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'Between phutu and samoosas': Student response to assessment tasks for a third-year university course which adopts a World English approach

Abstract

This article demonstrates how teaching World Englishes (WE) and Indigenised Varieties of English (IVE), such as South African Englishes (SAE), challenges the hegemony of English which persists in African teaching contexts despite progressive language policies, the multilingualism of the learners and the fluid, translingual linguistic boundaries which exist in the 21st century. There is a need to acknowledge the linguistic resources of the multilingual learner. This article describes the value of teaching SAE as a didactic initiative designed to empower multilingual speakers of English in a semester module prescribed for the major in English at the University of South Africa, taught via distance education. It represents, in this context, a challenge from within the heart of hegemony. The paper showcases assessment tasks designed to teach WEs while promoting English language proficiency at graduate level. A qualitative analysis of student responses reveals that, although the hegemony of English remains strong, 'Black' South African English (BSAE) as an IVE is rapidly gaining ground. Students write with authority when the linguistic resources they bring to the assignment task are harnessed, but find certain of the theoretical underpinnings of WE difficult. This is not surprising given that although a greater tolerance for non-standard varieties of English is endorsed by the course, a standard variety is required for assessment purposes.

Keywords: World Englishes, pedagogy, indigenised varieties of English (IVE), South African Englishes, multilingualism, hegemony

'Between phutu and samoosas':[1] Student response to assessment tasks for a third-year university course which adopts a World English approach

Introduction

The research[2] on which this article is based was conducted at the University of South Africa (UNISA), a distance-teaching institution whose identity is revealed in the logo: 'The African University shaping futures in the service of humanity'.[3] One could thus anticipate that courses offered by such an institution would have an unapologetically African agenda and that Northern Hemisphere theories would be critiqued to determine their appropriateness for this African teaching context. This paper is based on a set of key assumptions which need to be acknowledged from the onset. The first is that the hegemonic status of English remains largely unchallenged in South Africa despite the country's progressive language policy which recognises 11 official (and on paper equal) languages – two ex-settler languages and nine indigenous ones. Expressed in numeric terms: 2 + 9 were intended to = 11. However, in effect, the sum equates to 1 as the English language remains dominant in all spheres of life, a reality which disadvantages any additional-language speaker of English (EAL) who has not attained near-native proficiency in English. In contrast, the minority of less than 10% first-language speakers of English in South Africa are linguistically advantaged by nature of their birth. Second, teaching should tap into the 'meta-discursive regimes that are versatile, mobile and fluid in response to transnational mobility and blurring of boundaries between nation states in the 21st century … [a reality which points to] the obsolete nature of one-ness ideology and its sequential, linear and positivist methods in African classrooms' (Makalela 2016: 187).[4] In the modern epoch, multilingualism is the norm. In the South African context, 'students regard their multilingualism as one of the most important markers of their South Africanness' (Coetzee Van-Rooy 2010: 25). Pedagogical tasks should evoke the linguistic 'resources that students bring with them to the university classroom' (Coetzee Van-Rooy 2010: 6), not only because new knowledge would then be built on established knowledge, but because of the cognitive benefits (enhanced metalinguistic awareness, enhanced language maintenance strategies and greater cognitive flexibility) associated with multilingualism (Coetzee Van-Rooy 2010: 5). The English language

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1   The quotation is taken from a poem by Malika Ndlovu:
     You see, between bunnychow and boerewors
     Between melktert and breyani
     There's a flavour that's our own
     Between phutu and samoosas
     There is a taste we can call homegrown (Chennels 2013: 123)

2   This article is based on an unpublished paper presented at the fourth international interdisciplinary biennial conference at Muldersdrift, South Africa from 2-6 September 2018.
3   The author acknowledges the comprehensive feedback from the critical reviewers.
4   Here the author has adopted a position on multilingualism based on Blommaert and is aware that this is not the sole, or even the mainstream, view of multilingualism.

evaluation criteria used in the assessment of South African students in the third-year English Studies course on which this article is based, require Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills and a demonstrable proficiency in the ancestral white variety (traditionally referred to as South African English (SAE)) that serves as the local standard. The majority of learners and their teachers are speakers of Black South African Englishes (BSAE). The plural is used here as one can distinguish between the more traditional L1-influenced variety and the black middle-class variety, which can be described as a mixture of General SAE which frequently reveals an American influence[5]. When ex-colonial languages are equated with 'educational success, political activity and upward social mobility' (Makalela 2016: 187), a push towards English results which disadvantages indigenous South African languages, creating the false impression that there are 'superior' and 'inferior' languages (Wolff 2017: 11).

The emphasis on linguistic rights and equality associated with WE does not seem to have impacted the more prescriptive approach to grammatical 'correctness', which underpins university assessment tasks, the gatekeeping portals to employment opportunities (Spencer 2005). Lecturers tend towards a prescriptive approach and are possibly unaware of the body of research in the field of Linguistics which explores the 'crucial issue' (Van Rooy 2011: 191) of the distinction between error and innovation in non-native varieties of English and the fact that new 'linguistic conventions emerge from forms that may have started out as error' (Van Rooy 2011: 189). In Outer Circle contexts, norms are set by educated second-language speakers of English themselves (Van Rooy 2011: 204).

Theoretical underpinning

This paper adopts an Applied Linguistics (AL) approach to world Englishes (WE) as it is concerned with the implications of WE for 'language learning and teaching' (Bolton 2018: 6). WE has challenged received knowledge through its emphasis on the 'pluricentricity of English, conceptions of the "native speaker", formalist ontology, functional perspectives [its acknowledgment of the benefits of] multilingualism … [and its emphasis on] social, functional and multilingual perspectives' (Sridhar & Sridhar 2018: 127). The cognitive-social division which separated the disciplines has been reduced through an increasing acceptance that 'language learning is inherently social and at the same time, all learning is cognitive by definition' (Gass 2018: 121). As Larsen-Freeman acknowledges:

> Language learning is not about some linear progression of monolinguals from one homogenous language community to another. It is not about the linear aggregation of linguistic units, and success is not measured by a learner's conformity to a static, native speaker competence (in Gass 2018: 122).

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5   Reviewer 1 needs acknowledgement here.

The key principles of a WE approach to pedagogy, summarized from D'Angelo (2016:35-36), are given below. WE studies promote a focus on *users* (rather than *learners)* of English which has resulted in the pedagogical implications of WE falling behind other research areas in the field. In a WE approach, the goal of inclusivity results in an emphasis on the multilingual repertoires of the learner being harnessed in language learning contexts. The cognitive advantages of multilingualism are acknowledged in AL learners of English whose motivation for learning English is instrumental rather than integrative (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2010). The issues of ownership and the legitimisation of IVEs are contextualized against the growing numbers of EAL speakers as opposed to relatively miniscule numbers of so-called 'Inner Circle' speakers of English (Kachru 1992). The research of Schneider (2011) has led to the understanding that in 'Outer-circle contexts English has an official domain resulting in the development of codifiable, endonormative local standards' (D'Angelo 2016: 35). The hegemony of English is related to its use as a global *lingua franca* where intelligibility is achieved despite participants having divergent home languages and speaking different IVE, which reflect their local cultures. In addition, 'the L1 or substrate language is seen as an asset, rather than as a source of "interference" … [while] code-mixing and code-switching is a linguistic resource/strategy' (D'Angelo 2016: 36). WE accepts the inevitability of language change and asserts that the IVE should no longer be regarded as a 'some sort of "interlanguage" or learner variety as they might be characterised in more mainstream SLA and related TESOL terminology. … the educated local variety [becomes] the model and … is one that is mastered by teachers who are ALS themselves. …' (D'Angelo 2016: 34-35).

Bolton (2018) explains that the widest applications of WE theory include the fields of 'English studies, corpus linguistics, the sociology of language, features-based and dialectological studies, pidgin and creole research, 'Kachruvian' linguistics, lexicographical approaches, popular accounts, critical linguistics, and futurological approaches' (Bolton 2018: 6). It is this broad view of WE to which students of *ENN3701 The history and spread of English,* the module which serves as a case study for this article, are exposed. The pedagogical implications of a WE approach remains an under-researched area and the first full-book publication relating to pedagogy and English as an International Language (EIL) was published in 2012 by Matsuda. In this text only a single chapter is devoted to WE-related lesson plans of activities and tasks for traditional English classrooms sourced from teachers across the globe (Matsuda 2012: 201-237).

Kachru's (1992) *Three-circles model* and Schneider's (2011) *Dynamic model' of postcolonial Englishes* provide the theoretical underpinning for the course. Kachru (1992) provides the concepts Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles and the terms ENL, ESL and EFL. This model 'captures the status and functions of English, as well as its dynamic identity-confirming capacity' (in Coetzee-Van Rooy 2010: 9). In Kachru's work, the 'stigmas attached to proficiency in only one kind of English (the English of the idealised native English speaker) disappear' (in Coetzee-Van Rooy 2010: 9) and multilingual creativity is celebrated. In the ex-colonialist, South African context, Schneider's model is particularly appropriate (Schneider 2011: 34). This model considers aspects such as history and politics, identity construction, sociolinguistic issues relating to contact use and attitudes, and linguistic developments. It charts the contact history and

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linguistic relationships between the indigenous (IDG) and the settler (STL) groupings as they move from Stage 1 (*the foundation or initial contact phase*) to Stage 2 (*the exonormative phase when the colonial status and the norms of British English remain unchallenged*) to Stage 3 (*the nativisation phase when ties with the 'mother country' are weakened*) to Stage 4 (*the endonormative phase)* and it is here that local norms become acknowledged. There is considerable debate amongst South African linguists relating to the argument that SAE is situated at Schneider's Stage 4.[6] What is not in contention is the fact that the academic context in which this research takes place does not readily champion linguistic rights and equality. In the words of Canagarajah (2006: 234): 'In extremely formal institutional contexts where inner-circle norms are conventional (such as in academic communication), one … [tends to] adopt the established norms'.   This discrepancy has didactic implications.

Problem statement

The overwhelming majority of teachers at all levels in the educational system in South Africa are EAL speakers of South African English (SAE), an IVE which can be argued to be at a post-independence phase where 'a new linguistic norm is increasingly recognised and … accepted in society, and is employed culturally and in literary representations' (Schneider 2011: 35). Yet there remains a gap (beyond an issue of register) when students whose work exhibits features of SAE write for academic contexts.

Makalela identifies the prevailing thinking as follows: '"one nation – one language", "one classroom – one language" – a practice that still dominates national dialogues and classroom practices today' (Makalela 2016: 189). The flourishing field of WE asserts that there is no 'one' language and no 'one' English. To compound the teaching challenge, strong, ethnically-based varieties of SAE exist, making the quest for a common SAE even more elusive.

The research question which this paper asks is how, in a module at third level in the English major at university level can one acknowledge the Englishes students use and their fluid, multilingual repertoires and yet assist them to master the standard variety of South African English which is the norm for South African institutions of learning?

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6   Reviewer 1: 'The question is whether Stage 4 has been reached, and the consensus among them seems to be that this has happened only in part, for some, and especially following Bekker and Mesthrie, for an elite of native and non-native speakers who converge on similar practices. Van Rooy generally argues even more cautiously that phase 4 has not really been reached'. Van Rooy proposes a refinement to Schneider's model. He argues that in a postcolonial contact situation, multiple contact settings give rise to different postcolonial Englishes and that these do not necessarily converge (Van Rooy 2014).

How, in such a context, can one empower students and give them voice? The *Content Knowledge Outcomes* envisioned in UNISA's *ENN3701: The history and spread of English* challenge a belief in 'languages as static entities that are bounded and capable of being placed in boxes' (Makalela 2015). The course charts the evolution of English over the last 1500 years to its present status as the global *lingua franca* with a hegemonic position in Africa. At the heart of the course is the contestation which exists between postcolonial Englishes and standard varieties of English. In Section 4 of the course, the focus falls on South African Englishes and the module interrogates possible future linguistic trajectories. The course does not shy away from the political in its examination of the linguistic. Any study of language in postcolonial counties has to confront, head-on, the gaps which persist in pedagogy, despite advances in research in the field of WE. This disjunction is at the heart of Obeng's (2002) assertion that in the majority of African countries linguistic subservience to English remains, despite political independence. The *Values and Attitudes* underpinning the course require students to demonstrate tolerance toward linguistic variation, to adopt a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach, to show sensitivity towards variation and yet to understand the need for a standard variety of English in formal contexts and to be able to use it themselves. The students have to pass a final, gatekeeping examination in which they are required to write formal academic essays. To what extent does the assessment which matters, the one with linguistic capital, hark back to Schnieder's Stage 2 rather than keeping pace with research which places SAE around Stage 4 of development in terms of Schnieder's model?

The course has its foundation in research in WE as a discipline, and covers issues 'ranging from mother-tongue teaching and the empowerment of a non-native, indigenized variety, which are such central issues starting from Kachru's work in the field. Many of the issues go back to foundational work by De Kadt and Wade in the 1990s, followed by extensive work by Mesthrie, De Klerk, Makalela, Van Rooy, and Coetzee-Van Rooy in the 2000s. Makalela's work from that period includes pieces focused very specifically on BSAE and its role as liberating agent, prior to his more recent work in the translanguaging paradigm' (adapted: Reviewer 1). In line with this WE research tradition, the course intends students to grasp that English has been remade and domesticated by users of the language who now 'own' the language through their unique, indigenised varieties of English. The centre has shifted from the native-speaker of the language to the users of the English language who have adapted the English language to mirror their own image and for their own purposes. This realisation is empowering and represents a shift away from the authority of the Native English Speaker of English as the font of knowledge. IVE assert the rights of the EAL speakers to use the English language for their own purposes. Their motivation is instrumental rather than integrative (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2010) as they have infused the English language with their own cultural values. They have, in effect, given English 'a flavour that's our own' (Chennels 2013: 123). In metaphoric terms, this shift can be represented by a wife who finds her own identity and voice despite an abusive marriage (Dowling 2016). When the IVE becomes a recognised standard, this represents emancipation on the part of the wife.

Methodology: A case study of assessment tasks in UNISA's ENN3701: The History and Spread of English

This research uses a case study methodology which involves an in-depth analysis of a bounded system. The educational site is University of South Africa's *ENN3701: The history and spread of English,* a semester module offered in the final year of the English major in an Open and Distance Learning context at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The student numbers vary but, over the past four years, have fallen consistently to just shy of 100 students registered for the module per semester. It is the module which has consistently had the highest throughput rate of the five modules offered at third level for the English major. The final section of the module, which deals with South African Englishes, aims to empower students by acknowledging their linguistic rights as users of divergent South African Englishes. The students have to submit one formative assessment assignment for this section of the course and an examination question, which has to be answered in an hour, covers this teaching material. The course is offered as a semester module in an Open and Distance Teaching (ODL) environment. As the course serves as a bridge between the third level and post-graduate study, selected journal articles are prescribed. The data collected for this study relates to assessment of the module. The researcher examined 20 assignment and examination questions from 2015 (when the revised course came into effect) to those set for the 2019 academic year. From these 20 assessment tasks, 4 were randomly selected for the purposes of this article. Analysis and interpretation of the data involved reader interpretation to explain how the assessment tasks function as WE pedagogic intervention strategies. This section of the research can be classified as exemplification.

A qualitative, thematic analysis of ten randomly-selected assignments was conducted to assess the students' responses to the assessment tasks. Marked assignments were sourced from archival sites on the university's *j-router* and *MyUnisa* systems. The data can be classified as archival material produced by students whose final examinations have been written. For ethical purposes, the scripts used have been numbered from A to J. Ten scripts were randomly selected from the 62 marked assignments on record. The scripts were then printed and a manual, thematic analysis was conducted. The scripts evaluated represent responses to *Assessment Task Four* described in this article.

The assessment tasks showcased

Sample assignment question 1: consciousness raising with respect to the hegemony of English and its sustained status in post-independent African countries.

Journal article underpinning assignment: Obeng (2002: 75-96) entitled 'For the most part, they paid no attention to our native languages': the politics about languages in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The assignment task reads as follows:

On page 62 of the Only Study Guide for ENG3701, Professor Viljoen writes about perceptions of global English in postcolonial countries:

> *There is ambiguity about the post-independence role of English [in Africa] – as a language of unification, as a lingua franca, but also as the language of colonialism … [but that there is also a view which] is that those people who were once colonised by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it – assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers.*

Write an essay (based on the quotation given above) in which you evaluate the ambiguity surrounding perceptions of English in the South African context.[7]

This question invites students to engage with the politics underlying the post-independence hegemony of English on the African continent. As Maluleke (2015) so astutely asserts:

> Every linguistic vacuum is quickly filled with English. Where English has not yet fully occupied space, English-dominant code switching is the order of the day. It has become the mark of class and culture. All indications are that English is our present and our future (2015: 15).

This question invites students to work in the area of critical linguistics which has been described as 'the expression of resistance to the linguistic imperialism and cultural hegemony of English, in tandem with resistance to Anglo-American political power' (Bolton 2018: 6). In the prescribed journal article, Obeng (2002) denounces the hegemony of English on the African continent. He discusses the language policies of seven African countries to demonstrate how divergent solutions to the language issue in these linguistic contexts have enhanced the hegemony of English. He puts forward four reasons for retaining an ex-colonial language in a post-independence African context.

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7   The wording of the assessment tasks has been refined following input from the reviewers.

These are that the colonial language serves a unifying function; that it is neutral; that the ex-colonial language has the advantage of being an international language; and that it will promote the development of the African people. Obeng (2002) debunks all four of these arguments, asking how the language of the oppressor can ever be regarded as 'neutral'. He uses the example of Nigeria to show how fear of seeming to promote one of the 400 indigenous languages used in the country pushed the Nigerian language policy makers away from selecting any single national language towards favouring English and the development of transitional bilingualism (Obeng 2002: 81). This is the most common policy in post-independence Africa, one which promotes mother tongue education in the initial standards of education but then phases it out in favour of the colonial language which takes over as medium of instruction for higher grades and educational contexts. Does this language policy translate into learning benefits for the African child? The results of the Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL) administered to students entering university point to a challenge with respect to literacy in South Africa (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2010:6). To what extent can these low levels of academic literacy be ascribed to the dominance of English and the language policies in Africa? This is not an easy question as literacy levels are affected by a myriad of variables, which include the under-resourcing of schools and the lack of a reading culture in poverty-stricken areas.

Simply because English is South Africa's only international language does not mean that it will necessarily promote the development of the African people. Obeng (2002) cites the examples of highly industrialised countries such as China and Japan to support his argument that a country can be an international global player and yet retain mother-tongue education and restrict the use of English to that of a *lingua franca*. Obeng (2002: 76) believes that South Africa is remarkable 'for being the first country in Africa to recognise the linguistic rights of its ethnolinguistic groups and thus having the most complex official policy'. The Constitution's recognition of 11 official languages enshrines the linguistic human rights of divergent language groups in South Africa. In terms of policy, South Africa seems to have resisted the myths outlined above. Yet, to what extent does the language policy pay only lip service to linguistic human rights while the linguistic capital associated with English results in a push towards English which is not pedagogically sound? The analysis of the students' responses, presented at the end of this article, demonstrate the high status still associated with English and a belief in a mythical 'pure' English.[8]

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8   Sections from the commentary on the tasks have been taken from feedback material written for the students by the author.

Sample assignment question 2: acknowledging 'highly creative lifestyle codes' (Wolff 2017: 14).

Journal article underpinning assignment: Bembe & Beukes (2007: 463-472) entitled 'The use of slang by black youth in Gauteng'.

The assignment task reads as follows:

The extract from Niq Mhlongo's Dog Eat Dog below demonstrates the gap between the page and the tongue (written and spoken English). Please read it carefully and then answer the questions given after the extract.

'She held the running shoe up. 'What do you think? Beautiful, né?' …

'Hau! Cheap as well, né.'

'Only eighty rand Mama,' interrupted the black vendor. His pronunciation of 'eighty' sounded like 'eti'.

'Serious?' asked Theks.

'Sure Mama. Me give Mama discount eighty rand,' said the seller.

… I examined the shoe. It was different from other Nike shoes I knew. The logo on this particular shoe pointed in the opposite direction. Suspiciously I looked again: the logo started with a letter M instead of the usual N. Because of our overfamiliarity with the Nike logo, we had nearly bought a fake product. We were about to buy a Mike shoe.

'Yerrrr! Don't. It's a fong-kong', I warned Theks under my breath.

'What? You lie?'

She snatched the shoe from my hand to examine it.

'Look! It's Mike not Nike. It's not the real McCoy.'

… 'Eeei-sh! What time are you leaving this place?' …

'Five, Mama,' replied the seller while raising five fingers.

[He then asks if he can keep the shoe for his potential client.]

'Iyaa. Can you?' …

'Yes, Mama.' (Mhlongo 2004: 70-71)

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A	*Using the extract above, demonstrate the features of township slang in contrast to the written variety. The parts in inverted commas represent the spoken dialogue while the more formal section is best demonstrated in the paragraph starting 'I examined the shoe'.*

B	*Using the references to the text cited for this assignment to illustrate your arguments, discuss creoles/pidgins on the one hand, and the hybrid practices that emerge in urban contact settings.*

This assignment question requires students to work in the area of pidgin and creole studies, and to engage with Bolton's (2018) definition: 'The description and analysis of "mixed" [9] languages and the dynamics of linguistic hybridisation in language contact settings' (2018: 6). The assignment also contains elements of features-based and lexicographical approaches to WE studies. The sociology of language is also relevant when students examine the identity issues relating to the use of language in the text. The article on which this assignment is based, Bembe and Beukes (2007), studies Tsotsitaal and Is'camtho. The article demonstrates the creativity of the urban slang used in the Gauteng area. It shows how these languages function as innovative identity markers for the township youth, have a strong element of fun and are a part of the highly-developed repertoire of languages used in a multilingual society. They are also carriers of cultural values, as the respectful use of the term 'Mama' indicates in the extract. Usage changes constantly as can be demonstrated by the shift in attitude to the term 'fong-kong' (a blend of faux and Hong Kong) an indirect critique of the fake commercial goods produced in the East, now on sale in Gauteng by informal vendors. The term 'fong-kong' was originally viewed through the lens of creativity and fun but is now regarded as derogatory, racist and symptomatic of the deep-rooted xenophobia at the heart of South African society. The American influence in Black middle-class English is suggested in the reference to 'the real Mc Coy', an originally-American term, meaning the genuine article. The reason for studying such 'creative lifestyle codes' is succinctly described in Wolff (2017: 14)

> English is just another resource in [learners'] linguistic repertoires. Forcing … [students] to … reduce their multilingual competencies in favour of becoming secondary monolinguals … amounts to a counter-productive waste of human, intellectual, cognitive, creative and cultural resources.

The extract selected for evaluation displays features of an IVE at Stage 4, which is 'employed culturally and in literary representations' (Schneider 2011: 35). However, the text also exemplifies hybridity in WE, an issue not directly addressed in Schneider's Dynamic Model. The questions explore the gap between norm-makers and norm-breakers and asks if the time has not come to 'have one large circle [rather than Kachru's three] with everyone inside' (Kachru and Smith 2008: 182). An extract from Niq Mhlongo's *Dog Eat Dog* (2013) provides the starting point for discussion. The extract

9   '"Mixed" languages are not the same as creoles, whose origins might be very mixed and hybrid, but over time, they become stable conventionalized languages (or varieties of their parent languages) in their own right, with important identity functions but without the synchronic hybridity' (adapted: Reviewer 1).

contains examples of township slang used by educated students such as Theks and the speaker. This is considered, deliberate use of slang as an identity marker. In contrast, the broken English used by the black vendor requires students to work in an area outside of elitist, 'idealised "national" Englishes … [which] ignore pidgins, creoles and so-called "substandard" dialects [and to become familiar with] the breadth of studies in the field' (Kachru and Smith 2008: 182). It is an approach which acknowledges the functions of hybrid varieties used in specific contexts for pragmatic goals. The vendor's words 'Sure Mama. Me give Mama discount eighty rand', might reveal a rudimentary command of the English language, but the vendor's repertoires enable trading negotiations with clientele.

The given passage contains examples of lexical, grammatical and phonetic features of SAE. The e-reserves prescribed for this task are Schneider's 'Case study: South African Black English (2010: 127-131) and Silva (1997), which deals with the lexis of SAE. Schneider (2010:130) discusses features relating to inconsistent article use in BSAE but the vendor's statement 'Me give Mama discount' represents a 'caricature of errors and BSAE' (Reviewer 1).   The rest of the extract serves as a model for students of accurate use of the article, which can be used for didactic purposes:

> I examined **the** shoe. It was different from other **(no article here as it refers to Nike shoes in general)** Nike shoes I knew. The logo on this particular shoe pointed in **the** opposite direction. Suspiciously I looked again: **the** logo started with **a** letter M instead of **the** usual N. Because of our overfamiliarity with **the** Nike logo, we had nearly bought **a** fake product. We were about to buy **a** Mike shoe.

All the sentences are expressed in grammatically correct, full sentences. There are no sentence fragments (such as 'cheap as well, né') which are characteristic of the spoken text.

The analysis to the students' responses, given at the end of the article, reveals how positively students respond when they are able to tap into their linguistic repertoires, which express their hybrid identities.

Sample assignment question 3: appropriate contexts of use

Journal article underpinning assignment: Schneider (2011: 122-131) entitled 'Nation building with language(s): South Africa'.

The assignment task reads as follows:

> *Dowling cautions that new language varieties might be 'creative and funky, stylish and cool, but [believes that] they are not helpful if you want access to a good education and a well-paid job' (http://www.litnet.co.za/Article/some-thoughts-on-jonathan-jansens-call-for-english). Schneider (2011: 223) echoes this sentiment when he states that 'gatekeepers of linguistic propriety tend to resent these mixed*

varieties everywhere, for fear of seeing "good", pure, standard forms of language polluted [but he argues that] in reality it's just the opposite: these language habits are cognitively creative and culturally appropriate".

Before you begin to write, think carefully about where you stand with respect to the complex issues relating to language raised by Dowling and Schneider in the above quotations.

Now write an essay in which you discuss the views of linguists who adopt a 'descriptive' approach and the 'purist', prescriptive approach to South African English (an Indigenised Variety of English (IVE) frequently exhibited in the stance of business and educational policy makers). In the course of your essay, provide specific lexical and grammatical examples of features of the variety of South African English of your choice.

This assignment requires students to adopt a pluricentric approach to the study of WE. It contains elements of both features-based and lexicographical approaches to WE studies when it requires students to contrast formal and informal registers. Students are given voice when required to write about their IVE in formal academic contexts as their expertise is acknowledged. However, there are equally compelling pedagogical reasons for raising students' awareness of appropriate contexts of use and of the discrepancy between the academic English required in formal contexts and IVE which serve as social identity markers. The study by Van Rooy and Terblanche (2006)[10] confirms that student writing of additional-language speakers is 'less formal and more colloquial; it exhibits more reduction phenomena typically associated with conversation; is less integrated and more fragmented in terms of information presentation; uses more general and potentially more ambiguous cohesive devices; and is more cautious and polite when claims are made' (Van Rooy and Terblanche 2006: 160). The critical commentary selected for this assignment is designed to raise awareness that there are high-stakes, gatekeeping contexts in which a formal register of a standard variety is required. This does not detract from the value of creative and culturally appropriate use of the IVE in contexts other than the most formal ones.

The assignment requires students to display their insider knowledge of lexical ('phutu and samoosas' (Chennels 2013: 123)) and grammatical features of the IVE of their choice. The journal article related to this assignment uses a recording by a 'Black' SAE speaker to demonstrate, not only phonetic variation, but also selected 'grammatical characteristics of 'Black' SAE (Schneider 2011: 129-130). These include plural markings of nouns being omitted, variability of subject/verb agreement, use of the resumptive pronoun, excessive use of the complementiser 'that', use of reduplication and challenges with respect to article use. Parkinson and Singh (2007: 54) found that student writing moved closer to SE after an exercise in which they were alerted to and taught to distinguish between grammatical differences between BSAE and Standard English (SE).

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10 Van Rooy and Terblanche (2006) used a corpus-based approach which compared The Tswana Learner English Corpus (TLEC) to Louvain Corpus of Native English Student Essays (LOCNESS).

In the assessment task for this article, students were required to provide their own examples of grammatical features of BSAE but, in line with the research cited above, they should also have been asked to re-write the sentences in SE.

Sample assignment question 4: the high status of 'Black' South African English

Book chapters underpinning assignment (Bragg 2003: 154-198): the three chapters which cover American English and Silva (1997) entitled 'The lexis of South African English'.

The assignment task reads as follows:

In his budget speech for 2018, then Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba apologised for the raised taxes on luxury items such as tobacco and alcohol. The phrase he used was: 'Eish sorry'. In this same prestigious speech, Minister Gigaba also

quoted US rapper Kendrick Lamar's song Alright. Gigaba's exact words were: "As urban poet Kendrick Lamar says: 'We gon' be right, we gon' be alright," (http:// ewn.co.za/2018/02/22/gigaba-channels-his-wokeness-quotes-kendrick-lamar-in-budget-speech

Write an essay in which you outline where you believe South African English (SAE) stands in the tension between World Englishes and English as a global language and the degree to which a colonial language like SAE can be regarded as being owned by those who speak it, regardless of their mother tongues.

In the course of your answer, consider attitudes towards 'Black' South African English (BSAE) as an indigenised variety of South African English (SAE) and what it indicates for the future of BSAE when high-status speakers (such as the South African Finance Minister) use features of BSAE in formal contexts. Include in your answer, grammatical and lexical features of BSAE and provide your own examples of these variations.

Yet again students have to identify grammatical and lexical features of so-called 'Black' South African English (BSAE) and are required to provide their own examples. This is an attempt to shift the authority to the AEL speakers of English who will be able to use insider knowledge to respond to the task. The question also requires students to examine attitudes towards BSAE. The fact that a US rapper is quoted in the South African budget speech in 2018 demonstrates the appeal of American culture.[11] Bolton (2018) defines this as the world-wide attraction towards America's irresistible Empire 'of consumer goods, global media, mass production, popular entertainment and

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11 Adapted Reviewer 1: See Mair (2013), a paper on the topic of the prestige of standard and non-standard varieties across the world, with applications to Nigerian English. Van Rooy & Kruger's (2018) apply this line of thinking to South African English and examine the evidence for such loans from Nigerian, Jamaican and AAVE in South African English.

contemporary modernity' (2018: 10). It is a global trend fuelled by global power, the myth of the 'American Dream', and internet technology. Yet, the appeal is not restricted to the material.

The music quoted by Gigaba contains a strong and forceful black emancipationist theme, indicating that BSAE celebrates negritude and identifies with its concerns on a global platform. There is also a message of hope: 'We gon' be right, we gon' be alright' to all peoples of colour.

In this assignment students begin to work in the area of what Bolton (2018: 6) terms 'linguistic futurology', a field which engages with possible future scenarios. Here students need to question the degree to which SAE meets the entry conditions for Schneider's Stage 4. Will BSAE become the dominant variety? Is a single national variety possible or even desirable in such a culturally-diverse country? The fact that a lexical item from BSAE was used in a speech otherwise presented in SE at the highest level on the most formal and influential platform (the budget speech in Parliament) by the Minister of Finance, himself a speaker of BSAE, points to the elevated status of the variety. This realisation should be empowering for the majority: multilingual speakers of BSAE.

Qualitative analysis of student responses

The ten randomly-selected student essays were identified from archival sources at UNISA, downloaded and printed, prior to a manual thematic analysis being conducted on them by the author. The findings represent the student responses to the content of the course and towards a WE pedagogical approach.

Attitudes towards English and Black South African English

A range of attitudes, from negative to positive, were revealed in the students' writing on BSAE. The negative connotations of certain words or phrases, such as 'insecurity', 'contempt', 'looked down upon' (x 2), and 'peculiar' suggest that the stigma against BSAE as an IVE has not been successfully addressed by the course. Students could also have internalised the prescriptive value judgements of their writing by teachers. Five of the respondents cite 'poor resources', 'poor teaching', the 'type of English blacks have been exposed to', 'direct translation from the L1' and 'interference' as variables in the equation.

Deference towards 'British English' remains, embodied in phrases such as the 'goal should be British English' and the statement that SAE is 'still viewed as inferior to British English', even though the student qualifies the statement by saying that the view 'signifies a lack of understanding and acceptance of IVEs'. These statements indicate the ongoing hegemony of English and suggest that an exonormative stance has not been unsettled by the course content. The phrases associated with British English are 'high-level British

English', 'high status' and 'lack of proper education in Standard British English', as well as 'exposure to proper English'. The fact that 'teachers may not be fluent enough' is cited as a reason for students being unable to 'tak[e] command of pure English', of a 'pure, standard form of English'. More nuanced attitudes are revealed in statements like: there 'need[s] to be more generousity towards IVEs' and that there is a 'need for [a] positive attitude'.

Five students distanced themselves from 'Black' in BSAE by using inverted commas. The nomenclature is defined as 'debatable', 'simplistic' and 'problematic'. BSAE is described as a 'carrier of regional identity' in a 'far from homogeneous' society' (x2), as an 'identity marker'(x5) and as the 'dominant language of young, educated black people'. This view is repeated in the claim that the variety serves as an 'identity marker, especially associated with black and young'. BSAE is viewed as a 'symbol of belonging'. The view is expressed that BSAE evokes a 'sense of control' and 'belonging' (x3). 'Pride' (x2) is strongly associated with the variety. It is viewed as being 'appropriate in a multilingual society' (x2) and as a 'reality that cannot be escaped from'. Its function is described by one student as 'unifying divergent cultural groups'.

The insight is expressed that the use of BSAE is more indicative 'of class than of ethnicity'. The development of BSAE is viewed as having a 'symbolic role' as a being a 'symbol of victory against Apartheid', as a 'symbol of power' and as being the 'language of revolution against Apartheid'. Its development 'shows change is definitely underway' and that Africans 'can be taught in a language that was once denied them' (x3). The variety is considered to be 'very empowering' and 'spread of BSAE is [seen to be] on a powerful course' (x3). This view is related to 'gaining native speakers of the variety when the second language of the parents becomes the first language of the children'. BSAE is seen as having 'its foot in the door as *the* language in South Africa'. In line with Schneider's theory, the variety is viewed as resulting from a 'long evolutionary process' marked by 'internal development'.

A strong feature of BSAE and urban slang exhibit strong 'lexical creativity'. They represent 'the ability of a post-colonial country to re-write the language of the coloniser – granting it a cultural flair that makes it the user's own'. The author has observed that students excel at describing lexical innovation and a single example is given to demonstrate this point. In a detailed discussion of a specific Kentucky Fried Chicken advertisement, H demonstrates the 'creation of compounds' through the use of the word '*ama-banzi* which, according to the online dictionary of South African English [source given] is a combination of a "Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele plural noun prefix" *ama* paired with the plural form from the colonial English form *bun* (bread roll) creating the word *banzi*. … Here, even though it is only one bun, it still acquires the plural form *zi*'. The use of 'black' SAE in African advertisements illustrates its widespread acceptability and the acknowledgement of it as an important … ethnic variety of SAE'.

Opinions on the use of IVEs in Gigaba's speech

Various reasons are cited for Minister Gigaba's strategic use of the word 'eish' in a formal speech. It is seen as a deliberate shift away from 'educated black speech' for a 'strategic purpose' and this is viewed as a 'political strategy' (x3). His shift in register in his use of the word is seen as showing 'confidence and strength'. Students have commented on the effectiveness of the contrast between the 'formal context and [his] strategic use of BSAE' which 'creates a dissonance which introduces humour into his speech' (x2). The use suggests that the minister 'relate[s] to the people' (x2) and that its use 'humanises' a formal context. The word is used strategically to 'defuse tension after delivering news of a tax increase' and is seen as a 'strategy used in the speech to retain audience interest' and to add 'personality' to the speech. The shift is viewed as an example of the 'multilingual's ability to switch between ethnolects, code mix and code switch'. The minister's command of both SAE and BSAE reveals his 'multiple identities' and 'ethnicities'.

A broader view relates the use of the term to the status of BSAE. One student states that it reveals the 'unifying role an exclusive language variant is able to fulfil'. Another claims that 'power' is revealed, not by this one incidence of use, but by 'the continual presence of the accent used by black political leaders in the media'. The strong 'media presence' of BSAE is represented in Gigaba's speech. The use of 'eish' is also viewed as a way of marking 'resistance against being labelled "too white"'. A comment is made that there is a 'conflict between ambition [associated with a near-native fluency in English] and desire to be identified as a black person'. The inclusion of the words from Kendrick Lamar's lyric is seen as representing an 'identification' with 'the black struggle worldwide' (x4). Although the usage is described as 'broken' and 'different from Standard American English', its use is seen as being 'effective' (x4) in the context of the speech.

Acknowledging students' unique linguistic repertoires and giving them 'voice'

The undergraduate university course under discussion promotes linguistic rights and encourages students to acknowledge their unique ethnolects and to 'voice' these. The multiple ethnicities represented in this course are revealed by the quotations which follow. In support of near-native proficiency by AEL speakers, the writer of script A states that her[12] mother is Portuguese but, after being in South Africa for forty years, she has near-native English proficiency apart from a 'slight' Portuguese accent. The same student observes that 'many of the black children that I have taught' claim that they 'just started speaking English all the time at home' and that they now have 'standard English accents' in comparison with those of their parents. C writes that 'it is no longer a linguistic taboo to hear someone from an IsiXhosa background say 'I'm gonna *whatsapisha*' (I am going to text using WhatsApp; with an added suffix – *isha* commonly used … to mark a verb'.)

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12   The gender of the students is not known. The female gender has been used solely to avoid awkward 's/he' grammatical constructions.

She writes from her position as a Zimbabwean in South Africa, that the majority of black middle-class residents in the Cape Town area 'have adopted for themselves and their children English as a first language'. E writes that 'as a young child growing up in rural Durban, my language was influenced by IsiZulu without my knowledge' but that as an L1 English speaker 'it was not necessary for me to learn another language'. Here the monolingual bias of the L1 speaker of English is evident. In contrast, F, a black South African student reveals her pride when she states that the use of BSAE shows that 'South Africans have taken command of a language that once threatened to embarrass and humiliate them by exposing their level of education, or lack thereof'. In her opinion, 'BSAE must not be mistaken as a language [associated with a lack of education]'. G states that the examples given of grammatical features of BSAE 'have been created from the student's knowledge or taken from personal anecdotes'. While this student finds the prescribed material difficult and tends to string short quotations together, her authority can be heard when she draws information from a living knowledge of the IVE. H states that 'growing up as a child in South Africa, we inherited the word 'songololo' from isiXhosa and just yesterday on SAFM radio there was a joke surrounding 'labola' (bride [price]) that was not aimed at being culturally specific. Rather it used the term knowing that a cross-cultural audience of South Africans would understand [it]'. In this way students to tap into their linguistic identities and relate the course content to their worlds.

Proficiency needed to master course content

A high level of academic literacy is demonstrated by D who writes: 'According to the Oxford English Dictionary, indigenise means "to bring something under control, dominance, or influence of people native to the area [reference included]". Thus we can say that for a language to be indigenised means that a group of people have taken and influenced or adapted it, to ultimately reflect aspects of their culture.' This response shows that the student is able to integrate sources, reference correctly and integrate knowledge associated with WE to produce a coherent assertion in her own words.

H is the only student whose academic proficiency resulted in a nuanced engagement with all the e-reserves, a grasp of the theoretical underpinnings and who displayed an ability to integrate this knowledge into a coherent essay. A sample of H's work is presented below to demonstrate this proficiency:

The major issue with these anachronistic theories is that they require countries and languages to be homogenous. With the industrial revolution, the technological revolution, globalisation, and now the digital revolution, [and multilingualism, enhanced] through diaspora, these theories do not fully account for the … linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups that exist.

H was also the only student in the test sample who was able to grasp fully the theoretical complexities underpinning the course. It is possible that a semester of study in a distance-teaching context is inadequate time for the majority of students to come to grips with the course content.

Conclusion

WE is clear in its denunciation of the ongoing hegemony of English, the dominance of the native speaker and the monolingual bias at the heart of English pedagogy. It is unequivocal in its demand for a recognition of multilingualism as a norm, for a historical view of language-change and for a more descriptive, non-essentialist stance to the teaching of English. In short, what is needed is adaptations in didactic contexts. The area where this shift is most needed is in assessment, as it is in this high-stakes context that has linguistic capital. 'What is needed is to reinvent the curriculum reorienting [it] to indigenous concerns and examining closely the ideologies that we implicitly assume students to adopt and internalise' (Reviewer 1). The degree to which a variety is regarded as acceptable for academic purposes in high-stakes contexts depends on the level of legitimacy accorded[13] by influential stakeholders in education. The assignment questions designed for this module were designed to encourage students to interrogate entrenched, conservative attitudes towards non-standard varieties of English and to dislodge value judgements associated with a mythical 'pure' English. The students' responses demonstrate the challenges and triumphs associated with the implementation of a WE orientation to assessment tasks.

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13   For further detail on the distinction between error and conventionalized innovation, please consult Van Rooy (2011).

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