

How the subject of English has assumed a political role in the latter half of the 20th century

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(Ochanomizu University Doctoral Course)

Introduction

We have given to the world the English language, which is now close to being to the modern world what Latin was to the ancient. We know that our literature is a great inspiration. (Thatcher:1979)

As Margaret Thatcher hints above, the domination of Latin and Greek literacy education in England prior to the 20th century has been replaced by the domination of English:

While 19th century public secondary school curricula were dominated by instruction in Greek and Latin, the majority of the nation's secondary-aged pupils received teaching in the English language and literature because, the view was, of the civilizing influence and 'moral wealth' that such instruction would produce (Knight, 1996: 34).

Thatcher is arguing that the heritage literature – Shakespeare, in particular – provides the basis for personal and social improvement. It is well-known that Thatcher often quoted Shakespeare's plays. In fact, Shakespeare is one of the greatest poets in England, and no one should doubt this fact. Not only Thatcher, but also the Prince of Wales alluded to Shakespeare. Most notably in a 1991 speech at the Shakespeare's birthday:

Shakespeare's message is the universal, timeless one, yet clad in the garments of his time. He is not just our poet, but the world's. Yet his roots are ours, his language is ours, his culture ours ...His plays are a direct inheritance of the humanism of the Mystery plays, so popular in later Medieval Europe, which deliberately set out to hand on to future generations essential knowledge and experience under the guise of entertainment. No formal education - just the communication of wisdom through the evocation and study of human emotion, thought and behaviour.

Here, we found one of the significant aspects of English. What the prince's speech indicates 'roots', 'language' and 'culture' is the key elements of this paper as well. I will discuss these elements in the latter sections.

In *The Great Betrayal*, Brian Cox, who introduced the idea of making the study of Shakespeare compulsory, mentions that he was concerned about the Prince's idea of the National Curriculum. He was afraid the Prince would claim that English was taught so 'bloody' badly that even his own office staff could not speak or write it properly. Cox wrote to the Prince of Wales about his idea of the National Curriculum. Ten days later, Cox received a letter from the Prince's Deputy Private Secretary saying that the Prince was interested in Cox's idea of the National Curriculum, and the Prince used the phrase in his speech:

There is now, I think, a growing consensus on what needs to be taught and it is heartening to witness the widespread recognition of this in the new National Curriculum for English. It emphasizes the importance of spelling, listening, reading and writing. It recognizes the fact that competence in English is a key to success in all other subjects in the curriculum and a pre-requisite for adult life. (Cox 1992: 260-261)

The idea of this speech is both utopian and ideological. From the view point of Mannheim, it seems to be the concept of utopian thinking because the prince said 'English to be a key to success in all other subjects... and a pre-requisite for adult life'. Under the system of the National Curriculum, we could recognize that English has an aim of political value. It seems to be an ideological aspect as well. Before discussing the idea of Cox, let us consider the idea of Mannheim.

In 1936, Mannheim's "Ideology and Utopia", indicates that his thought of ideology held by society's ruling groups obscure the real conditions and there by preserve the status quo. On the other hand, his thought of utopia signifies just an opposite aspect. However, he does not mean that both sides are simply biased.

The very attempt to determine the meaning of the concept "utopia" shows to what extent every definition in historical thinking depends necessarily upon one's perspective, ie. it contains within itself the whole system of thought representing the position of the thinker in question and especially the political evaluations which lie behind this system of the nuance in which it is employed already embody to a certain degree a prejudgment concerning the out come of the chain of ideas built upon it. ... From this position, it is practically impossible to transcend the limits of the status quo. (Mannheim 196-197: 1936)

The time Mannheim wrote this book was almost the same period as the time of the Newbolt Report. In this paper, the idea of 'utopia and ideology' is also one of main point on discussing history of English education. This point will be maintained in the latter chapter.

Let us return to Cox's phrase. Cox's use of the phrase 'adult life' reminds us of the Bullock Report in 1975, which suggested the idea of the humanizing potential of education. Before the Bullock Report, the idea of a humanizing education emerged just prior to the World War II. From the viewpoint of cultural studies, Brian Doyle wrote about this humane education in his 'English and Englishness'. It is one of pioneering study about the teaching English through the Newbolt Report. Brian Doyle discusses that it seems likely that the combined pressures upon English both from inside and outside the discipline might well have caused it to accommodate itself

more directly to the service of 'vocationalism', and 'social responsibility', and thus the needs of interdisciplinary and applied work in late 1950s (Doyle 107:1989).

Before discussing teaching English, let us consider the term 'English as a school subject'. By Bethan Marshall, 'English as a school subject is about the art of language. That is its unique contribution and why it should remain central to the curriculum.' In addition, she adds, 'Indeed almost anyone trying to present a rationale for English begins by setting out the alternative position'. In terms of a subject, 'English' has been changed by some historical periods. From the point of view, English or a subject English would not have been defined only one meaning in this paper. The two reports mentioned in this paper were issued in the different period. In my future study, I will focus on each report specifically, and I will define the term 'English' from time to time.

In this paper, I will focus on the history of the teaching of English from the 1920's to the 1970's just before the National Curriculum because of the turning point. I will argue how the teaching of English has become politicized, while focusing mainly on the Newbolt and the Bullock Report. In fact, English is regarded as a key subject in the political education. In addition, the teaching of English has engendered a conflict between the schools and the government. I will argue the teaching of English in the four sections. Firstly I will trace how English becomes the key issue on the education from 1920-1980. Secondly, while mentioning the point of pioneering study, I will focus on the Newbolt Report, which is the first report on the teaching of English in the 20th century. Thirdly, in focusing on the Bullock Report, I will discuss the political history of teaching English in the 1970's. Lastly, I will conclude with how the subject of English would become an instrument of politics, and how the teaching of English engenders ideological and humanizing education in the 20th century.

1. How English becomes the key issue on the education from 1920-1980

Let us consider through the 1920s and the year 1970s and the 1980s. In one hand, Judy Giles and Tim Middleton analyse the Englishness by the writing works, in 'Writing Englishness 1900-1950'. They maintain about the recent English:

For modern readers debates over the place of English in the school curriculum are only too familiar, and with the Newbolt Report we have one of the first interventions by central government into the teaching of literature. ...The new literature and art of the early twentieth century, today so revered, were likely to excite contempt or perhaps only apathy amongst the majority of people in the period.

(Judy Giles and Tim Middleton 150-151: 1995)

On the other hand, Fussell argues that the First world War had revealed instilling patriotic pride – many a soldier carried a copy of the Oxford Book of English Verse in his knapsack (Fussell 1977:155-90). The Newbolt Report emphasized below:

It is only quite lately that we in England have begun to have the definite consciousness, which the French gained in the age of Louis XIV, that we have a great and independent literature of our own which need not lower its flag in the presence of the greatest on the earth...Our language and

literature are as great a source of pride and may be made as great a bond of national unity to us as those of France are, and have long been, to the French.(Doyle 1986: 102-11)

Here we found the purpose and role of the study English in the 1920s. In addition, in order to recognize a bond of national unity, the report compared English to French. This point is analogous to the speech at the Ruskin College in 1976, which is proverbially compared English to French. The teaching of English was an ideological weapon in the 1970s. Because of the Great Debate, political influence on education has been a key issue in England. Concerning the Great Debate, Robert Phillips and Gill Harper-Jones argue that scholars are generally in agreement that 'the moment of 1976' (Batteson, 1997) was significant in the history of education policy and debate in England and in Wales. They also mention the famous speech by a Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan at Ruskin College in October 1976:

Let me repeat some of the fields that need study because they cause concern. These are the methods and aims of informal instruction; the strong case for the so-called 'core curriculum' of basic knowledge; next what is the proper way of monitoring the use of resources in order to maintain a proper national standard of performance; then there is the role of the inspectorate in relation to national standards; and there is the need to improve relation between industry and education. (Phillips and Harper-Jones 298: 2002)

After the Great Debate, the Education Reform Act 1988 led to the National Curriculum and the national assessment monitored by a reformed inspectorate that lacked any local authority. Since then, local authorities and teachers have little control over curriculum. In addition, the students are controlled by the assessment tests. The teaching of English is one of the main points of politicized matters because English is the state language. English has become one of the core subjects in the National curriculum since 1988. The reason is that teaching English is considered an essential component of a state education, and that it also represents the identity of England. Consequently, state education (this term originates from David Hornbrook.) is seen as fostering personal growth in England as well.

In 1975, John Dixon, in his 'Growth through English', identified three views of the subject English, which he called 'cultural heritage', 'skills', and 'personal growth'. In addition, the 1975 Bullock Report also identifies 'personal growth' and 'basic skills' along with 'English as an instrument of social change' (DES 1975, para 1.3). In the 1980's, Cox and his working committee, which created the first version of the National Curriculum for English, identified five 'views of English teaching: personal growth, cross curricular, adult needs, cultural heritage and cultural analysis' (DES and WO, 1989, para 2.20-2.27). In terms of the National Curriculum, Cox's work, the teaching of English began to acquire much greater political and humanizing aspects. In 2004, from the viewpoint of the teaching of English history, Bethan Marshall argued that "the teaching of English has been often almost synonymous with a template for utopian reform". In much the same way that the National Curriculum promotes humanizing education, it also engenders ideological education. Here, we suggest the key issue of the teaching English in modern education through the 1920s, the 1970s and the 1980s. This will expand in the next chapter from the point of the Newbolt Report.

2. The Newbolt Report and the teaching of subject English before the 1920's

In the history of English as a school subject is that it is a relatively new subject. In addition, English did not exist as a separately identifiable subject in elementary and secondary schools in the 19th century (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner:48). Ball, Kenny and Gardiner mention that the first recognizable university chairs in the subject English were established in 1878 Cambridge and in 1883 Oxford. On the other analysis, Doyle pointed that the Cambridge has started the subject English in 1917 (Doyle 341). Ball, Kenny and Gardiner argue in 'Literacy, Politics and the Teaching of English' (1990):

Prior to that it was the subject matter and pedagogy of the teaching of Classics which informed the work done by most school children in secondary schools: hence the prominence of the term grammar. In elementary schools students..., and were subjected to systematic instruction in the principles of English grammar by analogy with the grammars of the classics. ...Even this form of English was seen as a subject vastly inferior to Classics: a status distinction which was to remain for many years. (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner: 48)

However, the types of English introduced at Oxford and at Cambridge were strikingly different from each other. The Oxford approach was characterised by its traditionally heavier emphasis on medieval literature, but the Cambridge approach consisted of an emphasis on literature as both a moral and a life-giving force (Engler:341). Those different approaches changed considerably the role of teaching English literature at university, and they also concerned the relations between England and Germany. Balz Engler in his 'Englishness and English Studies' argues that English literature as a subject of study was not firstly introduced in England at all. He reviews three such cases: Scotland in the 18th century, India in the 19th century, and Germany in the 19th century. English Literature was not only for people in England. The Scots were the first to treat English Literature as a subject. By comparison, it was also introduced astonishingly late in England (Engler :339).

Engler discussed that Germany treated English literature below:

In Germany, for which we have the impressive account by Finkenstaedt, it was the practical need for teachers of English in secondary education that was instrumental in the creation of the first chairs in English in the 1870's...and the teaching of English at school of course reflected the powerful position of Britain in politics and trade. But there were also ideological reasons. There was a sense of being related to the English, of sharing common Germanic origins.(Engler :340)

From this viewpoint, English heritage made it possible for the Germans to believe that they had their share in even Shakespeare. England defeated Germany in the World War I, and ironically, at the time of the World War II, the situation had been totally changed. English in the educational system had been established between the wars in England. In 1983, Terry Eagleton referred to the academic English establishment in the beginning of 20th century:

The era of the academic establishment of English is also the era of high imperialism in England. As British capitalism became threatened and progressively outstripped by its younger German and American rivals, the

squalid, undignified scramble of too much capital chasing too few overseas territories, which was to culminate in 1914 in the first imperialist world war, created the urgent need for a sense of national mission and identity. (Eagleton :24)

Margaret Mathieson maintains that two works (English for the English 1921, George Sampson's and the Newbolt Report 1921) are landmarks of any survey of the history of English teaching. In the context of the 1920's, victory over Germany in the World War I heralded a restoration of national pride and an upsurge of patriotic feeling; a sense of national mission and identity, which had been lacking as the capitalist crises deepened in the build up to the World War II, was evident once again. The goal, as the new educators saw it, was to force home the advantage and promote English as the subject which could lock onto, and act as a focus for, this new national pride. In 1921, the English government issued the Newbolt Report on Teaching English for British people (HMSO, 1921).

In 1921, George Sampson, as I mentioned above, published *English for the English*. Bethan discusses the different aspects from the Newbolt Report, which represents significant contrast:

In his (George Sampson) book *English for the English*, also published in 1921, Sampson writes: 'There is no class in the country that does not need a full education in English. Possibly a common basis for education might do much to mitigate the class antagonism' (Sampson, 1952, p.44). He goes on to add, 'If we want that class antagonism to be mitigated, we must abandon our system of class education and find some sort of education common to all schools of all classes', and concludes, 'The one common basis for a common culture is a common tongue'(ibid.,P45). (Bathan: 60)

We will indicate the Newbolt Report, later on; we might know a diversity of description on the class antagonism.

Let us return to this main issue of the Newbolt Report. The committee members of the Newbolt Report were Caroline Spurgeon, John Dover Wilson and Sir Arthur Quiller-Coch and so forth. Alan Bacon refers to the committee and the outline of the Newbolt Report:

It is often referred to as the Newbolt Report, after its chairman, the patriotic poet and President of the English Association, Sir Henry Newbolt. English was not the only subject to be inquired into at this time; three other committees were appointed, investigating the teaching of science, classics and modern languages. The terms of reference give to this committee on English stated that regard should be had to '(1) the requirements of a liberal education; (2) the needs of business, the professions, and public services; and (3) the relation of English to other studies.' (Bacon: 294)

From the viewpoint of quotation, we might discover the idea of cross curricular in the statement (3). This is one of the key expanding points to the Bullock Report. In addition, from the purpose of English teaching, Beverton maintains the Newbolt Report:

The Newbolt committee had been charged with inquiring into the position occupied by English in the educational system of England, and to advise

how its study may best be promoted in schools of all types. While the Committee's report did see English language teaching as a means of saving the nation's children from poor speech habits, it also exposed the inappropriateness of teaching grammar using Latin grammar as a template. Most significantly, it distinguished between the use of prescriptive and descriptive grammars of English as textbooks. (Beverton: 128)

Newbolt also focused on the English grammar in order to save the nation's children's literacy. In addition, here we also found that the report aimed at all the types of schools in England, which is related to the Act in 1944. From the point of national education, let us consider the following quotation:

We believe that such an education based upon the English language and literature would have important social as well as personal, results; it would have unifying tendency. Two causes, both accidental and conventional rather than national, at present distinguish and divide one class from another in England. The first of these is a marked difference in their modes of speech. If the teaching of the language were properly and universally provided for, the difference between educated and uneducated speech, which at present causes so much prejudice and difficulty of intercourse on both side would gradually disappear...The English people might learn as a whole to regard their own language, first with respect, and then with a genuine feeling of pride and affection. (The Newbolt Report Introduction 15.)

Compared this to the Sampson's work, we could say that the teaching of English in Newbolt report has more humanizing aspect than the Sampson's work. What Sampson wrote about the teaching of English is more practical and aggressive than the Newbolt Report. From this point of view, the description of the Newbolt Report is utopian rather than ideological. The Newbolt Report, however, was intended by the government in order to spread the politicized influence of English.

Brian Doyle argued the Newbolt Report in his *'English and Englishness'* in 1989:

In fact, English turns out to overwhelm the very concept of education itself in that the overall goal is to provide 'the best use of English as a means of intercourse and of education' (1/5). This is by no means a minor point since, as will be shown below, the Report sets out a programme for cultural renewal which has implications well beyond the institutional boundaries formal education. ..."The most valuable for all purposes are those experiences of human relations which are gained by contact with human beings. This contact may take place in the intercourse of the classroom, the playground, the home and the outer world, or solely in the inner world of thought and feeling, through the personal records of action and experience known to us under the form of literature. (4/8)

Here, Doyle emphasized humanizing aspects of 'the best use of English as a means of intercourse and of education'. From the viewpoint of the ideological, educational system in England, Ball, Kenny and Gardiner argue that gradually English teaching shifted to a new paradigm. In *'Literacy, Politics and the Teaching of English'*, they maintain that:

This then was the ideological situation of English in the 40's and 50's; less

than three quarters of a century of English teaching had seen changes and shifts in emphasis, but the outcome of these was a more or less fixed notion of what culture and language meant. There had been a series of moral panics and political crises for the British Establishment which were followed or accompanied in each case by the emergence of new paradigms of English teaching. Each new paradigm was a development of the already existing ones. These emergent paradigms were usually followed by 'official' responses, reports etc., which attempted to frame policy for schools. (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner: 56)

During the 1950's and 1960's the status of English as a school subject became more established, in particular at secondary schools with the branching of English into two examinable aspects, Language and Literature. We will expand these aspects in next section of the 'Bullock Report'.

3. The Bullock Report on the teaching of English

It is notorious for what comprehensive schools were experiencing declines in standards, and behaviour problems among students in the 1960's. Teachers could not control their class rooms. Ball, Kenny and Gardiner refer to:

Lack of classroom control spilled over into the rest of the school and thence onto the streets. ...Teachers could no longer be trusted with the education of the nation's children. The progressivism of the comprehensive school - curriculum, teaching methods and social relationships- was thoroughly debunked in the critical discourse of the Black Papers. However, this would hardly have been feasible without the ideological support of the greater part of the media for the educational project of the 'Old Humanists'. (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner :65)

'Old Humanist' refers to the Leavisite vision of English teaching. From the 1930's, F.R Leavis was an influential member of Cambridge University, and he was an advocate of teaching literature, focusing especially on a close reading of the text. He energized discipline of English in order to keeping social harmony, which means 'a golden past of organic social unity' (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner :56). In 1970's, the Conservative party stood for this Leavisite 'old humanist' vision and skill-oriented 'industrial trainers' (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner :66). In this context, Margaret Thatcher, who was the Secretary of State for Education, was moved to set up an inquiry under Sir Alan Bullock in order to consider all aspects of teaching the use of English. The Bullock Report

- 'A Language for Life' - was published in 1975. The report emphasizes the significant notion of English in the secondary school as almost exclusively a source of material for personal response to social issues' (Bullock Report :7). This purpose is very different from that of the teaching of English during the 1960's and early '70s when a child-centred approach was popular. The Bullock Report Committee member as below:

- Sir Alan Bullock (Chairman): Vice Chancellor, University of Oxford
- Sister Basil Burbridge: Headmistress, St Margaret Mary Junior and Infant School
- Professor JN Britton: Goldsmiths' Professor of Education in the University of London (Omitted the rest of 19 members)

According to the introduction on the Bullock Report, "To consider in relation to schools: (a) all aspects of teaching the use of English, including reading, writing, and speech; (b) how present practice might be improved and the role that initial and in-service training might play; (c) to what extent arrangements for monitoring the general level of attainment in these skills can be introduced or improved; and to make recommendations" (The Bullock Report Introduction xxxi-xxxiv).

From these points, it can be said that the purpose of the report is practical. For the primary schools, this is the first official report of the teaching English. However, here let us focus on the English education in the secondary schools. Ball, Kenny and Gardiner also refer to the major topic of language and literature in 'the Bullock Report':

In fact both of the major contesting paradigms outlined earlier, 'English as language' and 'English as literature', receive positive reinforcement in Bullock. Support was given to the teaching of literature 'which aims at personal and moral growth' and stresses 'the "civilizing" power of literature'. (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner: 67)

According to The Bullock Report (Bullock: 125), "literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms and is a valuable source of imaginative insight. It should recognize as a powerful force in English teaching at all levels." From this point of view, the connection between literature and language exists on the teaching of English in 1975. In addition, the report mentions the literature and the language below:

In Britain the tradition of literature teaching is one which aims at personal and moral growth, and in the last two decades this emphasis has grown. It is soundly based tradition, and properly interpreted is a powerful force in English teaching. Literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms. Through these complexities are presented the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of people who exist outside and beyond the reader's daily awareness. This process of bringing them within that circle of consciousness is where the greatest value of literature lies.(Bullock:128)

Lastly, as Beverton also refers to the Bullock Report, stressing the responsibility incumbent on all subject teachers to develop their pupils' language proficiency:

The resulting Bullock Report, *A Language for Life* (DES, 1975), stressed the role of English as the medium through which teaching and learning is largely conducted. It promoted the notion of 'language across the curriculum', meaning that all subjects carried a responsibility towards developing pupils' language. (Bullock: 129)

The aspects of 'language across the curriculum' and 'basic skills' are related to the economic and political role of English teaching because of their connection to a literate labour force. Ball, Kenny and Gardiner analyse the Bullock Report from the viewpoint of the new role of teaching English:

What we are suggesting here is that the Bullock Report served as a vehicle for restructuring English. Its role was symbolic in giving public censure to significant aspects of the 'new wave' English and in creating space for the insertion of alternative concepts of the role and purpose, and from and content, of English teaching. (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner: 69)

Nevertheless the 'new wave' English, in 1975 February, the Daily Mail criticized that "the Bullock Report had little that was positive to say about the teaching of grammar" (Ball, Kenny and Gardiner: 69). However, in fact, the key aspects of the Bullock Report are 'personal growth', 'basic skills' and 'language across the curriculum'. The context of this report is politicized; however, what means "all subjects carried a responsibility towards developing pupils' language" is humanizing education purpose as well.

Conclusion

The teaching of English has the both ideological and utopian aspects, which based on the definition of Karl Mannheim as mentioning at the beginning of this paper. On the one hand, he indicates that ideologies are the situationally transcendent ideas which never succeed de facto in the realization of their projected contents (194). On the other hand, he mentions:

Utopias too transcend the social situation, for they too orient conduct towards elements which the situation, in so far as it is realized at the time, does not contain. But they are not ideologies, i.e. they are not ideologies in the measure and in so far they succeed through counter activity in transforming the existing historical reality into one more in accord with their own conceptions. (Mannheim: 195-6)

Since 1921, the government issued the two reports in English, which are the Newbolt and the Bullock as mentioning in previous chapter. For these government reports, the teaching English became an ideological weapon in a way. However, during the World War I and II, the aspect of English provided the 'Englishness' with their own different conceptions.

In his influential *Growth through English*, John Dixon identified three views of 'English', as we have seen, which he called 'cultural heritage', 'skills' and 'personal growth'. The 1975 Bullock Report also identifies 'personal growth' (DES 1975, para 1.3), and in the 1980's, Professor Brian Cox and his working committee, identified personal growth as well (DES and WO, 1989, para 2.20-2.27). Here we found that the teaching of English has gradually acquired some humanizing significance. On the one hand, the ideological aspect of the English teaching has been politicized as well, included with what the government has inspectorate control for the assessment test. On the other aspects of personal growth and cultural heritage, the teaching of English is the role of humanizing education. As we have seen, the perspectives on teaching English vary in different period.

Terry Eagleton discusses in his criticizing to the movement of Leavisite group: "English was an arena in which the most fundamental questions of human existence - what it meant to be a person, to engage in significant relationship with others, to live from the vital centre of the most essential values - ... (27: 1983)". From his point of view, it can be said that English has a significant role for human existence and relationship with others. In addition, Eagleton discusses that the organic society was used as the ideal myth for belabouring the mechanized life of modern industrial society, therefore it has always gone (Eagleton: 32). In organic society, however, true English literature concretely enacted. He continuously maintains 'English literature in organic society':

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The 'health' and 'vitality' of such language was the product of a 'sane' civilization: it embodied a creative wholeness which had been historically lost, and to read literature was thus to regain vital touch with the roots of one's own being. Literature was in a sense an organic society all of its own: it was important because it was nothing less than a whole social ideology. (Eagleton: 32)

From his point of view, English is significantly meaningful as an organic medium. The subjects of English (English language, English as an organic medium, and English literature) is the most influential subjects of all the fields of education.

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Abstract Aoki, Keiko

The history of English as a school subject is relatively short. In his essay, 'Englishness and English Studies', Balz Engler points out that it was not England in which English literature as a subject of study was first introduced. He reviews three cases in support of his arguments: Scotland in the 18th century, India in the 19th century, and Germany, also in the 19th century. Britain defeated Germany in World War I, and ironically, by the time of World War II, the situation had been totally changed. During the 1950s and 1960s, the status of English as a school subject became more firmly established. The paper shows how, in this context, English was regarded as a key subject in political education. In addition, the teaching of English engendered a conflict between schools and the government, particularly from the 1920s to the 1970s.

This paper divides its analysis of the teaching of English into four sections. Firstly, it traces how English became a key issue in education from 1920 to 1980. Secondly, it focuses on the Newbolt Report, the first report on the teaching of English to be issued in the 20th century. Thirdly, within the framework of a central focus on the Bullock Report, it discusses the political history of the teaching of English in the 1970s. Lastly, it concludes by showing how the subject of English became an instrument of politics, and how the teaching of English contributed to the ideologizing and humanizing of education in the 20th century.