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Linguistic penetration at Schneider's Phase 4: Acceptability ratings of entrenched features of Black South African English by South Africans outside the originating culture of the variety[i].

A B S T R A C T This study has its theoretical roots at the juncture between World Englishes theory, Black South African English (BSAE) as a variety of English, and pedagogy. The study determined acceptability ratings (AR) of selected, entrenched features of BSAE by L1 English and Afrikaans-speaking South African education students in their third year of university. Tolerance for features of BSAE in formal, academic writing suggests that a wider acceptance of BSAE is emerging. I argue that even a low level of acceptance of features of BSAE by this sample group can suggest linguistic convergence and initial entry into Phase 4 of Schneider's (2009) Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes. This is indicative of a wider acceptance of features of BSAE beyond the originating members of the variety.

The study evaluates responses by L1 English and Afrikaans-speaking student teachers at a tertiary institution in Gauteng[ii] to a questionnaire based on a list of characteristic features of Black South African English (BSAE) adapted from De Klerk and Gough (2002:362). Students were required to indicate the statements they would mark as incorrect in formal, academic writing and to identify the single feature which they regarded as the most in need of remediation. The findings indicate (up to 26%) that students outside the racial category of 'black' are tolerant of certain entrenched features (extension of progressive, no singular or third person indicative present, phrases such as 'X's first time' and omission of the article) of BSAE. This suggests that the variety is gaining momentum as certain features are beginning to be tolerated even

in formal, written, academic contexts at university level. If features are penetrating segments of the South African population outside of the originating culture it can be argued that there is some movement of the variety towards Schneider's Phase 4 of endonormative standardization of BSAE. However, other entrenched features of BSAE (the use of too and very much as intensifiers, the use of resumptive pronouns and gender conflation in pronouns) received a 0% AR. The pedagogic implications of this non-acceptance are discussed.

Key words: acceptability ratings, South Africans, BSAE, World Englishes, Assessment, Schneider, Dynamic model, South Africa

A model of writing which separates language, writer and context … sees students as identical and isolated, trying to acquire a set of skills independently of their identities, purposes and disciplines … [and views] good writing [as] largely a matter of grammatical accuracy … [and] literacy as a set of discrete, value-free rules and technical skills. … this pervasive view has two main implications. First, by divorcing language from context, academic literacy is misrepresented as a naturalized, self-evident and non-contestable way of participating in academic communities … Second … any difficulties can be seen as a deficiency in the student (Hyland 2011: 4-5).

Once upon a time, all identities were stable, all children had names like Jack and Jill, all verbs were inflected, all cases marked. Our language was full and complete! (Adapted from Muysken 2011)

Introduction

A non-native variety of English in a post-colonial country develops through the educational system. While it is an additional language on first entry to school, it frequently becomes the dominant language later in life. Non-native varieties differ from creoles, which are native languages, and from pidgins in that very few of these are languages of education (Williams 1987: 161-162). Non-native varieties of English have a wide range of functional and sociolinguistic uses and have 'undergone certain changes which have resulted in features which are quite different from native speaker (NS) varieties' (Williams 1987: 162). Both Kachru (1990) and Schneider (2009) have attributed this change to a process called nativization which represents an adaptation to the new sociocultural and linguistic context. Of vital importance is that these features gradually become stable, communal choices rather than individual student variables on the road to mastery of the target language. Williams (1987: 164) asserts that 'the original target is often no longer easily accessible (or even desirable) for most speakers. Instead, the regional variety has become the standard and the target. Although an exonormative standard may be maintained officially, by and large the input is from the new variety, both in and out of the classroom.' Black South African English (BSAE) is one such variety.

BSAE has been influenced by the post-independence demographic power of the speakers of the variety in South Africa, the educational spread of the variety and the high status that English has in South Africa (Makalela 2004: 356). These factors will ensure that the variety will gain in stature and that the debate relating to which standard is applicable in South Africa will intensify. Yet, despite its widespread use as a lingua franca (LF) between non-native English speakers in South Africa, the status of BSAE as a recognized variety remains contested and the resultant uncertainty is deeply problematic, particularly in a didactic setting. Makalela cites examples of researchers whose views of the variety fall on a continuum ranging from

dismissal of BSAE as a cluster of 'errors' (viewed in terms of fossilization theory as evidence of arrested linguistic development on the path to mastery of an elusive Standard English) to the view of BSAE as a distinct variety of English that is both shared and understood by a the broad spectrum of educated Black South Africans (2004: 366). He asserts that the majority of South African linguists favour the former view despite the estimation that 80% of English communication takes place between non-native speakers of English.

This article examines the acceptability ratings (AR) in formal writing contexts of features of BSAE which differ from those of Standard English and the implications of these ratings in terms of the development of the variety and for assessment. Previous studies into acceptability ratings for features of BSAE (Roodt (1993), Gough (1996), Van der Walt (2001) and Van der Walt and Van Rooy (2002)) provided data, but these studies were concerned with the originating culture of the variety. The present study differs in that it involves research subjects from outside the originating culture of the variety. The research subjects were L1 English and Afrikaans-speaking education students at a university in Gauteng, South Africa, about to enter the practical phase of their training as teachers after three years of theoretical teaching. Acceptance of features of BSAE by Afrikaans and L1 English South Africans represents tolerance of certain features of BSAE 'beyond the innovating segment of the community' (De Klerk 2003: 466, Van Rooy 2011:189-191, Van Rooy and Terblanche 2010:361). Linguistic convergence can be argued, in terms of World Englishes theory, to be a sign of initial entry into Phase four (endonormative stabilization) of Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes. In Schneider's model Phase three (nativization) is characterized by weakening ties with the colonial country, a permanent settler (STL) community living with a permanently resident communities of indigenous origin (IND). The widespread contact between the groups results in innovations and structural nativization of new forms which spread from the IND to the STL population. Yet this is a period in which there is a 'sociolinguistic cleavage' (Schneider 2003:255) between innovative speakers who begin to approximate the indigenous norms and those who uphold the standards of the settler variety. The spread of forms from the IND to the STL streams is thus a core characteristic of Schneider's Phase three. In post-independence, Phase four, there is a growing national identity and self-reliance that results in a greater acceptance of local linguistic norms as well as literary creativity in the variety. The new variety becomes stabilized and codification begins to gain momentum (Schneider 2003:255). In Van Rooy and Terblanche's words: 'the crucial difference between Phase three [nativization] and Phase four [endonormative stabilization] is not so much the presence of innovative forms, but an indication that they enjoy a degree of acceptance' (2010:360). Viewed in this light, tolerance of features of BSAE outside the originating cultural group can be viewed as a necessary pre-requisite for transition to Schneider's Phase four.

Non-acceptance of features of BSAE in educational contexts has pedagogical implication and these are also explored in the article. I argue that the impact of World Engishes on pedagogy and assessment is an area that has not received the attention it deserves. Davidson astutely comments that 'Phillipson and Pennycook don't have much to say about tests … Why are tests exempt? … These authors are not alone in wearing societal blinders when it comes to tests' (1994:381). Van der Walt believes that 'the question of dialect or variety is rarely considered in assessment' (2001:1). It is the author's contention that as long as high-stakes tests endorse

exogenous norms and dismiss entrenched features of BSAE as deviant, a view of writing as distanced from context (and as described in the opening quotation from Hyland) will prevail. The question posed by Mesthrie and Blatt (2008: 200) 'whether the New English [in this case, BSAE] should be overtly recognized within the educational system, if it is the tacit norm that people follow', is the core issue of this article.

Van der Walt identifies three perspectives in the debate relating to the acceptability of features of BSAE in educational contexts: linguistic, ideological and educational (2001:6-7). While the neutral, descriptive linguistic view regards the development of varieties and their ultimate acceptance as inevitable, the ideological difference / deficit debate, represented by the Kachru and Quirk on an international level (see Kachru 1990:7-9; 18) and on a South African platform by researchers such as Webb (1996) and Titlestad (1996), is one that is fraught with controversy and passion on both sides. This controversy (see Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008: 201-202; Schneider 2003:238) represents the 'sociolinguistic cleavage' between conservative and liberal views that is characteristic of Schneider's Phase three. The educational perspective aims to develop students' language proficiency so that it as closely as possible approximates the elusive (but tested) native speaker norms. This view is strongly supported in the South African context by Wright (1996) who states that 'pressures for the institutionalisation of non-standard English [which he describes as 'a linguistic and economic incongruity'] will tend to decline when better quality education becomes available in the state system' (1996:158). Likewise, Gough believes that 'it is not so much the acceptance of an alternative variety that is at issue, but rather the necessity of fundamental transformations to the language learning environment' (1996: 70). Increasingly there is a discrepancy between linguistic norms tested and language used by students whose home language is not English and who, on graduation, become the role models who further entrench linguistic features of BSAE (Van der Walt 2001). This 'disparity between linguistic norm and linguistic behaviour [is one Gough anticipated in 1996] … would continue for some time' (70).

A variety of models are helpful in grasping the unprecedented diffusion of English across the globe beginning with Kachru's (1990:3) pioneering, three concentric circles model, which, very broadly put, is a native-, second- or additional- and foreign-language distinction. In terms of this model, additional-language learners of English in Inner Circles countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, acquire English in a predominantly native English-speaking country in learning situations characterized by language shift and subtractive bilingualism (Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008:158). In contrast, additional-language learners in the Outer Circle, such as the ex-colonial countries, learn English in a context where the L1 speakers of the language are in the minority. Here the learner's aim of functional bilingualism does not distract from their competence 'in a local language and [their] participating in its cultural milieu' (Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008:158). It is here that New Englishes find their home. In Expanding Circle countries, such as China, people learn English as a foreign language. In Inner Circle countries, with majority L1 English speakers, the learning of the language is more naturalistic, while in Outer Circle countries the language is learnt formally in educational contexts. Kachru (1990:3) argues that South Africa is sociolinguistically too complex to fall into any single category. However, for the purposes of this article, South Africa will be regarded as an Outer Circle country as the widespread contact with English makes 'makes any talk of

English as a foreign language in some parts of South Africa … simply misguided' (Coetzee-Van Rooy and Van Rooy 2005:3). In South Africa, BSAE, a contested nomenclature because of its use of racial categories, can be defined as 'a variety of "South African" English, which is further specified as "Black" to indicate its origin … and its status as a language spoken by speakers who have already acquired at least one other language' (Coetzee-Van Rooy and Van Rooy 2005:1). Schneider identifies South Africa as falling into the category of 'multilingual ancestral English' (2003:235) which is 'linguistically heterogeneous' (2003:243).

Schneider's Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes (2003) is described as 'the most recent and advanced model that accounts for the complex linguistic ecologies in former British colonies … [on the grounds that] it incorporates both native and non-native varieties in one coherent account' (Van Rooy and Terblanche 2010:358). Schneider argues in favour of fairly uniform contact and language revision phases on the road towards the birth of a new variety of English, namely, the foundation phase, exonormative stabilization, nativization, endonormative stabilization and differentiation. These five stages of language variation and the emergence of New Englishes 'are regarded as functions of socio-politically-driven identity reconstructions of all the parties involved' (Schneider 2003:271). In the process English becomes independent of its colonial origins and locally-adapted linguistic features become acknowledged to various degrees until a point of acceptance can result in codification and acceptance of the new variety of English. In his evaluation of South Africa, Schneider recognizes two branches of English settlers as the original settler (STL or *superstrate*) strand but views Afrikaans-speaking South Africans as representatives of the indigenous (IDG or *substrate*) strand on the grounds that they have been 'thoroughly Africanized culturally and linguistically, including the transformation of their originally Dutch language to the strongly contact-induced Afrikaans' (Schneider 2009:176) and also have minimal allegiance to their Dutch settler origins. The representatives of the nine indigenous languages, officially recognized in the South African Constitution, are members of the IDG strand (or *substrate*). In terms of Schneider's classification, the Indian population can be viewed as representing the ADS strand (adstrates). Core to Schneider's theory is the concept that New Englishes can be regarded as the products of 'processes of convergence between these groups' (2003:242). An "Event X", defined as a spectacular, quasi-catastrophic change of direction' (Schneider 2009:185), is vital for progression to Stage four and the defeat of Apartheid and the 1994 South African general elections meet this requirement. Schneider believes that South African English 'has made deep inroads into phase 4 [Endonormative Stabilization] although it is not justified to talk of a single, stabilized variety' (2009:188). During phase 4 there are 'early indications of linguistic convergence between the IDG (indigenous) and STL (Settler) strands' (Van Rooy and Terblanche 2010:358).

In educational contexts, testing norms based on Inner Circle Varieties (British in the case of South Africa) are appropriate when an Outer Circle country is in Phase two (exonormative stabilization) in terms of Schneider's model. These testing norms become problematic when the variety progresses towards endonormative stabilization (Phase four) in Schneider's model as there is a disjunction between the language tested and the language used by the majority of the population. Despite progressive initiatives, such as the Dictionary of South African English based at Rhodes University, the variety has not yet gained institutionalized recognition and research is needed to establish which features are stabilized and how far they are on the road

to becoming acknowledged, stable features of a new variety of English. In terms of its word-formation processes, Van Rooy and Terblanche (2010) have provided convincing evidence in support of the fact that South African English is entering Phase 4 (endonomative stabilization) in terms of Schneider's theory. In terms of pronunciation of the GOOSE vowel (long /u/ or / uw/), Mesthrie (2010) examined the level of sociolinguistic change in the English of young middle-class South Africans and provided evidence of dialect convergence among three groups of South African English speakers (native white, Indian speakers and BSAE speakers) at the upper end of the socio-economic spectrum. The results show that the middle-class speakers of the three ethnicities tested are all fronting the vowel, but in different ways with different levels of accommodation (Mesthrie 2010: 3). In a study which focused on grammatical forms, Van Rooy (2011) shows how the extended use of the progressive and the 'can be able construction', features that could be described as learner error, have developed totally new meanings, distinct from those of their Inner-circle varieties (Van Rooy 2011). In this paper, I am concerned with grammatical features of the variety that deviate from Standard English and the degree to which these features have gained a wider recognition beyond the originating culture.

Although the features of BSAE are widely acknowledged and documented, there is inadequate information about which features have gained acceptance and 'many discussions are based on impressionistic evidence' (Van der Walt 2002:3). The acceptability ratings of individual features of BSAE need to be researched. Acceptability ratings given by South African English trainee teachers reveal the language they model and the features they regard as flawed when encountered in student scripts. Where speakers of BSAE 'go into teaching; they will serve as models, and it can be expected that these forms will be perpetuated in schools' (Van der Walt 2001:5) resulting in a linguistic variety that undercuts endeavours to inculcate standard 'native-speaker' norms. In a society where the 'native-speaker' is severely outnumbered and 'pure' linguistic models are rare, failure (if judged in terms of native speaker norms) is virtually inevitable. Makalela states that the small proportion, which he cites as 5%, of native speakers in South Africa, 'cannot possibly exert sufficient influence to "spread" traditional native norms to the overwhelming majority of second language speakers' (2004: 356). BSAE is used in education by teachers 'who use the institutionalized forms of the variety, not the British norms' (Makalela 2004:357) of a seriously outnumbered native-speaking population. BSAE is used for a variety of functions and is still in a state of flux prior to Schneider's Stage 5 (differentiation). This uncertainty is problematic for both teachers and pupils, especially when it comes to the testing scenario where prescribed norms are vital.

Related empirical studies

The following two studies have been included to indicate the student point of view. In the first, Timmis evaluated 600 questionnaires from students and teachers from over 45 countries (including representatives from the Outer Circle) at the IATEFL Dublin 2000 conference and concluded that 'teachers seem to be moving away from native-speaker norms faster than students are' (Timmis 2002:248). This raises the question of the need to meet student expectation as it is not 'appropriate to offer students a target which manifestly does not meet their aspirations' (Timmis 2002:249). Here students express the desire to learn the language that has 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1991) as it is this variety that is socially endorsed and

which will empower the student. In Hyland's words: 'socially powerful institutions … support dominant literacy practices that are part of organized configurations of power and knowledge embodied in social relationships' (2011:5). If the dominant literacy operates in Schneider's Phase two and requires the mastery of exo-normative grammatical norms, students will strive towards acquiring this validated form, no matter how elusive this goal may be. The second article that indicates the student perspective is a South African study. Coetzee-Van Rooy and Van Rooy (2005) required 167 first-year black students to label six forms of South African English and indicate their attitudes towards these varieties, the proximity to their own variety and included comprehensibility ratings. They describe the high status that Acrolect BSAE enjoys. Students rate this form as closest to their own, assign the most favourable attitude ratings to this speaker and the variety has the highest level of comprehensibility for all participants. Their own variety, Mesolect BSAE, enjoys relatively low status and they do not want to associate themselves with this variety and it scores low in the attitude and comprehensibility ratings.

Key articles that focus on the vitally important difference between error and innovation in the variety include Bamgbose (1998), Van Rooy and Terblanche (2010) and Van Rooy (2011). Kachru defines a deviation ('error') as a 'form that differs from those habitually used in Inner Circle/native contexts, but [that] is acceptable in a different (New English) context' (in Van Rooy 2011:191). The heart of the matter is to decide if such forms can be regarded as 'genuine linguistic innovations that have become conventionalized, or whether they simply exhibit errors' (Van Rooy 2011:192). Van Rooy uses Schneider's Dynamic Model to explain that 'in post-colonial societies, the (in origin) "erroneous" forms may attain conventional status as soon as native speakers, as well as acrolectal speakers approximating the external Standard English norms, accept the indigenous populations as members of their own speech community' (2011:194). The identity convergence in Schneider's Stages 3 and 4 between the original Settler and Indigenous populations results in stabilization of 'particular varieties, such that native speaker varieties may show traces of influence from New Varieties' (Van Rooy 2011:194). This suggests that the variety has spread beyond its originating culture. Van Rooy shows how the core meaning of the progressive aspect in South African English has 'acquired new meaning, in which the dynamic-stative contrast plays no part … The core meaning of the construction is different in BSAE, where temporariness, imminent change and the activity being foregrounded at some temporal reference point are not central to the meaning of the usage' (2011:196). The same has happened with the 'can be able to' construction, which, he shows 'draws on subtle semantic contrasts between modals "can" and "could": Black South African English has conventionalized this usage, going beyond the mere potential of extending an existing pattern in English to new territory' (Van Rooy 2011:198). He concludes that these are new, stable constructions where the norm-setting has originated in educated, second-language speakers rather than L1 English speakers. These forms can be viewed as conventionalized innovations that 'go beyond the ethnolectal boundaries of Black South African English to other forms of SAE as well' (2011:201).

Key articles that focus on features of BSAE and the degree they have been granted the status of entrenched features in the originating target culture are listed below. In a study based on a

spoken data base, De Klerk (2003) studied 20 separate linguistic features of BSAE that had been identified in the literature as features of Black South African English from a corpus of Xhosa English which comprised 540,000 words of spoken data across 299 speakers. After a detailed analysis of each of these features, de Klerk concludes 'varieties of BSAE are getting closer and closer to the … final stage, when local features are becoming widely used and accepted' (2003: 478). Van der Walt surveyed 525 third-year students of English at two universities and one college of education in Northern Province, North West and Gauteng using a 52 item questionnaire which contained 32 common features of BSAE. In this survey, features of BSAE were categorized in accordance with their effect size. A large effect size was defined as a feature accepted by more than 75% of the subjects, a medium effect size by 65%-74% of the subjects and a small effect size by 50-64% of the subjects. Features that fall into the top two categories are 'regarded as entrenched in the subjects surveyed' (Van der Walt 2001:5). Both Van der Walt (2001) and Van der Walt and Van Rooy (2002) use Gill's model (1999) and argue that BSAE has moved beyond the exonormative stabilization phase into the liberation phase, which is one that is characterized by confusion as the variety moves towards endonomative phase. The grammatical basis of the feature and the levels of entrenchment in the originating culture are given in each of these articles but these details fall outside the scope of this article.

Research study

The research establishes acceptability rating of features of BSAE by Afrikaans and L1 English-speaking teacher-trainee students. The subjects represent educated speakers outside the originating members of the variety. They were required to give acceptability ratings for features of BSAE in formal, academic writing contexts, the form of writing that is assessed in high-stakes examinations. The focus on writing in formal contexts was deliberate as this is the medium most resistant to change and thus acceptance of a feature in this context suggests a movement towards wider tolerance of the variety and of entry into Schneider's Phase four. The acceptability ratings were determined by means of a questionnaire.

The questionnaire (Addendum 1) contained 23 features of BSAE (adapted from De Klerk and Gough (2002:362)) that do not conform to Standard English. Respondents were asked to indicate the 'errors' they would mark as incorrect in **formal**, **academic writing**. They were asked to indicate the one error they regarded as the most serious. This questionnaire was given to students at a university in Gauteng and administered by a colleague. The name of the institution has also been withheld for ethical reasons. Convenience sampling was undertaken and an existing teaching group was used for the study. The students had completed three years of theoretical education and were about to embark on their practical training. In total 24 students responded to the questionnaire. The sample group was restricted to English L1 and Afrikaans-speaking students. All were between 21 and 23 years old. The group was selected to represent educated speakers of English outside the originating culture of the variety.

Findings

Question 1: *Acceptability ratings outside the originating community*

The first question read: *Please put a CROSS next to each of the sentences below that you*

regard as INCORRECT, which you WOULD CORRECT if you were marking these in students' WRITING at university. An acceptance of a feature means that it is regarded as grammatically correct and is accepted in a formal writing context at an advanced level. This can be taken as endorsement of the feature. The use of a written university context was selected deliberately to try to ascertain acceptance at the highest level. However, as educators trained in Applied Linguistics would not mark all 'errors' in student writing, it is recommended that any replication of this study should either exclude the statement relating to correction of perceived errors or separate this aspect out as a second, separate question.

The response to Question 1 allowed the researcher to calculate the acceptability rating (AR) for each feature for members outside the originating community of BSAE. The acceptability ratings for Question 1 are given below.

Table 1: Acceptability ratings for features of BSAE

FEATURE	EXAMPLE	PERCEN-TAGE AR
Question order retained in indirect questions	I asked him *why did he go*.	26%
Extension of progressive	Even racism is still existing.	21%
No singular or third person indicative present	The survival of a person depend on education.	21%
X's first time for 'the first time that X'	This is my first time to go on a journey.	21%
Omission of article	He was good man.	17%
Noun phases not always marked for number	We did all our subject in English.	17%
Invariant ne in tag questions	You start again by pushing the button, ne.	17%
Generalization of being as a participial	He left *being* thirsty.	17%
New pronoun forms	She was very happy *of which* it was clear to see.	17%
Non-count as count nouns	You must put more *efforts* into your work.	13%
Idiosyncratic patterns of complementation	The thing that made me *to know* God is the wonder of creation.	13%
Simplification of tenses	We supposed to stay in our homes.	13%
Structures of comparison	She was beautiful than all other women.	13%
New quantifier forms	*Others* were drinking, *others* were eating.	13%
***Can be able* to as a modal verb phrase**	I can be able to go.	13%
Past tense not always marked	The 2005 boycotts starts early that year.	9%
New prepositional verb forms	He *explained about* the situation.	9%

Use of *in order that* in purpose clause	She went there *in order* that he sees her.	9%
Use of subordinators	*Although* she loved him *but* she did not marry him.	9%
The most thing for the thing I \<verb\> most	The most thing I like is apples.	4%
Excessive use of resumptive pronouns	The man who I saw *him* wearing a big hat.	0%
Gender conflation in pronouns	He said he was afraid of becoming a mother for the first time.	0%
Use of too and very much as intensifiers	She is too beautiful.	0%

Question 2: **The features identified as the most problematic by members outside the originating community.**

The second question read: *Please put THREE EXCLAMATION MARKS (!!!) next to the ONE sentence that contains the error you regard as THE MOST SERIOUS ERROR. The following table*[iii] shows the items the students listed as being most in need of intervention. The findings are given in the table below.

Table 2: Features of BSAE identified as the most problematic

PERCENTAGE	FEATURE
48	Use of *too* and *very much* as intensifiers
26	Excessive use of resumptive pronoun
13	Gender conflation in pronouns
9	Omission of article
9	Idiosyncratic patterns of complementation
4	Non-count as count nouns
4	Structures of comparison
4	Invariant *ne* tag questions

Evidence of non-acceptance of certain features of BSAE and the implications of non-acceptance

The first three features identified as the most problematic in the second question (the use of too and *very much* as intensifiers, excessive use of the use of resumptive pronouns and gender conflation in pronouns) are those which also had a 0% acceptability rating in the first question. There is thus no ambiguity with respect to the fact that for the sample population outside the originating culture these three features remain seriously problematic although they have all been identified as entrenched features of BSAE (Van der Walt 2001) by a sample taken from the originating culture. This study suggests that these features of BSAE have not permeated beyond the originating members of the variety.

There are serious implications to non-acceptance of entrenched features of BSAE. The first is the political perspective. The use of the elusive, idealized 'native speaker' norms of an exogenous variety (British Standard English) in South Africa 'favours a particular [minority]

sub-group in society – often a more advantaged group with higher socio-economic status' (Van der Walt 2001:2). As these tests are often high-stakes examinations, this endorsement of native speaker norms further widens the gaps to favour the privileged with 'devastating effects … It reproduces linguistic apartheid that excludes those who are culturally distant from it from any meaningful participation in the … the country and limits … international access to scientific knowledge' (Makalela 2004:366). Black South African students, who represent the majority in South Africa, still experience the aftershocks of Apartheid education and a subtractive bilingual policy where African languages serve as the Medium of Instruction for only the first four years of schooling. There is thus a case in terms of political redress to be made for re-standardization and harmonization of English in post-Apartheid South Africa. To support his argument in favour of re-standardization, Makalele contentiously states that despite 150 years of 'teaching foreign-based English in South Africa, the majority of the Black population is still functionally illiterate in British norms' (2004:363).

There are power-related issues that arise when entrenched features of BSAE are not accepted. A lack of recognition of a speaker's language variety can be argued to be a form of subjugation and oppression. It can result in a situation where Inner Circle varieties of English are granted a high-ranking status and those that fall outside this elusive ideal are relegated to the level of deviation and error (Vavrus 1991:182). An insider/outsider dichotomy is then endorsed, which runs counter to harmonizing process described in Schneider's Phase three. This dichotomy becomes increasingly irrational as the variety moves in accordance with Schneider's theory and continues to spread in range and depth becoming increasingly less reliant on the norms of the inner circle.

Evidence of non-acceptance of features that do not impede communication

The present study shows instances of non-acceptance of certain entrenched features of BSAE, even when these specific features, such as excessive use of the resumptive pronoun and too and very much as intensifiers, do not impede communication. The debate needs to be raised about the degree to which features that are entrenched in BSAE, but which do not impede communication, should be penalized in the testing context. In this regard, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) is helpful as it aims to identify items used systematically but differently from L1 speakers by expert English speakers from a wide range of L1s. These items do not cause communication difficulties. The following items have been identified by Seidlhofer (2004:220) as features that do not impede communication:

- Interchangeable use *who* and *which*
- Non use of 3rd person present tense
- Article omissions or insertions
- All purpose tag: *isn't it* or *no*?
- Increased redundancy: add prepositions discuss *about*
- Increased explicitness: *black colour*
- Heavy reliance on verbs with semantic generality: *do, have, make*
- Pluralisation of uncountable nouns: *staffs*
- Use of that clauses (not infinitives): *I want that we discuss about* (Jenkins 2006:170)

Jenkins (2006) takes the issue raised by Seidlhofer (2004) further by showing that items causing communicative difficulty relate mainly to unilateral idiomaticity, in the form of idiom, phrase or metaphor unknown to listener (2006:170). Communication breakdown is a serious issue and is the criterion most frequently cited in terms of language proficiency to distinguish between passing and failing scripts. In the *ESL Composition Profile*, proposed by Jacobs et al. (1981:30) and used for entry-level English for Specific Purposes courses at UNISA, for example, this distinction is made. In a multi-cultural teaching context, students could identify culturally-specific idioms that could cause communication breakdown in an attempt to raise awareness of this issue.

Features that do not cause communication breakdown should be treated with more tolerance than errors which impede communication. However, the features identified in the present study as having a 0% AR (the use of *too* and *very much* as intensifiers, excessive use of the use of resumptive pronouns and gender conflation in pronouns) suggest that the distinction between communicative and non-communicative errors is not made as all three features were rejected despite the fact that it is only gender conflation has a potential for communicative breakdown.

Evidence of uncertainty and the implications

There is an ambiguous response to five features (omission of the article, idiosyncratic patterns of complementation, non-countable nouns used as countable nouns, structures of comparison and invariant tag questions). These features are identified as the most problematic in the second question by some subjects while having acceptability ratings of 17%, 9%, 13%, 4% and 4% awarded to them in the first question. This uncertainty is characteristic of a variety that is in Gill's (1999) liberation phase of development.

However, a certain level of lack of consensus with respect to acceptability ratings is to be expected as Standard English is hard to define and there is confusion and disagreement about what Standard English is. It must be acknowledged, however, that in any language the concept of a 'standard' is a contested and shifting construct and thus a certain degree of ambiguity relating to the acceptability of features of any variety when judged against a norm is to be anticipated. Theory is likewise not fixed but fluid. The difference / deficit debate shows that two diametrically opposed views are possible. For example, is the extension of the progressive form as an error, an example of overgeneralization (addition of *-ing* suffix in the case of stative verbs) and an infringement of Standard English or as a reflection of the 'Bantu language logic where verbal inflections do not play an important role in the articulation of aspectual meaning' (Makalela 2004:359)? Van Rooy has demonstrated that forms can be innovations and represent a new construction with a different meaning to that accorded it in Standard British English (2011:195-197) and sees this as evidence of an innovation, conventionalized in BSAE. The same grammatical feature can be viewed in totally divergent ways and these views have pedagogical implications and divergent implications for the degree of penetration of the variety into academic writing contexts.

Evidence of acceptance of certain features of BSAE

The responses to question 1 reveal acceptability ratings of up to 26% for certain entrenched features of BSAE by members outside the originating culture of the variety. Although these

acceptability ratings might seem low, it can be argued that these figures represent an emerging tolerance of the variety as one would have expected these forms to be totally rejected by members outside the originating culture of the variety, especially given that the AR was tested in the area most resistant to change (the written form at university level). Davies explains that the written language is the most stable form 'as it is the goal and it is the product of institutionalized learning' (2009:82). The Acceptability Ratings achieved in this study in the written medium give a preliminary indication that students outside the racial category of 'black' exhibit an initial level of tolerance of certain entrenched features (such as the extension of progressive, no singular or third person indicative present, phrases such as 'X's first time' and omission of the article) of BSAE. This can be interpreted that the variety is gaining momentum as certain features of BSAE are beginning to be tolerated even in formal, written, academic contexts at university level. These features are penetrating segments of the South African population outside of the originating culture and this suggests that there is some movement of the variety towards Schneider's Phase 4 of endonormative standardization of BSAE. It is evidence that the variety is becoming entrenched, institutionalized and is gaining strength when certain of its features are being accepted in formal, written contexts by those who do not speak the variety. However, this small-scale research needs to be verified by further research.

Recommendations based on research studies

This section of the article outlines scholarly suggestions to raise awareness of pedagogical issues relating to conflicting norms in testing contexts. In an article entitled 'Torn between two norms: innovations in World Englishes', Bamgbose (1998) recommends that knowledge of a non-native language should be a standard requirement for teachers. The minority of South African teachers, whose home language is not one of the indigenous languages, would benefit from knowing an African language and these languages need to be accorded cultural capital. If teachers of English knew the linguistic features of African languages, they would know, for example, that in Bantu languages 'not all verbs are marked for past tense in narrative sequences. Instead, only the verb in the first clause is marked for past tense' (Makalela 2004:360). Knowledge of African languages would also help to identify when a form has acquired a totally unique meaning and can be classified as an innovation that has been conventionalized in the variety. Features of BSAE have socio-linguistic origins. Modality markers, downgraders (hedges) or upgraders (intensifiers), for example, reflect a culturally-determined level of politeness. Black students frequently use multiple downgraders and this indirect speech is 'highly valued as a signal of politeness … [which] reflect a face-preserving culture that is deeply rooted in Bantu languages, [and] attempts to correct them would be insensitive to the weight of a rich culture that underpins their production' (Makalele 2004:362). In theory, an understanding the underlying grammatical or socio-linguistic influences of the learners' mother tongue promotes tolerance and influences the way students approach teaching and their attitude to individual grammatical features of the variety. However, one cannot assume that all teachers will have the level of linguistic insight required to interpret grammatical features and shifts in meaning.

Vavrus (1991) surveyed ten TESOL programmes and concluded that 'a monomodel paradigm based on native-speaker norms remains firmly entrenched' (1991:181). He asserts forcefully that power should be given to speakers in the Outer circle by 'expunging from ESL pedagogy

any notions of deviance in the institutionalized varieties of English' (Vavrus 1991:191), by raising awareness of local norms and by acceptance of multilingualism and multiculturalism, by increasing understanding of the political underpinnings of pedagogy on all levels (1991: 192), and that teacher-training programmes should embrace a multimodel paradigm which recognizes 'diversity and dispel[s] the fiction of monomodelism' (1991:192). In his study, 'The interlanguage metaphor and language assessment', Davidson (1994) challenges tests that uphold a single norm as he claims this suppresses linguistic variety. He claims that major tests, such as the TOEFL, are forces that promote the interlanguage metaphor via language testing. He recommends that testers examine trait structure of diverse-ability groups separately and asserts that the impetus for change must be the test users. This would empower students who could then be strong instruments for change.

In a country like South Africa, where English is used as a Lingua Franca (defined as a contact language used among non-mother tongue speakers), an understanding of research insights in the field is beneficial. The underlying principles of ELF include a pluricentric model, the belief that no monolithic variety does or can exist and use of the local variety in local communicative context (Jenkins 2006:162). Outer circle speakers have a right to their variety rather than to defer to the native speaker and Seidlhofer believes that students should accommodate varieties in the multilingual classes and challenge the concept of native-speaker ownership of English (in Jenkins 2006). The most urgent issue is to identify 'a way of incorporating a [World Englishes-English Second Language] WES-ESL perspective into testing … [because] until examination boards acknowledge the importance of new competencies, teachers and curriculum planners will not do so …for fear of jeopardising their students' exam prospects' (Jenkins 2006:175) and students will continue to favour the exonormative ideal, as indicated in Timmis (2002:249).

More recent insights include Elder and Harding (2008) and Davies (2009). Elder and Harding explain that the emphasis on communicative language teaching has caused a shift towards 'evaluating intercultural communicative skills instead of obsessively testing "inner circle" Englishes' (2008:34.1). However, because of the fluidity of New English norms, the 'fallback position, clearly safer and more practical, has been to stay with the standard varieties' (2008:34.1). It is ironical that it is frequently test users' wish to align themselves with the prestige varieties of the language and thus 'tests from the inner circle are often viewed by local stakeholders as "the gold standard" (2009:34.1). In addition, Elder and Harding appeal to those outside the testing field to grasp the ethical responsibilities of testers before they judge the seemingly slow response of test developers to shift towards endonormative standards which are not yet fully codified (2009:34.1). Davies argues convincingly that what is preventing the use of local norms in formal assessment is 'less the hegemony of Western postcolonial and economic power and more the uncertainty of the stakeholders' (2009: 80). He demonstrates that it is not in the spoken language but in its written form that exonormative rules still remain largely uncontested in post-colonial contexts. Yet, for Davies the choice of which norm to use lies with the inhabitants of the country and 'only their own uncertainty prevents them' (2009:87) from asserting this linguistic control.

Conclusions

The present study needs to be replicated with a much larger sample before findings can be put forward with conviction. Nevertheless, the study provides preliminary evidence of the conflicting

judgments with respect to norms that are characteristic BSAE, a variety that has moved well beyond the certainty inherent in Schneider's Phase two of exonormative stabilization. In addition, the study suggests that certain entrenched features of BSAE (extension of progressive, no singular or third person indicative present, phrases such as 'X's first time' and omission of the article) are penetrating segments of the South African population outside the originating culture in formal, written contexts. With respect to these features, there is movement of the variety towards Schneider's Phase 4 (endonormative standardization) of BSAE. However, other entrenched features of BSAE (the use of too and very much as intensifiers, the use of resumptive pronouns and gender conflation in pronouns) are totally rejected (0% AR) by the sample in this study. These features seem not to have penetrated outside the originating culture of the variety. With respect to these features, speakers of BSAE would be penalized in written tests if they were marked by the teachers in the sample group. The consequences of non-acceptance of entrenched features of BSAE extend beyond testing and have political implications that impact on power relations between the IND and STR strands. The difference/deference debate is inevitable and it will intensify as, in accordance with Schneider's model, BSAE moves towards the endonormative stabilization and South Africans continue to re-align their identities and make linguistic accommodations. However, the degree of legitimacy accorded to the variety will ultimately depend on all the linguistic stakeholders in South Africa and their level of confidence in the variety.

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Addendum 1: Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

1. Briefly outline your background: age, gender, race, teaching experience, highest qualification in the space below.
2. Please put a CROSS next to each of the sentences below that you regard as INCORRECT, which you WOULD CORRECT if you were marking these in students' WRITING at university.
3. Please put THREE EXCLAMATION MARKS (!!!) next to the ONE sentence that contains the error you regard as THE MOST SERIOUS ERROR.

The 23 features of BSAE tested are given are listed in Table 1.

Please use the back of the page if you would like to make any additional comments.

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ii The name of the institution has been withheld for ethical reasons.

iii The totals add up to more than 100% as some students listed more than one item.