exist (Baudrillard, 1994). It can be compared to the fake factories in the former East Germany, with scholars and students executing meaningless activities because they are expected of them and because no one wants to tell the emperor he is naked. That is why, for example, we still see women and non-white scholars following the research methodologies of white men. These methodologies do not articulate with their personal anthropologies and cultures, but with those of the men in power.

In Decolonizing Methodologies, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) tells her story of modernism and traditional research. It is a story of, and for, all indigenous peoples, one that is based on experiences that have been shaped by a long history of imperialism and colonialism. That imperialism ‘still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly’ (Smith, 1999, p. 19), and so the story is not one that can be stopped by an apology (González, 2003).[1] It is a story that indigenous peoples have to tell each other and others, a story they have to share in order to understand the consequences of imperialism and to combat its influence on their daily lives. Such stories need to be told because ‘indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures have been silenced or misrepresented, ridiculed or condemned in academic and popular discourses’ (Smith, 1999, p. 20).[2] This situation is perpetuated by scholars working from a typically Western anthropological or ethnographic perspective who, most of the time, speak of research on indigenous peoples. These scholars may have goodwill in their breast pockets, but they also have patents in their hip pockets. The ends of their formulaic research are more important to them than the means and reify the mechanistic colonial constructions that frame the binary oppositions between coloniser and colonised. Smith (1999, p. 23) tells us that the reach of imperialism into ‘our heads’ is most destructive for these/her oppressed people, and that they/we need ‘to decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity’. Thus, there is the need for a post-colonial discourse which includes the notion of authenticity and the acknowledgement of the pre-colonised time, and which recognises in ‘the epistemological sophistication of the indigenous paradigm ... a unity in all things and a connected spiritual energy embedded in both human and natural elements’ (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 65).

This need is just as great now that the concept of imperialism is being replaced by that of globalisation (Eschle & Maiguashca, 2005; Scholte, 2005) because those in power continue to use the same techniques that allow them to destroy, humiliate and oppress in order to maintain their
dominance. Such techniques are determined by the grammar of imperialism, which is framed by the positivistic Western paradigms (that is, Paradigm I and II research). The imperialists and colonisers continue to visit disorder and confusion on indigenous societies all over the world. They have cut, and continue to cut, the original connections between indigenous peoples and their histories, landscapes, contexts, languages, social relations and ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world. It is a process of systematic fragmentation. Written language is seen to signify superior levels of civilisation, and so, other cultures, those that make other communicative choices, tend to be labelled as primitive from the Western perspective; and this traditional Western perspective has constructed the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorised and in which indigenous voices have been overwhelmingly silenced (Smith, 1999, p. 29).

We are led to think of them as ‘Other’, but the lazy essentialism generated by a focus on the exotic ‘Other’ (Said, 1978) can lead us to overlook the subjugation of non-exotic others such as, here, Dutch educational researchers. But why are we getting worried about traditional research? It is something the devout believe in, but these traditional research paradigms have been created (in much the same way that J.M. Barrie [2007] created fairies by persuading audiences to state their belief in them). This, though, is why there is such a pressure on the practice and consumption of specific research paradigms: they are simulacra. Yet, the power of their neo-authenticity is such that they produce and reproduce the power inherent in the hierarchies of journal rankings.

A New Paradigm for Local and Indigenous Representation

Joe Kincheloe (2003) stepped back from this and said goodbye to such traditional pedagogical and educational research. He called it ‘bad work’, with its hallmarks of social Darwinism; the construction of nature as enemy; the belief in science as the provider of facts; efficiency as maximum productivity; the supremacy of systems-efficiency and cost–benefit analysis models; the purpose of work as the promotion of, at least, short-term personal welfare and, at most, short-term national welfare; and the contingency of human happiness on the acquisition of more and better consumer items (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 28-31). He argued that each endeavour of the traditionalists to develop verified, generalisable knowledge about pedagogical and educational practice will, at the end of the day, be insufficient and inadequate, and even unsuitable and improper. Yet, scholars working with traditional paradigms typically accept without critical reflection the presuppositions of mainstream research, and this tends to leave their presuppositions untroubled and unproblematised. The belief that ‘a singular, stable, external reality ... can be perceived by one’s senses’ (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 49) means that major aspects of pedagogical and educational domains, particularly those factors that are unobservable, remain unexamined. The hidden ideological forces of such research are not seen and not discussed. Reflecting on the consequences of traditional research paradigms for daily educational praxis, Kincheloe (2003) observes that ‘[t]eaching is like speaking, for if a speaker were to rely on research-based, formalized rules he or she would be mute’ (p. 102), and he notes Alvin Gouldner’s concern that such paradigms, when used in the social sciences, ‘promote a form of inquiry suitable for an alienated age and an alienated people’ (p. 50).

In order to challenge this, teachers have to become critical inquirers – critical constructivist teacher researchers – themselves, researchers who are ‘passionate scholars who connect themselves emotionally to that which they are seeking to know and understand’ and who, ‘[i]n the spirit of hope, possibility, and anti-determinism ... seek to liberate themselves from ... determinism by taking control of our perceptual abilities, by transcending what the context permits’ (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 64, 68). Teachers as researchers should be active producers of knowledge and not just consumers of the knowledge of academics working in traditional paradigms; and they should operate in a culture of good work that opposes the bad work of the traditionalists. That culture of good work is guided by the principles of self-direction; the job as a place of learning; work variety; workmate cooperation that challenges the reification of hierarchical knowledge; individual work as a contribution to social welfare; and play as a virtue which must be incorporated into work (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 25-27). Intuitive knowledge – or tacit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Weggeman, 1997) – has to guide scholars through their research. The androcentric principle of the value-free interaction between researcher and respondent is revealed as false in feminist research which identifies the traditional role allocation of researcher as man and respondent as woman.
Similarly, one thinks of Fanon’s (1986) encounter with the (unmarked) white child, and its reminder that ‘no matter how people of color define themselves, there are still the more powerful stereotypes in public culture that define their status and identities within the cosmos of the dominant’ (Stanfield, 1998, p. 348). Intuitive knowledge opposes the interpretative restrictions of codified knowledge and requires the teacher as researcher to employ herself as a human being who is part of the inquiry (unlike in traditional forms of research, particularly Paradigm I research, in which the role of the scholar should not be recognisable and knowable – which is why her actual influence on the research results is not visible).

Thus, Kincheloe (2003, p. 69) incorporates sensual knowledge and self-knowledge in his research methods because researchers ‘who do not understand themselves tend to misconstrue the pronouncements and feelings of others’. He connects body language and the language of emotions with verbal language in his inquiry so that emotions become a ‘powerful knowing mechanism that extends our ability to make sense of the universe’ (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 63-64). Madeleine Grumet (1988) has searched for research methods that involve body language and feelings in the public debate about pedagogy and education. She uses qualitative methods and methodologies like history, theatre, autobiography and phenomenology to confront and contrast the androcentric abstraction with ‘the uncertainty, specificity, and contradiction of the private, the corporal, the feminine’ (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 64). Such research challenges the domination of ‘what works’ and the tyranny of best practice to reveal that which is suppressed: that which works in one classroom will not necessarily work in another. That this is so obvious counter-intuitively makes it so easy to suppress because the complexities are typically expurgated from research. Post-formal thinking (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993) offers a framework for the Paradigm III research that can reclaim these complexities: (1) etymology (the origin of validated knowledge) requires the exploration of the forces that produce what cultures validate as knowledge; (2) pattern seeks to understand the connecting patterns and relationships that undergird the lived world; (3) process cultivates new ways of reading and researching that attempt to make sense of both ourselves and contemporary society; and (4) contextualisation appreciates that knowledge can never stand alone or be complete in and of itself.

The orthodoxy of the field of international journals, having generated the simulacrum, perpetuates it. It can do nothing less. Yet, just as Baudrillard’s (1986) jogger is running not towards life but towards death, this orthodoxy legitimates the loss of vitality, the loss of life itself. Research cast through the frameworks of Paradigms I and II serves the ends of the researcher, rather than those the researcher is claiming to represent. Such research has been emptied of its authenticity.

Challenging the power of traditional research paradigms requires a new language capable of comprehending a new epistemology. We therefore need a new pedagogical language and, with this language, we will get new understandings and realisations of pedagogy. This will not resolve all the problems sketched out above (and experienced in much greater detail in the classroom), but it is impossible to think about renewing the old pedagogical system with tainted words and texts that will damage us rather than support our pedagogical actions. The new language – our own pedagogical language – must be created by teachers, students, parents, and so on. And it must be sustained through publication, because this gives it legitimacy. It should be – it will be – a language of the here and now that can tell pedagogical stories over and over again, stories without predetermined ends, stories telling of constant movement and transformation. This never-ending research process, free from the constraints of traditional paradigms, will be less instrumental, methodical and linear, and more ethical and normative.

This new language will recognise the importance of pedagogical sensitivity and energy. Controlling the gaze of youngsters (Kincheloe, 2007) controls their minds. The arrogance and disinterestedness of researchers and the teachers as researchers they train and who operate in traditional paradigms (Jansen, 2010) is opposed to this energy, and seeks to assert a pedagogical ennui that educates students to become zombies (Giroux, 2011). In order to counter-oppose this, we need to map our reflexive pedagogical performances and connect them to pedagogical sensitivity. If we do this, the teacher and the students can be seen as a dancing couple (Carroll, 2004; Anttila, 2007) because the metaphor of dance makes body language, semiotics and pedagogical sensitivity visible and obvious. The dancing teacher and students show us an aesthetical translation of their reflexive interaction. The expression of pedagogical sensitivity in the students’ dance and musicality (whether ballet or blues) makes it possible for them to give shape to
their sorrows and to their oppression in educational situations (DeFrantz, 2004; Malott & Porfilio, 2007; Parmar & Bain, 2007).

Conclusion

Seeking publication in international journals presents more than just a (English) language problem. Here, we have used the codification of language as a metaphor for paradigmatic language (although this paradigmatic language also serves to illustrate linguistic problems). The Dutch context with which we are immediately concerned involves three paradigms: the dominant Paradigm I, which is positivistic; Paradigm II, which may slip into positivism through formulaic use; and the alternate Paradigm III, which we associate here with postmodern critical pedagogies. Paradigm III research offers an authentic means of challenging the subjugation that continues to stain educational research. Indigenous peoples, radical epistemologies and methodologies, and teacher trainers and teachers as researchers – as well as those struggling with the English language – all jostle for position at the bottom of educational hierarchies; and international journals, those means of sharing and validating research, function as the mouthpieces of these structures.

There is a small collection of Dutch educational journals which lack the prestige of the international publications. They offer an important means of disseminating research by Dutch scholars on Dutch education and about Dutch students and teachers. The stories told in these journals can challenge the silencing and misrepresentation of indigenous classrooms, cultures, epistemologies and languages (Spivak, 1988, 1994; Smith, 1999). Other in-country journals play equally important roles, but they also lack prestige. They, too, are subjugated. Indigenous researchers (represented here by their Dutch colleagues) therefore have to make a choice: Do they show scholarly solidarity in and through their writing, or do they become complicit in the hierarchies that subjugate their own cultures? Our intention here is not to suggest a lazy essentialism, but to highlight the complexities structuring the field of international research publications. The Paradigm III framework for which we have argued, and which structures our narrative, provides a way of addressing these complexities. International and high-ranking journals are important, and the politics of international communication means they are likely to be written in English. Language is about communication, and we do not want to find ourselves speaking Dutch into a void. We want to share research, obtain recognition for our work and challenge educational injustices. And, in considering these injustices, the problem is not just the English language, but the paradigmatic languages of the journals using it.

The dominance of the English language can cause problems for non-English speakers trying to get their work published in international journals. However, these problems also illustrate the dominance of particular research paradigms. Just as non-English-speaking scholars must (usually) find a way of publishing in English if they want international recognition, so too are alternate scholars likely to be coerced into using traditional paradigms if they want their research published. When writing for publication, then, who do they want their research to represent – themselves or those with whom they have been working? Representing the educational experiences of subjugated groups through Paradigm III research is likely to be difficult, because it presents a heterodox challenge to the orthodoxy of the Paradigm I and II research that is the mainstay of most international journals. Yet, if such alternate research is not taken seriously, if it is not recognised as being rigorous and (to use the Dutch term) ‘scientific’, then who will want to share it? This presents would-be authors with ethical and practical problems: Who should they represent and in which journals? Such problems are further complicated if these would-be authors are unable to get published in top-rated international journals. There is the problem of securing the compulsory credits that may be a condition of tenure and promotion. There is the problem of not being taken seriously and of not being recognised as professional. And there is the problem that abandoning alternative research for the relative safety of traditional paradigms contributes to the reproduction of inequalities in educational hierarchies. There are high-quality journals that will publish such work (and we like to think of Power and Education as one of them), and some radical journals have orthodox status through being highly ranked (although we could argue that this is the field justifying its claims to legitimacy by allowing some room for heterodox dissent).
Elsewhere, though, it may be necessary to spend so much space justifying a paradigmatic position that there is little room left for the researcher’s substantive concerns. Moreover, pressures of time and productivity may lead (intentionally or otherwise) to heuristic short cuts replacing epistemological complexities; and their inherent mechanisation can generate paradigmatic simulacra. Researchers operating in Paradigm II frameworks may believe they are being anti-positivistic, whereas their formulaic approaches contribute to the dominance of Paradigm I research by denying authentic complexity. The world view they present under such circumstances is not as others see it, but as they themselves see it. The issue of a global language, then, signals that we take so much for granted in conducting educational research. If we are to appreciate and engage with this problem, we need a new paradigmatic language; and that language, and all that it signifies, needs to be recognised by high-ranking peer-reviewed journals.

Notes

[1] González (2003, pp. 80, 81) distinguishes in her story between de-colonial thinking and post-colonial thinking: ‘A de-colonial voice is one which attempts to undo the construction of colonizing ontologies and epistemologies’ and ‘a post-colonial ethnography will have to do more than simply point out that colonization has taken place [and] is not merely an act of defiance, but one of great courage, in that unlike pre-colonial awareness, there is now a sense of coexisting within social systems that may or may not still be fully or partially in the creative grasp of the colonial fist’.

[2] Spivak (1988, 1994) has also written about the silencing of subalterns, and especially of female subalterns, in almost the same words.

References


The Power of the Code


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