

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH USED BY BLACK
SOUTH AFRICANS WITH REFERENCE TO SOCIETAL
CONTEXT AND EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

Janet Wilson Lubbe, BA, B.Ed., HED.

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Magister Educationis in Didactics
in the Department of Educational Sciences at the
Vaal Triangle Campus of the Potchefstroom University
for Christian Higher Education

Supervisor: Professor W.H. Willies
Joint Supervisor: Dr. L.M. Verneulen

Vanderbijlpark
1997

SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to establish the errors made by Black South Africans in English and to categorize them. Only those errors which result in a reduction or a breakdown of communication are included since these errors have a negative influence on the Black South African's ability to study and achieve. Various suggestions to improve the communicative competency of the scholar, the student and the teacher have been made.

A short historical background of English as a lingua franca in Africa and a dominant language in South Africa has been given. The development of Black South African English, including the influence of indigenous languages, political factors and factors such as isolation and the policy of separate schools, has been discussed. Black South African English is compared with Standard English and it was determined that it is not a dialect of English but a non-standard form of English which results in communication problems.

The problems which poor language competency causes in the government and politics, in education and in the working environment are discussed. The necessity for English usage which is generally understood by the different language groups in South Africa as well as by first and second English language users beyond South Africa's borders is also discussed. The aim of highlighting these factors is to prevent a reduction or a breakdown in communication and to promote the advancement of Black South Africans.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die foute wat swart Suid-Afrikaners in Engels maak, vas te stel en in kategorieë te plaas. Net foute wat 'n aftakeling van kommunikasie veroorsaak word gebruik omdat hierdie foute 'n negatiewe invloed op swart Suid-Afrikaners se vermoë het om te studeer en te presteer. Verskillende voorstelle word uiteengesit om die taalvaardigheid van die skolier, die student en die onderwyser te verbeter.

'n Kort historiese agtergrond van Engels as 'n omgangstaal in Afrika en 'n dominante taal in Suid-Afrika word uiteengesit. Die ontwikkeling van swart Suid-Afrikaanse Engels, insluitend die invloed van swart moedertale, politieke faktore, en faktore soos isolasie en die beleid van aparte skoolonderrig, word bespreek. Swart Suid-Afrikaanse Engels word vergelyk met Standaardengels en dit word vasgestel dat dit nie 'n dialek is nie maar 'n niestandaardvorm van Engels wat kommunikasieprobleme veroorsaak.

Die probleme wat swak taalvaardigheid in Engels veroorsaak in die regering en politiek, in skole en tersiêre inrigtings, en in die werkplek word bespreek. Die noodsaaklikheid vir die gebruik van Engels wat algemeen verstaanbaar is deur die verskillende taalgroepe in Suid-Afrika asook eerste- en tweedetaalgebruikers van Engels in die buiteland word uiteengesit. Hierdie faktore word na vore gebring met die doel om die aftakeling van kommunikasie te voorkom en die vooruitgang van swart Suid-Afrikaners te bevorder.

INDEX

CHAPTER 1

1.	INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	1
1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	8
1.3	HYPOTHESIS	8
1.4	METHOD OF RESEARCH	9
1.4.1	Literature study	9
1.4.2	Empirical study	9
1.4.2.1	Aim	9
1.4.2.2	Intrument	10
1.5	DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY	10
1.5.1	Black South African English	10
1.5.2	Standard English	11
1.5.3	Non-standard English	11
1.5.4	Dialect of English	11
1.5.5	Lingua franca	12
1.5.6	Vernacular languages	12
1.5.7	Non-immersion situation	12
1.5.8	Medium of instruction	12
1.6	STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION	12

CHAPTER 2

2.	BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH	14
2.1	INTRODUCTION	14
2.2	BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH DEFINED	14
2.3	STANDARD ENGLISH	15
2.4	THE DEVLOPMENT OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH	18

2.5	DIALECT AND ACCENT	24
2.5.1	Differentiation between dialect and accent	24
2.5.2	The origin of a dialect	25
2.6	DIALECT OR DEVIANT FORM OF ENGLISH?	26
2.7	CONCLUSION	31

CHAPTER 3

3.	SOCIETAL CONTEXTS IN WHICH ENGLISH IS USED BY BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE EFFECT OF POOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCY ON THEIR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE AND FUNCTION IN THESE CONTEXTS	33
3.1	INTRODUCTION	33
3.2	ENGLISH IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS	34
3.2.1	English and international politics	37
3.3	ENGLISH IN EDUCATION	41
3.4	ENGLISH IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT	49
3.4.1	The spread of English in global industrial trade	49
3.4.2	English and the local job market	52
3.5	CONCLUSION	55

CHAPTER 4

4.	THE RESEARCH: THE STUDY POPULATION, COLLECTION OF DATA, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMPETENCY	57
4.1	INTRODUCTION	57
4.2	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	60
4.3	STUDY POPULATION	61
4.4	CATEGORIES OF ERRORS	62

4.4.1	Pronunciation, stress and rhythm, and spelling	62
4.4.1.1	Pronunciation, stress and rhythm	63
4.4.1.2	Pronunciation, diphthongs and individual letters of the alphabet	68
4.4.1.3	Pronunciation and spelling	70
4.4.2	English usage and meaning	72
4.4.2.1	Meaning and individual words	74
4.4.2.2	Incorrect use of idiomatic expressions	75
4.4.2.3	Concepts and meaning	77
4.4.3	Poor command of vocabulary	78
4.4.4	Language errors	79
4.4.4.1	The definite and indefinite article	81
4.4.4.2	Prepositions	82
4.4.4.3	Miscellaneous errors	83
4.5	SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	84
4.5.1	The teacher	85
4.5.2	The scholar	88
4.5.3	The student	91
4.6	CONCLUSION	95

CHAPTER 5

5.	CONCLUSION OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION	98
5.1	SUMMARY	98
6.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	105

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

British colonialism stretched throughout the length and breadth of Africa bringing with it an education system which was decidedly British in origin. English became the lingua franca of these colonies, some of which had a tremendous variety of indigenous languages, indeed, according to Brumfit (1984 : 3), Nigeria, alone, has over 400 languages. After independence, English remained the unifying, official language of these former British colonies. Southern Africa was no different from the rest of Africa and today the former British colonies such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland retain English as their official language or one of their official languages.

According to Mathiane (1989 :8), Namibia, since liberation, has also chosen English as its official language, partly because English is regarded as the

language of liberation, and partly because it is a vehicle of communication which allows the speaker, political or otherwise, to reach a larger section of the population than would be the case if a particular vernacular were used. At a conference on English in Africa arranged by the English Academy and the Grahamstown Foundation in September 1995, it was stated that although only one per cent of Namibians were mother-tongue English speakers, English had been chosen as the sole official language, in part, to avoid disunity (Couzens, 1995 : 18). English is, therefore, seen as a unifying language in Namibia just as it is in anglophone countries in other parts of Africa as previously stated.

The situation in South Africa is somewhat different to that in the other southern African countries in that there are two official languages of European origin, English and Afrikaans. Of these two languages, only English can be classified as an international language. Couzens (1995 : 18) states that English is a language of international contact, that is a language which is used by people of various nationalities and languages in order to

communicate with one another in the fields of commerce, science, technology, politics and diplomacy. According to du Toit *et al.* (1990 : 70), English is the lingua franca of Africa and the world. It enables people of different cultures to understand one another and to work with one another. Du Toit *et al.* (1990 : 70) also maintain that most of the world's knowledge is transmitted in English and additionally most of the world's trade is conducted in English. In short, English is an international language.

The first democratic elections in the Republic of South Africa took place on 27 April 1994. The previously independent states and homelands were reincorporated into the Republic and participated in the elections. The new government of the reintegrated South Africa elevated nine vernacular languages to the status of official languages making a total of eleven official languages. For any country to have so many official languages is a cumbersome burden which can only be made lighter if there is a lingua franca to act as a linking language among its diverse peoples to ensure effective communication.

In 1989. Mathiane (1989 : 8) had already predicted that English would become the lingua franca of South Africa, and Sarinjeive (1994 : 295) states that English is gradually emerging as the lingua franca. Cachalia (1995 : 152) states that there seems to be consensus among the various academics and organizations that English will be the lingua franca of South Africa. Reasons given by Cachalia (1995 : 152) to support this assertion are that English is an international language, a language of higher learning, and, furthermore, a language which can serve as the linking language among the various linguistic groups.

At the conference on English arranged by the English Academy and the Grahamstown Foundation in September 1995, it was stated that English clearly has a "special status" (Couzens 1995 : 18). This special status held by English can be linked to the idea that English is emerging as the lingua franca of South Africa. Despite the fact that English is the mother tongue of only three million of the forty-four million inhabitants of South Africa, English is the language of commerce, government, education and international contact (Couzens, 1995 : 18). It is,

furthermore, the language of aspiration and it is regarded favourably by the great majority (Couzens, 1995 : 18). Since the majority of South Africans are Black, this implies that Black South Africans are favourably disposed towards English and this contributes to the special status enjoyed by English.

Theron (1993 : 80) maintains that English is spoken as a second or foreign language by approximately 90% of the population of South Africa. This assertion supports the idea of English having a special status in this country. He further maintains that it is the dominant language in a multi-cultural society (Theron, 1993 : 77).

There has been an increase in the use of English in Black schools since the 1976 Soweto uprisings when students protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools because it had become stigmatised as the language of the oppressor (Roos, 1991 : 69). Black schools fell under the administration of the Department of Education and Training (DET) during the latter part of the apartheid era. According to Walker (1987: 101),

English is the official medium of instruction in primary schools from the fifth year. Some primary schools have chosen to utilize English from the first grade. Furthermore, it is the official medium of instruction at secondary schools and at tertiary level in most historically Black institutions (Alant, 1988 : 16).

English is also used with great frequency by Black politicians. According to Motau in Mathiane (1989: 8-9), it is a medium of communication which allows the speaker to rise above the limits of ethnicity, which the use of the vernacular imposes upon him, and in so doing, reach across the boundaries of race and colour thus allowing the political message to come to the fore.

According to Povey (1987 : 53), English is increasingly being used in the world of commerce and industry and is regarded as the language of science and technology. Alant (1988 : 16) states that for Black South Africans, English provides a basis for cross-cultural contacts within a culturally plural society and is a means of access to the job market and the urban-industrial complex. This means that as

more and more Black South Africans enter the world of industry and commerce, there will be an increase in the number of second-language users of English in these fields.

The increasing use of English, as a vehicle of communication, by second-language users in South Africa brings with it many communication problems, especially since these speakers have had little or no contact with mother-tongue English speakers over a period of several generations largely because of the politics of the country. Communication problems are closely related to the level of proficiency of the users and Alant (1988 : 16) states that over the last decade, the average proficiency of Black students has been a cause for concern. Many of the students, who were educated over the last decade, now find themselves in industry, commerce and teaching and an inadequate competence in English must have a negative impact on their ability to communicate and possibly even to perform their jobs.

The communication problems, which affect the intelligibility of the message (content of speech and writing) being transmitted, will be discussed in

greater detail in Chapter 4. It is these problem areas, seen against the background of commerce; government; politics and international contact, and education, discussed in Chapter 3, which this research wishes to address.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will focus on the questions which follow.

- How does Black South African English differ from Standard English?
- Do these differences have an effect on communication?
- What effect does poor language proficiency have on the Black person's ability to function in education, in the workplace and on an inter-cultural level?
- What suggestions can be made to improve English competency amongst Black South Africans?

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

English, as a medium of communication, as used by Black South African second-language speakers, has

problematic aspects relating to pronunciation, stress, rhythm, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, vocabulary and meaning which result in reduced communication or a breakdown of communication on an inter-cultural and international level as well as in education.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Literature study

A study of literature, with particular reference to the Communicative Approach to English Second Language (ESL) teaching was made. In addition, literature pertaining to English used by Black South Africans in societal contexts was studied. The literature study not only provides a theoretical background but also provides a basis for substantiating the empirical study.

1.4.2 Empirical study

1.4.2.1 Aim

By means of an empirical investigation, it is hoped to establish the errors in language which impede communication.

1.4.2.2 Instrument

Over a period of two and a half years, data pertaining to the errors which impede communication has been recorded. This data has been obtained from tests, examinations and assignments completed by third and fourth-year students who are teachers or prospective teachers. The data was collected at an historically Black university in Gauteng. Careful note has also been made of the verbal contributions of students. Biographical details of the students were obtained by means of a questionnaire.

In addition to the data obtained from the students, personal interviews were conducted with university lecturers, executives as well as management personnel in the field of industry in order to establish some of the areas which they regarded as problematic.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

1.5.1 Black South African English

The form of English used as a second language by the

majority of Black South African who attended former Department of Education schools.

1.5.2 Standard English

The form of English used by the majority of educated English-speaking people. It adheres to an accepted system of grammar, meaning and pronunciation although it may be spoken with a variety of accents. (cf. Strevens, 1977 : 136).

1.5.3 Non-standard English

A form of English which does not adhere to the norms of grammar, meaning and pronunciation which are inherent in Standard English.

1.5.4 Dialect of English

A form of language which evolved in areas where people were isolated over a long period of time and which differs from Standard English with regard to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and idiom. It is used regionally by mother-tongue users of English.

1.5.5 Lingua franca

A language serving as a medium of communication between different nations whose own languages are not the same (Concise Oxford, 1983 : 586).

1.5.6 Vernacular languages

In the South African context this usually refers to indigenous Black languages.

1.5.7 Non-immersion situation

A situation in which the learner is not exposed to the target language at all times.

1.5.8 Medium of instruction

Language of teaching.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 comprises an introduction to the topic of the research. The purpose of the study is introduced and the hypothesis given as well as

definitions of terminology used.

Chapter 2 traces the origins of what is often termed Black South African English and attempts to determine whether it can be classified as a dialect or whether it is a non-standard form of English.

Chapter 3 considers the contexts in which English is used as a medium of communication by Black South Africans. It also considers the effect of poor English language competency on communication and the ability to function in education, politics, the workplace and on an inter-cultural level.

In Chapter 4, the research study is presented in detail. Problematic aspects of Black South African English which result in reduced communication or a breakdown in communication are discussed. These problematic aspects have been revealed by the research and are used by Black South Africans within societal contexts. Suggestions of ways to improve communicative competence in English are made.

Chapter 5 constitutes a conclusion of the research and findings.

CHAPTER 2

2. BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

English, as used by Black South Africans, developed into its present form within an environment put into place by apartheid. This environment had different facets such as a separate schools' policy and minimal inter-cultural social interaction. The environment created by apartheid; mother-tongue interference, and demographic factors all played a role in the development of Black South African English which differs greatly from Standard English. Standard English according to Strevens (1977 : 136) is the variety of English used all over the world by educated people who use English. This means that it is a variety of English which has universal accessibility.

2.2 BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH DEFINED

The term "Black South African English" is used to differentiate this variety of English from other

varieties used in South Africa. In other words, it is a descriptive term. It is a term which describes the English used by the majority of people who attended DET schools. In other words, it is the variety of English which most Black South Africans use. Mersham (1987 : 70) calls this variety of English "South African Black English". Leighton et al (1992 : 27) use the term "African English" as do the African students who were involved in a survey conducted by Sarinjeive (1995 : 4) at an historically Black university in Gauteng. The term "African English" is misleading since it could refer to English spoken by Africans from any country on the continent of Africa, however, in both cases the term refers specifically to South Africa. For the purposes of this research, the term "Black South African English" will be used.

2.3 STANDARD ENGLISH

In order to explain the ways in which Black South African English is problematic as a medium of communication, it is necessary to make a comparison between this variety of English and some other

variety. Standard English has been chosen as the comparative model for a variety of reasons.

- Standard English is the universal non-regional dialect,
- educated people all over the world who use English make use of Standard English,
- it may be spoken with a variety of accents, both regional and non-regional,
- it has been universally accepted as the only appropriate model for educational use, both as a first and second language,
- it is the variety of English which has been most comprehensively described and studied,
- it is the language of literature, except for works where regional dialects are deliberately introduced.

(Strevens, 1977 : 136)

In addition to the reasons outlined by Strevens, it must be added that in South Africa, Standard English is the language in which school textbooks are written. In the Government Gazette of 6 June 1997, it is stated that standard forms of English should

be used in education where appropriate although pupils must also learn to communicate in different contexts by using a range of registers and language varieties (RSA, 1997 : 23). Furthermore, newspapers and magazines are largely written in Standard English as are textbooks and reference material at tertiary level. Accessibility to these sources of information presupposes the ability to understand and use Standard English. The variations inherent in any particular variety of non-standard English may be of such a nature that the user may find that his understanding of the information is distorted by his language usage, hence the need for Standard English.

Strevens (1977 : 137) states that "Standard" in the term "Standard English" means most frequently used rather than better. In other words, it does not contain the element of snobbishness, or social superiority, which people, at times, attribute to it.

Burnett (1989 : 59) states that the laissez-aller approach to the teaching of English in the 1960's has proved to be unacceptable to parents, employers and governments alike because they want adults who

can communicate in Standard English. The main reason for insistence on Standard English is accessibility to other first, second and foreign users of English.

Standard English has, therefore, been chosen as the comparative model by virtue of its accessibility to other users of English and to written materials as well by reason of its acceptability to employers, governments and parents.

2.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH.

The apartheid policy of the previous government advocated separate development. This meant that the various peoples of South Africa had minimal contact with one another particularly in a social context. Interaction did take place to a certain degree in the workplace and in shops and other businesses. People worked together in industry and commerce, but at the end of the day White people went home to their White suburbs and townships and Black people to their Black townships. This meant that after working-hours, little social interaction took place

because of different geographical locations. In addition, the governmental policy of the separation of people according to race developed a perception of the undesirability or unacceptability of intercultural socializing which further inhibited social interaction.

Walker (1987 : 101) states that Black children were separated in schools, by government policy, from mother-tongue speakers of English. These children were taught, as previously mentioned, at DET schools and the teachers were mainly drawn from the same colour group as the children, that is the teachers were usually Black.

According to Walker (1987 : 102), the teachers in Black schools are not native speakers of English and in addition they display a limited English proficiency. Alant (1988 : 16-17) states that Black teachers have limited opportunities to interact with mother-tongue speakers of English and they have difficulty in expressing themselves in English. These limitations in the teachers' English obviously affect their teaching and the language which they transmit since the children's main English model

(and sometimes only model) is the teacher (Strevens, 1977 : 74).

Separate development of the apartheid era restricted the teachers' opportunities to communicate with first language English speakers. Additionally, there may be demographic factors which restricted, and which may still restrict, the teachers' interaction with native English speakers. The teachers may live in isolated rural areas where most of their contact is with speakers of indigenous Black languages. Alternatively, they may inhabit areas in which Afrikaans predominates. The lack of opportunity to interact with first language speakers of English is a factor contributing to the Black teacher's lack of proficiency since the teacher is deprived of what is called monitoring. According to Krashen in Brown, H.D. (1987 : 188), monitoring is used to edit one's output; the user makes alterations or corrections to his language usage as they are consciously perceived.

Monitoring is part of the conscious learning process. Lack of interaction with mother-tongue English speakers means that Black teachers are

deprived of opportunities of consciously comparing their English for correctness of usage against the English of native speakers. In other words, Black South African teachers use the sort of English to which they are exposed, and which may not be grammatically or semantically correct. They teach the children through the medium the English which they themselves utilize thus perpetuating the errors which they, themselves use and which they, themselves, may have been taught.

Exposure to language is not limited to verbal interaction. Input is also received by means of exposure to radio, television, books and other materials and the second language user can use these media for monitoring his language. Black people, however, seldom listen to the radio except in the vernacular. Human Sciences Research Council reports reviewed in Prinsloo (1987 : 26) confirm that the majority of Black people prefer to listen to broadcasts in their own languages and show very little interest in hearing English. Brown, J. (1987 : 43) states that Black pupils have little (and often no) contact with English books, newspapers, radio or television. According to Sarinjeive (1994

: 299) African radio and television channels are preferred to non-African channels by Black students. It must be concluded that English media are not greatly utilized by either children or adults in Black South African society. In other words, input in English is limited in the lives of Black South Africans.

Lack of contact with English mother-tongue speakers, with the accompanying lack of opportunity for monitoring, means that teachers are often unaware of grammatical errors and the superimposition of the mother tongue upon their English usage. The reason for their lack of awareness lies in the fact that their English usage will largely be similar to that of the people with whom they have contact, people like themselves who have been educated in DET schools by non-native speakers of English, people who seldom use English outside the classroom.

The superimposition of the vernacular upon English takes different forms and affects pronunciation as well as grammatical and semantic aspects of the language. Leshoai in Mershem (1987 : 70) states that much of the English spoken in the townships is

unintelligible to someone who is not acquainted with township culture. The language has undergone a process of fusion with a number of other indigenous South African languages to such an extent that inter-cultural and inter-racial communication cannot take place. He cites the following examples to illustrate the superimposition of the mother tongue upon English.

- I hear hunger.
(I am hungry)
- I've got a chest.
(I have a cold)
- Hunger has got me.
(I am hungry)
- I hear pain in my hand.
(I have a pain in my hand)

The deviations inherent in Black South African English pose serious problems for communication in school, in the workplace and socially. According to Roos (1991 : 22), form and function are both important in effective communication. She further states that learners are often unaware of the negative social consequences of their non-standard

use and that grammatical accuracy is necessary for successful communication, especially in academic, professional and sophisticated social circles.

It was out of the background outlined above that Black South African English evolved. The isolation of speakers from English first-language speakers as well as mother-tongue interference had their effects on many aspects of the language so that an English was formed which differed greatly from Standard English. These differences will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.5 DIALECT AND ACCENT

2.5.1 Differentiation between dialect and accent

A dialect should not be confused with an accent. There is a clear distinction between accent and dialect and the main components are as follows:

DIALECT	ACCENT
pronunciation	pronunciation
vocabulary	
grammar	

idiom

(Honey, 1991 : 2)

Dialect then incorporates more features than accent with the single feature common to both being pronunciation. Pronunciation has two main features, accent and intonation. Intonation is the 'tune' of a sentence (Honey, 1991 : 5).

All people, who speak English, speak with an accent be they native speakers or non-native speakers. This obviously includes Black South Africans. English dialects, on the other hand, are spoken by native speakers of English who are normally able to speak Standard English in addition to their dialect. According to Sarinjeive (1995 : 1), all normal speakers of a dialect are able to use more than one variety of language.

2.5.2 The origin of a dialect

A dialect arises in areas where a language is used as a mother tongue by people who are isolated over a long period of time, usually, but not always, as a result of geographic inaccessibility. In other

words, speakers of a dialect are not second or foreign users of a language. A dialect exhibits variations, to a greater or lesser degree, from the original language so that when the English spoken by speakers in different geographical regions and from different social groups shows systematic differences the groups are said to speak different dialects of the same language (Fromkin and Rodman, 1983 : 245). The dialect spoken is the language which the people use daily to go about their business in a particular region although not necessarily the language in which they are educated or which they will use in "polite company". A salient feature of a dialect of English is that the speakers thereof are mother-tongue English speakers and not second or foreign speakers of English.

2.6 A DIALECT OR A DEVIANT FORM OF ENGLISH?

Black South African English differs from Standard English in various ways.

- There is a difference in word stress and sentence stress which results in a difference of rhythm.

- Many words have acquired different to accepted pronunciations which sometimes make them difficult to understand and indeed at times these pronunciations confuse the message. Pronunciation, at times, also influences spelling.
- A number of words and idiomatic phrases have acquired meanings other than those understood by users of Standard English so that the speaker may intend to transmit a particular message but the message which the listener receives is not that which the speaker intends.
- The mother-tongue language is often superimposed upon English.
- Still other areas of difference include incorrect usage of articles, tenses, prepositions and pronouns, largely as a result of mother-tongue interference.

As previously stated these differences will be

addressed in Chapter 4.

Black people in South Africa rarely use English on an interpersonal level in their daily lives in their own environment preferring to adhere to the vernacular where the speakers are of the same ethnic origin. This is substantiated by Gule in Mathiane (1989 : 8) who states that Black people interact with other Black people in a Black language in a variety of everyday situations. This is also substantiated by the HSRC reports reviewed by Prinsloo (1987 : 26) where it states that Black people communicate with one another at work mainly in one or other Black language. A study conducted in 1995 amongst students at an historically Black university in Gauteng revealed that the use of English is minimal outside the lecture hall (Sarinjeive, 1995 : 1). The vernacular is used when the speakers are of the same ethnic origin, however, English often becomes the medium of communication when the speakers are of different ethnic origins, for example Sotho and Zulu, since it may be the only common language.

English is the official medium of instruction after

the fourth year of school (Brown, J. 1987 : 43). English is also the language which is used in business by many Black South Africans largely because, historically, commerce and industry have been in English hands (Cluver, 1993 : 21) and because English is an international language. English is used in politics by Black South Africans because it rises above ethnicity as previously stated. It seems relatively clear that English is used by Black South Africans largely as a "bridging" language where the vernacular does not meet the needs of the situation. This is not meant to imply that African languages in South Africa are inferior, it merely means that they lack universality particularly on an inter-cultural level, since unlike English, African languages are not international languages.

Caribbean dialects of English are spoken by the Black populations of many of the islands of the West Indies where a form of English very different from Standard English in its grammar, idiom, and pronunciation evolved, possibly under the influence of the original West African languages which it supplanted (Honey, 1991 : 8). Black South African

English also displays many of the same features as the Caribbean dialects. As has been previously mentioned, these features include superimposition of the mother tongue upon English, differences in grammar, idiom and pronunciation. If Caribbean English is a dialect, why, then, is Black South African English not? The answer lies in the fact that English is the mother tongue of the Black people of these islands whereas it is a second language for Black South Africans. Theron (1993 : 81), states that English is an alternative language for Black second-language speakers who use their own languages conventionally.

Black South Africans are educated mainly in English and they use it in a variety of situations in society. Black South African English, however, cannot be classified as a dialect since dialect implies that the speakers thereof are also mother-tongue speakers of the particular language from which the dialect is derived. If Black South African English is not a dialect, then it must be regarded as a deviant, or non-standard, form of English. If it is a deviant form of English, it will, then, not be accessible to other speakers of

English which will result in reduced effectiveness and reduced communication, or worse, a breakdown of communication, the implications of which can be far-reaching in government, politics, industry, commerce, education and international situations.

In Chapter 4, more will be written about the ways in which Black South African English impedes communication.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Black South African English arose out of the environment created by a governmental policy of separate development which resulted in minimal interaction between first-language and Black second-language speakers; demographic factors, and mother-tongue interference. Although the children are educated in English for most of their school career, English remains a second language to them. As a second language, Black South African English cannot be regarded as a dialect, despite the differences from Standard English which it displays, since a salient feature of dialect is that it is a variation of the language which the people use as their mother tongue as is the case with speakers of Caribbean

dialects. The differences between Black South African English and Standard English are numerous and varied and often impede communication as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the various societal contexts in which Black South Africans use English as a medium of communication and the effect that poor English language competency has on communication and the ability to function in these societal contexts.

CHAPTER 3

3. SOCIETAL CONTEXTS IN WHICH ENGLISH IS USED BY BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE EFFECT OF POOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCY ON THEIR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE AND FUNCTION IN THESE CONTEXTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

English is used by Black South Africans in a variety of situations as a medium of communication. It is used in government, politics, commerce, industry, education and in international communication, as previously stated in Chapter 1. If it is to be used effectively in these situations, the users must have internalized the language and the message transmitted must incorporate the same basic meaning to both the transmitter and the recipient. In other words, for effective communication to take place the words must have the same dictionary meaning to both parties, and both parties must adhere to the system of grammar which naturally includes the spelling system.

The spoken use of the language must be adequate. An

excessively strong accent may obscure the message meaning of the utterance. This is confirmed by Honey (1991 : 97) who states that the meaning of the utterance may be unintelligible because the words are pronounced in an accent which is very different to that which one is used to hearing. To put it differently, the recipient should not be placed in the position that he must concentrate to such an extent on trying to understand the speaker's articulation of words that the content of the utterance becomes of secondary importance. There is a difference between English spoken clearly and correctly with a moderate African accent, which does not interfere with the meaning of the utterance, and Black South African English which results a serious loss of meaning for both first and second language listeners (Cobbleigh, 1995 : 23).

In Chapter 4, more will be written about the ways in which Black South African English, as a non-standard form of English, differs from Standard English.

3.2 ENGLISH IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

With the unbanning of a number of political

organizations such as the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress and their entrance into the political arena, we have experienced an upswing in the use of English in politics. Since the 1994 elections, there has been an increased use of English in government. According to Mathiane (1989 : 8) English is the medium of communication at Black political rallies with only the songs remaining ethnic. Motau in Mathiane (1989 : 8) states that Black South Africans need to use English as a vehicle of communication and as an instrument for liberation because it frees one from the confinement of thinking like a Zulu or a Mosotho. What is implied here is that the use of English will allow the political message to rise beyond the confines of a particular ethnic group and come to the fore. In other words, the political message becomes more important than the ethnic origin of the speaker. English is, therefore, seen both as a liberating and a unifying medium of communication within the Black political arena.

During the previous dispensation, the majority of the Members of Parliament were Afrikaans-speaking with the National Party having the greatest number

of seats. Automatically this meant that the use of Afrikaans was predominant. Since the 1994 elections, there has been an increasing use of English in parliament as this is often the only language which the members have in common. It must also be borne in mind that activists, during the political struggle for freedom, politicized Afrikaans and labelled it the language of the oppressor (Cluver, 1993 : 24). English, on the other hand was perceived as the language of change, freedom and economic opportunity (Cluver, 1993 : 27). As the language of the people who prevented Black advancement (Cluver, 1993 : 24), Afrikaans is unacceptable to many Black politicians and their constituents. The change in government as well as the perception of the Black community with regard to Afrikaans has, therefore, resulted in a movement away from Afrikaans towards English in parliament.

For many of today's Black politicians who were yesterday's exiles, English was often the language which they used in exile in countries such as the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom as well as various African countries. As an international language, it was the medium by means

or which they made the world at large aware of their struggle for liberation and democracy since it is accessible to a wide audience, as was previously stated. It is commonly believed that English will be a language of national unity and of reconciliation in the new South Africa (Adendorff, 1991 :70). These, then, are some of the reasons which have contributed to the increased use of English in national politics.

3.2.1 English and international politics

It is not only in national politics that there has been an increase in the use of English, but also in international politics. Povey (1987 : 53) maintains that, in recent years, there has been an increased demand for English as a language of international communication. He further maintains that there is no other language which can challenge the predominance of English in this field. This implies that English has supplanted French as the language of diplomacy.

There are different reasons for the increased use of English in international politics.

(a) The spread of English, as a language of foreign communication, goes hand in hand with the spread of English as a second language in multi-lingual states (Povey, 1987 : 53). Many African and Asian countries are multi-lingual states and those countries, which formed part of the British Empire, have retained English as an official language as previously stated.

(b) The emergence of the United States of America as a world power has also contributed to the use of English in international politics.

(c) Finally, there are a number of countries, such as the Great Britain, Canada and Australia where English is used as a first language.

South African politicians, who may be second language users of English, must communicate with their counterparts from other countries who are often also non-mother-tongue speakers of English. Correspondence and contact between diplomats as well as heads of states of the various countries of the world is usually carried out in English. This means that there is interaction on a spoken and a written

level between first-language users and second-language users as well as by second-language users and other second-language users. For effective communication to take place, all parties involved must be able to elicit the same meaning from the verbal or written text. According to Theron (1993 : 84), a successful message must meet three basic requirements. The receiver should be able to understand the message, accept it and finally respond appropriately.

Evans (1982 : 134) states that the world and society in which we live and function, values meaning and accuracy and communicates formally through the written word. The written word is, therefore, extremely important in international political communication. It demands a preciseness which is less necessary in oral communication for in oral communication the receiver can request clarification immediately if something is not clearly understood. The written word, on the other hand, is much more permanent than the spoken word and requires a level of communicative competence which enables the user to express himself accurately in a language which is intelligible to all parties. Intelligibility is,

after all, a vital component of communication. The language used must reflect knowledge of the language code itself as well as an adequate vocabulary if the message is to be successfully transmitted. This is substantiated by du Toit (1992 : 5) who states that communicative competence (functional language proficiency) involves knowledge of how to operate within the rule system of the language. Lack of knowledge of the rule system could result in unsuccessful transmission of the message and this could have serious and possibly even catastrophic consequences in a political context.

It has been suggested by Adendorff, 1991 : 72) that a new South Africa needs its own English - an English that is useful, an English that promotes unity and an English that will express solidarity with the rest of Africa and with the commonwealth. Furthermore, it must to be an English that is accessible to the entire South African population, thereby becoming a voice of the people. For this "own" English to be accessible to the various peoples of South Africa, as well as on an international level, it must display a closeness the grammatical structure and meanings of words as to

make these differences negligible if cross-cultural communication is to take place effectively as is the case when American English, Australian English, or any other standard form of English is used. Black South African English, if this is the new English envisaged, does not meet with these criteria and, therefore, becomes problematic in an international context as well as in a national context and results in reduced communication or a breakdown in communication. Problematic aspects of Black South African English will be elucidated in Chapter 4.

3.3 ENGLISH IN EDUCATION

Mother-tongue education up to matriculation level has not been feasible for Black South Africans for a variety of reasons including a lack of textbooks in indigenous languages in many subjects. Furthermore, according to Cachalia (1995 : 155), Black South Africans prefer English to vernacular languages as the medium of instruction in education, and Alant (1988 : 16) states that they view English as a means of access to the job market and the urban-industrial complex. Students want to learn English to be able to study further, to qualify for certain jobs and to

gain access to the international community (Roos, 1990 : 27). For many parents and teachers, mother-tongue education is also associated with Bantu Education (the predecessor of DET) and, therefore, viewed with suspicion (Leighton *et al.* 1993 : 4). This is substantiated by Cachalia (1995 : 155) who states that Black parents and pupils associate mother-tongue education with apartheid. Parents further regard mother-tongue education as a means of denying Black people access to good jobs (Cachalia, 1995 :155).

At historically Black schools, children are educated through the medium of English from the fifth year of school (Cachalia, 1995 : 157) although many Black parents are now opting for English from the first year of school. According to the findings by the HSRC, Black parents prefer mother-tongue education in pre-schools and to a lesser degree in the lower classes of formal education (Prinsloo, 1987 : 27). Interviews with teachers in Gauteng and colleagues at the historically Black university where the study was conducted, reveal that there is an increased desire to have the children educated in English even from pre-primary school onwards. The

reasons for the earlier introduction of English medium teaching lie in the perception of the limiting effects of the vernacular outlined in the previous paragraph. In addition, English is regarded as being the language of upward mobility, that is to say, English is regarded as being the language by means of which social advancement and advancement in the workplace take place (Gaganakis, 1992 : 51).

There are an increasing number of Black children attending historically White schools (Mathiane, 1989 : 7). The children who are attending historically Black schools (former DET schools), however, are still by far in the majority. They are being taught by Black non-mother-tongue speakers of English who also arose out of a similar background as has been previously established in Chapter 2. The teacher is not a native speaker of English and displays limited English proficiency (Walker, 1987 : 102). The limited proficiency of the teacher has a negative impact on the quality of the English learnt by the children since, according to Strevens (1977 : 74), the teacher is the learner's model especially with regard to the spoken language. Many of the

children, like their teachers, use little or no English outside the classroom which means that the children's English remains limited by the limited input. According to van der Walt (1989 : 50) mastery of English is related to input and children must be exposed to the language and read extensively if they are to become proficient in the language. Limited exposure to the language results in the children having limited English proficiency which in turn impedes their ability to do as well academically as they should. This is confirmed by Burgess (1990 :14) who maintains that no one can learn in a language which he does not fully understand and which he has not internalized. Just as no one can learn properly in a language which he does not understand, so, too, is teaching negatively affected by a poor command of the medium of instruction. According to Strevens (1977 : 74), if the teacher's command of the language is inadequate, the learner's achievement will be impaired.

Many teachers in high schools teach through the medium of the vernacular, however, the children are expected to write examinations in English, this being the official medium of instruction. The reason

that teachers resort to the use of the vernacular in the classroom is often because they have difficulty in expressing themselves in English, or, alternatively, because of deficiencies in the children's English (Alant, 1988 : 16). This is supported by Brown, J. (1987 : 46) who states that teachers regularly resort to mother-tongue instruction because the pupils do not understand much of the English input. Whatever the reasons, the children are disadvantaged because they are thinking in one language and writing in another and they may not have the vocabulary or language structures readily available to them to express all that they really know for it is only through using a language that one develops fluency and spontaneity of expression. This is substantiated by Leighton *et al.* (1993 : 16) who state that language structures are acquired through use and that communicative competence means being able to apply rules without having to think about them. It is then apparent that mastery of English will to a large extent determine the student's performance in secondary and tertiary education as English is the medium of instruction at these levels (Alant, 1988 : 16).

English is perceived by Black South Africans to be the language of education (Gaganakis, 1992 :51), and as has been previously stated, as a means of achieving success and prosperity (Mathiane, 1989 : 8). In the study conducted by Sarinjeive (1995 : 10), students stated that they want, as university graduates, to sound like educated professionals when they speak English. In order for students to achieve the necessary level of proficiency to fulfil their academic obligations and achieve success, tertiary institutions are obliged to spend millions of rand on compensatory education for students whose mastery of English is not adequate for learning at university level (Sarinjeive, 1994 : 297). The need for tertiary institutions to upgrade the English proficiency of the students arises because schools are not developing sufficiently competent users of English (Brown, J. 1987 : 41).

The problem of lack of English competency, therefore, has its source in childhood. The majority of Black children and young adults in education are involved in a non-immersion situation. In fact for most Black children, English can almost be regarded as a foreign language so little contact

do they have with it outside of school and tertiary institutions (Brown, J. 1987 : 43). English as a foreign language (EFL) indicates that it is not an official language of the country in question whereas English as a second language means that it is an official language of the country in question (Brown, J. 1987 : 43). This means that the pupils and students are being expected to fulfil their academic obligations (studying, reading, writing, listening, responding verbally) through the medium of a language which is not part of their lived environment. Black South African English continues to be propagated as a result of the limited contact with first language English speakers within the Black child's lived environment (Alant, 1988 : 17) and because of the lack of competency of the teachers (Walker, 1987 : 102). It continues to isolate the future adult from effective communication in various societal contexts, including his future workplace, because of its differences from Standard English as previously established in Chapter 2.

Many Black learners are unaware that the English which they have been taught in school is not

Standard English and that they are being disadvantaged because they are not communicating effectively, be it in relation to their textbooks or to people. The reasons for the lack of awareness lie, as has been previously established, in the fact they lack exposure to first English language users and the written word. Additionally, the English, which they use, is similar to that of the people with whom they have contact which is for the most part only their teachers since Black people generally speak African languages with each other (Prinsloo, 1987 : 27).

An awareness of the differences between Black South African English and Standard English often only becomes known to them when they enter the workplace or a tertiary institution where English is the medium of communication. Even at this stage, these young adults may well remain unaware of their communication problems because they use the language to which they have been exposed, and, as was previously stated in Chapter 2, their lived environment provides limited opportunities for monitoring. In addition, according to Kutumela and Moleli of the African Languages Department of Vista

University reported in Sarinjeive (1994: 298), the students translate to and from their mother tongue which adds to their language problems. This means that unawareness of the inaccuracy of their communication skills may result in the students experiencing extreme frustration when they do not receive the marks which they think should be allocated to them for assignments and in examinations. If the students do not know where the problems lie, then obviously they are unable to rectify them, and, at university level, the lecturers must assume that the students have the necessary English proficiency to cope with the content of their courses. It is a situation in which the students remain the losers unless a solution to the problem can be found.

3.4 ENGLISH IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

3.4.1 The spread of English in global industrial trade

There has been an explosion in the world-wide demand for English to use for numerous functions associated with modernization and social and technological progress (Honey, 1991 : 9). This has been the case

particularly since the 1980's so that English has become the lingua franca of the business world. It is the language which businessmen use when communicating with businessmen of other language groups. This is substantiated by Povey (1987 : 52) who maintains that in a post-war world of global interaction, the purpose of language studies has become achievement of international communication rather than cultural awareness.

Several emerging industrial countries such as Singapore and Malaysia have English as an official language. This is partly because of the British colonial heritage, but also partly because of the need for effective business communication in order to buy technology and to sell products. According to Povey (1987 : 53) the spread of English as a second language in multi-lingual countries has been accompanied by an equivalent growth in English as a foreign language. Employers in Japan and India, for example, expect Standard English to be taught rather than any other form of English (Burnett, 1989 : 59). The reason for this is that Standard English is accessible to other users of English whereas a non-standard form of English tends to isolate speakers

from the mainstream of communication (Burnett, 1989 : 59).

South Africa must also grow as an industrial nation if it is to feed its large population and this, combined with a changed political situation, has brought about a greater emphasis on the use of English in all facets of business. This means that there is a great need for the English used in inter-cultural situations to be accessible to all participants whether we are communicating within or without the boundaries of South Africa. Black South African English is not always accessible to other users because of the differences from Standard English outlined in Chapter 2. As previously stated, a non-standard form of English has an isolating effect because communication is ineffective. Since English is the major means of access to the job market and the urban-industrial complex as well as global markets, it is essential that Black South Africans are not isolated from job possibilities and upward social mobility because of their English language usage. This would be contrary to the ethos of equal opportunity embedded in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa.

3.4.2 English and the local job market

As part of the research study, personal interviews were conducted with executives and senior management personnel in industry in the Vaal Triangle in order to establish the status of English in industry. In addition, it was important to establish whether the non-African people in industry are experiencing problems in communication with African personnel and exactly what these problems are.

It was revealed during these interviews that over a period of several years, industry has been demanding a greater use of English of its senior personnel. According to a senior official of a large, predominantly Afrikaans company, internal reports must now be written in alternate months in English. He further states that the company expects that meetings be conducted alternately in English. Part of the reason for this is to accommodate African personnel.

English is regarded as an important means of access to the job market. This is substantiated in a survey conducted by Cachalia (1995 : 154) which

revealed that 100% of the respondents were of the opinion that acquisition of English will open doors to educational, economic and political opportunities. This is further substantiated by Leighton *et al.* (1993 : 4) who state that the perception is widely established amongst Black South Africans that mastery of English is the key to the wider world which includes the world of industry and commerce. Smith of a firm of personnel consultants maintains that every company wants the best and that companies want people with exceptional English (Garson, 1995 : 8). But the use of English by Black South Africans in the workplace is not without complications.

One of the executives interviewed complained that union officials insist upon using English as the medium of communication in negotiations. however, he is often unable to understand what the union officials are attempting to say. English is one of the home languages of this particular executive and he was educated at tertiary level in North America. He cites the following problems:-

- * union officials insist upon using impressive-

sounding words although they often use them in the wrong contexts,

- * union officials display an inadequate command of grammar and vocabulary.
- * strange pronunciations of words, and
- * inability to understand spoken English adequately for the purposes of negotiation.

The problematic aspects of communication identified by the executive in question have also been identified by various researchers. Odendaal in Alant (1988 : 16) identifies grammatical problems such as incorrect use of conjunctions and relative pronouns. In addition she mentions wrong choice of words and illogical sequencing of thoughts. Gardner (1986 : 185) reproduced in Alant (1988 : 17) states that students at the University of the Transkei do not read, write or comprehend English and what they produce is a compound which consists of Nguni syntax with an overlay of English words. Students involved in the study maintain that they like to use

impressive words as it makes them sound educated. This is substantiated by Sarinjeive (1994 : 302) who states that students are fond of using impressive-sounding words. The problems identified by the executive are, therefore, not unusual.

The executive further stated that the problems, with regard to the quality of English used by Black union officials, often result in a reduction of effective communication. Management and union official often talk at cross purposes which at times results in a total breakdown of communication and negotiation in the workplace.

3.5 CONCLUSION

English is used by Black South Africans in a wide variety of societal contexts: it is used in politics, education and in the workplace. For effective communication to take place all parties must understand one another whether the communication is oral or written.

English is playing an ever-increasing role in

politics both nationally and internationally. Black South African scholars and students are often disadvantaged in their academic pursuit because of lack of competency in English. The increase in the use of English in the workplace in South Africa is in line with its increasing use in industry and commerce world-wide, but problematic communication situations are often encountered. Many of the problems in these fields can be attributed to the non-standard aspects of Black South African English.

In Chapter 4, the research data obtained from the students will be considered.

CHAPTER 4

4. THE RESEARCH: THE STUDY POPULATION, COLLECTION OF DATA, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMPETENCY.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study arose out of an awareness that Black South African English differs in many ways from Standard English. Sometimes the differences do not affect the transmission of the message, that is the meaning contained in the words. At other times, however, the receiver struggles to comprehend what is said or written. The purpose of the research was to establish the ways in which Black South African English differs from Standard English, to isolate the differences which result in reduced communication or a breakdown of communication from those differences which do not, and to categorize them.

A similar study was conducted at the same university by Sarinjeive in 1994. Her findings correlate with the findings in the present study, however, there

are additional categories of differences which are not included in this study. The reason that the additional categories are not included lies in the fact that they do not interfere with meaning. In other words, the receiver is still able to comprehend the message. Sarinjeive (1994 : 299-303) identifies the following categories which she places under two main headings - mother-tongue interference and oral traditions.

MOTHER-TONGUE INTERFERENCE

Grammatical

Misuse of the definite and indefinite article

Misuse of prepositions

Misuse of verbs and tenses

Misuse of personal pronouns (he/she)

Word order

ORAL TRADITIONS

Rhetorical questions

Incorrect word usage (impressive sounding words)

Pronunciation which affects spelling

Repetition of a word or words

Circumlocution

Hyperbole (personal qualities of protagonist)

(Sarinjeive, 1994 : 299-303)

The categories which Sarinjeive (1994 : 299-303) identified but which do not have a bearing on this study are:-

- word order
- rhetorical questions
- repetition of word or words
- hyperbole

Other categories have been combined so that, for example, spelling and pronunciation fall into a single category in this study.

It is hoped that by highlighting the problematic aspects of Black South African English which result in reduced communication or a breakdown of communication that further research can be conducted in this field and ways may be found to reduce and possibly eliminate the problems. It is beyond the scope of a mini-dissertation to do more than point the way to deeper studies although a few suggestions

will be made which could bring about the improvement of communicative competency.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Over a period of two and a half years the consistent errors in English made by students, in both their written and oral work, have been collected. These errors have been categorized, however, some problems overlap the different categories, for example, spelling is often influenced by pronunciation.

In compiling the categories it has been necessary to bear in mind that students use English in a variety of societal contexts and when they enter the working world the number of societal contexts in which English is used, will increase. For this reason, spelling has been included as a problematic aspect of communication since the image of companies is projected, to a great extent, by means of the written correspondence of their employees. In addition the image of the government is reflected in the written correspondence of employees at various levels including the diplomatic field. Not included are those common errors which, although strange to

the ear of the first-language speaker, do not interfere with actual communication. Examples of these types of errors are:-

- omission of the 's' in the third person singular, present tense and
- expressions such as "I'm very much happy", or "according to my opinion".

4.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study population comprised 635 second, third and fourth-year students. No distinction was made between male and female as this was not important to the study. 68 students were studying Didactics of English and were prospective teachers. 94 students were part-time Education students. All of these students were teachers or had been teachers. Those who had been teachers, and were presently employed in industry and commerce, were hoping to re-enter the education field with better qualifications. 349 students were full-time Education students and the remaining 124 were studying English Language Proficiency for endorsement purposes on their teaching qualifications. All of the students were,

therefore, presently involved in the teaching profession or were hoping to enter or re-enter the profession.

No student studying, Didactics of English or English Language Proficiency was eliminated from the study population. Two students in the Education 200 groups, who were not mother-tongue speakers of an African language, were not included in the study. The remaining 633 students involved in the study, use English as a second language with one or other indigenous South African language being the mother tongue.

4.4 CATEGORIES OF ERRORS

4.4.1 Pronunciation, stress and rhythm, and spelling

Pronunciation, stress and rhythm, and spelling are intertwined, and it is sometimes difficult to separate one from the other. With regard to spelling, only words which are problematic because of pronunciation will be included.

4.4.1.1 Pronunciation, stress and rhythm

The stress in a Zulu or Sotho sentence is placed on the second last syllable of a sentence with the rest of the syllables having more or less the same value. This means that these languages have a very definite rhythm which differs from that of English. In English, the strong beats usually fall on the words which carry a lot of meaning such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, whereas less important words such as articles, conjunctions and prepositions usually have weak beats (du Toit, 1992 : 43). Normal speech has rhythmic groups which consist of a strongly stressed syllable with a number of unstressed syllables (du Toit, 1992 : 43). Speakers of Zulu and Sotho have a tendency to superimpose the general rhythm of their mother tongue upon English, the result of which is that the listener must listen extra-carefully in order to comprehend the words. In the process, a greater or lesser part of the message may be lost. The music of Black South African English is, therefore, different to the music which the first-language user is used to, and just as we speak in rhythmic groups we hear and encounter meaning in rhythmic groups. According to

du Toit *et al.* (1990 : 24), in order to extract the meaning of an utterance, we first recognize the sound patterns in segments related to phrases. In this we are assisted by the rhythm of speech. The sound segments are identified according to the knowledge which is already stored in our long term memory and by relating what is uttered to what has gone before and to that which follows, we build up the meaning of the utterance.

As previously mentioned, the syllables of words in Zulu and Sotho sentences have more or less the same value apart from the longer second last syllable. When the music of these African languages is superimposed upon English, the weak, unstressed end syllables of polysyllabic words are given a longer value than would normally be the case. This causes the listener to concentrate more than usual on the articulation of the words. Chapman *et al.* (1981 :59) states that a speaker whose English is fluent, idiomatic and grammatically correct cannot be understood if his pronunciation is too "foreign". In other words there will be a breakdown of communication if the pronunciation is too strange despite the correctness of the English usage.

According to du Toit (1992 : 40), intelligibility and acceptability are two of the most important criteria for pronunciation. In the case of the Black South African scholar, his most influential role model is the teacher, as has been previously established. If the teacher's pronunciation deviates from acceptable pronunciation, then the child is also likely to learn a deviant pronunciation. Du Toit (1992 : 45) further states that in most cases the learners are unaware that the sounds which they hear, or make, are different from those which first language speakers use. The reason that he gives is that people tend to hear sounds in terms of the sounds used in their mother tongue. In other words, the mother tongue interferes with the hearing and production of sounds.

Some second language learners achieve a more native-like pronunciation than others. Du Toit (1992 : 42) maintains that this is because these learners have a positive attitude towards English. A positive attitude towards the language is intertwined with motivation and such learners have a high motivation to speak with an accent which is as close as possible to that of mother-tongue speakers. Das in

Roos (1991 : 25) states that motivation is a serious problem when the learners are confronted with deviant usage of the target language all the time. In other words, if the child is surrounded by people who use a non-standard pronunciation he will not be motivated to improve his own pronunciation.

Tolerance of deviant pronunciation is another factor which reduces the learner's motivation to improve his pronunciation. If the learner is not made aware of his deviant pronunciation, but rather his pronunciation is tolerated, he may remain unaware of the importance for communication of an intelligible, acceptable pronunciation. Even if he is aware of his non-standard pronunciation, tolerance of such pronunciation may inhibit his desire to improve it. The result of an accumulation of errors and deviations in pronunciation may be that the message is not transmitted to the listener (du Toit, 1992 : 40). In other words there will be reduced communication or a breakdown of communication.

The following are examples of words where there is usually a deviation in pronunciation of the weak, end syllable in that it is given more value than

would be the case if it were pronounced by a first language speaker.

president; winner; professional;
problem; pupil; competition.

In dissyllabic and polysyllabic English words, one syllable tends to stand out more than others, although it is not necessary the same syllable in words having the same number of syllables, for example:

present - present economics - economy

There are a large number of words which the Black South African user of English tends to stress in the wrong place. At times the first language user will not recognize the words and no understanding will take place, or recognition will only follow a few seconds later by which time the listener has lost some of the on-going communication. Common examples of such words follow. In each case the syllable which is incorrectly pronounced in Black South African English is underlined.

adolescent; circumstances; contact;
agreement; equitable;

4.4.1.2 Pronunciation of diphthongs and individual letters of the alphabet

It is not only the rhythm and stress of words as used in Black South African English which affects the listener's comprehension, it is also the way in which certain letters of the alphabet are pronounced. Bobda (1991 :28) states that pronunciation is the greatest source of intelligibility. That is to say, the way words are said affect their comprehensibility. It must be noted that certain standards are advocated for communication to occur effectively whereas standardization of pronunciation is not. In other words, it is not advocated that all people speak with the same accent but simply that words should be pronounced in an acceptable manner.

It is not possible to mention all the letters of the alphabet and the diphthongs which cause problems for the listener and so only a few are designated.

a. The short 'i' found in 'bit' does not exist in Sotho or Zulu. As a result of mother-tongue interference, therefore, the 'i' is usually pronounced by Black South African speakers of English like the 'ee' sound in 'meet'. Examples are:-

rich; give; Africa; still; convince.

b. The letter 'a' is often pronounced as in 'cap' when it should be as in 'cape'. Examples of this deviation are:

parent; vary; various;

c. The end 'd' and 't' of words are often pronounced the same so that 'bed' and 'bet' or 'send' and 'sent' become indistinguishable.

d. The 'e' and the 'a' are pronounced in the same manner so that 'beg' and 'bag' or 'end' and 'and' become indistinguishable.

e. There are also a large number of miscellaneous words which are consistently wrongly pronounced such

as 'jeopardy' which is pronounced 'jopardy', and 'debt' in which the silent 'b' is pronounced.

Many of these pronunciations arose out of the isolation during the apartheid era. Isolation from mother-tongue speakers of English with its accompanying lack of monitoring, as well as mother-tongue interference have resulted in non-standard pronunciations which have become the norm amongst Black South Africans. Because this is what the people have been exposed to as being correct, they are often unaware of their deviant pronunciation. Such deviant pronunciations, however, combined with the deviant rhythm and stress cause the listener considerable stress as he struggles to decipher the message. In the process, there may be reduced communication or indeed a breakdown of communication.

4.4.1.3 Pronunciation and spelling

Research by Bobda (1991 :29) in the Cameroon, Wong (1993 : 46) in the United States of America and Barnard (1989 : 62) in South Africa (amongst Afrikaans-speaking pupils) indicates that

pronunciation affects spelling and that pupils and students in these countries, when learning English as a second language, rely on pronunciation-orthography strategies. Black South Africa users of English also display the same tendency to spell as they pronounce the words. The following are examples of words which are commonly confused, and often misspelled because the Black South African pronunciation of the words is identical or very similar.

live/leave; heart/hat; to/too; cap/cup;
lose/loose; people/pupil; been/being;
wash/watch; sheep/cheap; sight/side.

The list of commonly confused pairs is endless and only a few can be included as well as the following sentences which illustrate how confusion can occur.

- He had to leave without food for a week.

(live/leave)

- Will you watch my baby?

(watch/wash)

The reader must work from the assumption that the writer's message is correct and that he has used the vocabulary which he wished to use. This is not always the case since the pronunciation of the word has interfered with the spelling. The students involved in the study regularly make these errors which often result in lower marks because the examiner can only mark what is on the paper and not what he thinks the student wishes to write.

4.4.2 English usage and meaning

According to Francis (1967 : 3 - 5), language is a system of communication which is arbitrary, conventional and culturally transmitted. By arbitrary is meant that there is usually no connection between the act or object and the word used to denote it. It is conventional because there is agreement between speakers of the language that certain words have certain meanings. Finally, it is culturally transmitted because it is passed on to subsequent generations as a form of learned behaviour.

Since language is a system of communication which is

both arbitrary and conventional, we cannot impose upon it meanings which do not exist, in favour of the conventional meanings otherwise we run the risk of not communicating. Obviously, it is not being implied that language is static and unchanging, but such change is usually a natural, gradual process. The type of change being referred to, is that which is imposed upon the language as a result of diverse circumstances.

Black South African English has developed meanings to words, phrases and idioms which are not understood by first language speakers of English unless they have considerable contact with African non-mother-tongue speakers. This means that there is a breakdown in communication when such words, phrases and idioms are used in the various societal contexts where English is the medium of communication. In the case of international contact, obviously the same lack of understanding will apply since people, living in countries overseas, do not have much contact with Black South Africans.

There are different reasons for these changes in meaning having developed. Isolation from first

language speakers being a major influence as well as children being taught by non-mother-tongue speakers who have an inadequate command of English. To this must be added that relatively few people own or make use of a dictionary. Fewer than 20% of the students involved in the study own a dictionary.

4.4.2.1 Meaning and individual words

Many individual words have acquired meanings which are not understood by first language speakers and which, at times, can cause confusion. According to the students, they like to use impressive-sounding words because this is associated with being educated. The tendency to use impressive-sounding words is substantiated by Sarinjeive (1994 : 302). It is sometimes this tendency to use difficult words, when they are not sure of the meanings, that causes some of the communication difficulties.

The following are a number of words which are incorrectly used by students on a regular basis. The correct words are also given.

whereas

- where

whereby	- when
pressed	- great need to urinate
obstinate	- stupid
suffer	- have difficulty
offend	- break (the law)
idling	- unoccupied or idle (of action)
abscond	- play truant

- A delinquent ends up offending the law.

- Because of his lack of education, he will suffer
to get a job.

- Delinquents end up idling in the streets.

The second sentence also illustrates the students' difficulty in knowing when to use the infinitive and when to use the present participle.

4.4.2.2 Incorrect use of idiomatic expressions

The idiom of the mother tongue may be superimposed upon English. In addition, idiomatic expressions are sometimes shortened or used incorrectly. This can result in great confusion and even in inter-

cultural tension when the following expressions are used to explain absence from work or when they are given as a reason for not having written an examination.

- My father is late. (My father died.)
- My father was being laid. (My father was being buried.)

The expression " I have a bone to pick with you" means that a subject of dispute is to be discussed. In Black South African English, it simply means "I want to discuss something with you." In other words, the subject to be discussed may be innocuous and not a subject of dispute.

The following two examples create an expectation of behaviour which the speaker does not in fact mean.

- She is crying for your help.
(She is asking for your help.)
- Teachers beat children to soften their spirit.
(Teachers beat children to break their spirit.)

4.4.2.3 Concepts and meaning

When a concept consists of two or more words, there is a tendency to eliminate certain words necessary to the meaning of the concept in the mistaken belief that the total meaning of the concept is being retained, for example:

- a premature (a premature school-leaver)
 - a juvenile (a juvenile delinquent)
 - a primary (a primary school child)
 - mural (extra-mural)
-
- A juvenile is someone who commits acts which in an adult would be considered crimes.
 - Premature living can result in the child becoming a delinquent.

It is quite obvious that the above sentences do not communicate what the students intend. This results in the students losing marks unnecessarily. The second sentence combines the incorrect spelling of "leaving" caused by pronunciation, as well as the shortening of the concept "premature school

leaving".

4.4.3 Poor command of vocabulary

According to Krashen (1989 : 440), a large vocabulary is essential for mastery of a language. It is also essential for study purposes particularly at university level. Competence in vocabulary is acquired by means of comprehensible input in the form of reading (Krashen, 1989 :440). The majority of the students involved in the study display a poor command of vocabulary. The students who followed the second year of the didactics course (ENG30D) generally displayed a better command of vocabulary than the other students. These students had all completed ENG200 or ENG300 and had, therefore, completed a considerable amount of compulsory reading of literature. Most of the students rarely read for pleasure. Those, who do read, usually read a newspaper.

A poor command of vocabulary often leads to confusion or simply to contorted sentences which reduce communication as the student struggles to explain his ideas as the following sentences will

illustrate.

- They belong to bad-mannered groups.
(deviant)
- Peer group pressure leads a child to be out of his parents' control.
(causes the parents to lose control of their child)
- He is a colourless person.
(non-racist)
- Some families are financially unbalanced.
(impoverished)
- Stress and accent disturb the second language speaker to use the language effectively.
(prevent from using)
- The punctuation makes the meaning to be clear.
(clarifies the meaning).

4.4.4 Language errors

All of the students involved in the study make language errors. Only those language errors which

interfere with communication have been included.

Roos (1991 : 25) states that because there is so much tolerance of errors, learners may believe that errors do not matter. This means that learners who believe that errors do not matter will do little to improve their grammatical competency. Woods in Roos (1991 : 25) maintains that acceptance of all language errors could lead to poor communication abilities on the part of the learner.

The ability to communicate effectively is particularly important for students at tertiary level because they must communicate their ideas and knowledge to their lecturers in both written and verbal form. If they are unable to do this effectively, it can have a negative effect on the marks which they receive.

It is also important in the workplace to be able to communicate effectively. Ineffective communication can cause tension, as has previously been indicated. Financial losses as well as accidents may occur within companies when instructions are not understood and carried out.

In politics and government, the importance of effective communication cannot be sufficiently stressed since the well-being of the country and its citizens is at stake.

4.4.4.1 The definite and indefinite article

All of the students involved in the study have problems with the articles. Errors in the articles can usually be laid at the door of mother-tongue interference since articles do not form part of the grammatical structure of Sotho. This is substantiated by Sarinjeive (1994 : 300) who states that there is no formal mechanism by means of which definiteness and indefiniteness are overtly marked in Sotho. The students, therefore, have great difficulty in knowing when to use the indefinite article, when to use the definite article and when to omit the article altogether. It becomes a hit and miss usage.

- Do you want the food?

Many Black South African speakers use this to mean:

(a) Do you want food? and

(b) Do you want the food?

The first language speaker has difficulty in determining which meaning the speaker intends.

- I have the book and the pencil.

This is used interchangeably to mean:

(a) I have a book and a pencil, and

(b) I have the book and the pencil.

- This kind of behaviour is not an acceptable in the townships.

In this sentence an indefinite article is used before an adjective creating the impression that a noun will follow the adjective. When the noun does not follow the adjective, the listener may experience confusion as he tries to fill in the gap.

4.4.4.2 Prepositions

Black South African speakers of English have great difficulty with prepositions. One does not find

prepositions in Sotho . so that 'setulo' means 'the chair' and 'setulong' means 'on the chair'. The suffix, '-ng' has many meanings which the listener determines from the context. Mother-tongue interference lies, then, at the root of incorrect prepositional usage, however, the problem has been exacerbated by the lack of interaction between first language speakers and second language speakers over a long period of time. The following sentences illustrate some of the common prepositional difficulties.

- My daughter sits on the table to do her homework. (at)
- We support the fight for crime. (against)
- His marks show a decline from school work. (in)
- He did not favour anyone on top of Siphon. (over)
- The father has the responsibility of the child. (for)

4.4.4.3 Miscellaneous errors

It is very difficult to classify certain errors

although the cause lies largely with lack of monitoring because of isolation from first language speakers. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of vocabulary. The following are examples of a variety of common errors.

- for the left twenty minutes.
(for the remaining twenty minutes)
- It is too important. (very)
- an everytime answer.
(an answer which is always valid)
- English makes other Black languages not to be dominant.
(prevents the dominance of other Black languages)

4.5 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The approach to improved communicative competence must be three-fold. It must affect the scholar, the student and the teacher. The teacher is the pupil's role model as was previously stated. He must, therefore, use the best possible English. The child learns from the teacher, but can also contribute to the improvement of his own language. The student is

the product of the school (and the teacher) and he will, in turn, contribute to the child's language usage as an educator. The word educator is used in its widest sense to mean anyone who is involved in the child's upbringing. In other words, anyone who interacts meaningfully with the child as he is led to adulthood.

4.5.1 The teacher

The Molteno Project is engaged in courses to upgrade the quality of teaching. Teacher training materials including training films have been developed as part of the general upgrading programme. Additionally, a first course in English has been developed (Burnett, 1989 : 56). READ also runs programmes designed to improve the quality of English teaching. These programmes also include a variety of specially designed teaching materials. As many teachers as possible should be encouraged to participate in these courses as they make a valuable contribution to the improvement of the teacher's language skills as well as his teaching skills.

In-service training is one of the ways in which the

Department of Education attempts to improve the teacher's skills. It would be advantageous if a course could be based on the typical errors made in communication by Black South African users of English. The teacher would then become aware of the facets of his language competency which are problematic. Through awareness of the weaknesses in his language competency, the teacher will become actively involved in the process of improving his communicative competence especially if he comes to realize the negative effect that ineffective communication has on the child's ability to perform academically. Active involvement also includes monitoring since, according to Krashen in Brown, H.D. (1987 : 188), monitoring involves editing one's output with what is consciously perceived .

Awareness of the problematic areas of Black South African English, awareness of the weaknesses in the teacher's own language usage, monitoring against correct usage by mother-tongue users and active participation are interrelated. By means of an increased awareness of problematic areas in his own communication skills as well as those of the people in his community, the teacher will be motivated to

improve his competence. Improved competence will be transferred to the scholars since their main role model is their teacher.

There is much that the teacher can do himself to improve his communicative competence. Facilitators of the various training courses should impress the importance of reading upon the participating teacher. Additionally, he should be made aware that listening to English programmes on radio and television will also contribute to the improvement of language skills.

To summarize briefly, the teacher should be given help in improving his communicative competence by means of additional training from the Department of Education as well as any other organizations involved in this work. He must, however, be intrinsically motivated to improve the quality of his language usage through active participation. Improvement in the communicative competence of the teacher will have a direct effect on the language learnt by the scholars.

4.5.2 The scholar

Das in Roos (1991 : 25) states that motivation to eliminate errors becomes a serious problem when the learners are surrounded by deviant usage of the target language. This is one of the problems which Black South African children, who attend historically Black schools, are confronted with daily. If the teacher, who is the main role model, is actively involved in improving the quality of his own English language usage then the scholar will benefit. In addition, the teacher should try to make the scholar aware of the value of improving his English skills. The child should be made aware that improvement in his language skills will make studying easier and can improve academic performance. He should also be made aware that good English language skills can be beneficial when he enters the workforce later in life.

The teacher must, however, look for ways of improving the input which the child receives. The teacher can use pre-recorded tapes of mother-tongue speakers almost daily in his classroom. He should try to use the voices of as many people as possible

so as to expose the child to the biggest possible variety of speakers. In this way the child is not limited to the voice of the teacher. Poetry lends itself well to pre-recording. Items from the radio can be recorded to form a basis for discussion. Younger children enjoy listening to stories. These are commercially available, but the teacher may make use of non-commercial tapes. The tape recorder is a valuable asset for the non-mother-tongue teacher of English.

According to Krashen (1989 : 441), more aural and written comprehensible input results in more language acquisition. This means that the children should be encouraged to read as much as possible as well as being frequently exposed to the spoken word. Davis (1995 : 329) maintains that extensive reading is a crucial adjunct to classroom teaching in helping to expose the pupils to more "good" English than, unassisted, the teacher can hope to do. He further maintains that extensive reading improves the pupil's active and passive vocabulary and that the pupil will also use a greater variety of sentence structures. In other words, input through reading will bring about greater communicative

competence.

The ideal would be that every classroom should have its own library. Money is always a problem, but books can be solicited from the community or bought cheaply at jumble sales. The teacher can also make bulk loans from the library. In addition, old magazines, comics and travel brochures can be brought into the classroom. A free reading period can be included in the English schedule. The children should not be tested on what they have read, however, they should feel free to use this literature as background information for prepared speeches or other tasks.

All children should be encouraged to read a certain number of English books each term. The class library can provide scope for this activity. The class library can also be used for projects. In primary school, in particular, each child should be given a project which he can work on when he has finished the tasks set by the teacher.

The teacher can also encourage the child to join organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and

youth clubs. The child will then have the opportunity to mix with mother-tongue speakers of English on an informal basis. This will provide him with opportunities to use the language in non-threatening situations.

In conclusion, the teacher can help the child by providing a wide variety of opportunities for using the target language and by encouraging the child to read. The child can contribute to his language acquisition by participating in activities outside the school which provide opportunities for using English.

4.5.3 The student

The number of underprepared students entering tertiary institutions is increasing so that many institutions find it necessary to create programmes to assist pupils with their learning difficulties (Agar & Knopfmacher, 1995 : 115). Many of the problems which the students experience are related to language. As has been previously established, the students are studying through the medium of a language which is not their mother tongue and which

they rarely use outside the educational institution.

Academic Support Programmes play a vital role in helping students with their studies, however, not all students make use of this help. In addition, many students do not have enough time to make use of this facility. The students require a more intensive form of help, over a longer period of time than is usually available in Academic Support Programmes, to counteract their language deficiencies.

According to Agar & Knopfmacher (1995 : 115), students who attended DET schools are considered to be severely disadvantaged. If the students are disadvantaged and underprepared, then one must accept that the standard of English is lower than is necessary for university studies. It should not be expected of a Black student to cope with university studies in English when his English language competency is lower than required. This is especially significant when it is coupled with the fact that the medium of instruction for Black students is not the mother tongue. The answer may lie in a bridging course, or, in a pre-university

course such as is available at colleges in the United States of America or Canada. Another means of counteracting the problem of underprepared students is to introduce a post-matriculation such as is available at certain private schools in South Africa.

Bridging Courses are being used at various institutions to counteract the disadvantage experienced by Black students. Such courses are designed to upgrade the student's level of proficiency. Although these course should be subject specific to a certain degree, there should also be a strong language component to supplement the deficiencies in the student's English. In other words, such a course should deal with specific problems which the Black South African student encounters. The Academic Support Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand, for example, is designed to integrate language and learning skills into subject matter (Agar & Knopfmacher, 1995 : 115-116).

The course should have oral and aural components. There should be considerable emphasis on reading to

increase the student's input and to broaden the basis for further studies. Davis (1995 : 330) states that the benefits of intensive reading are considerable and result in improved language skills, reading skills, personal growth and improved examination results.

Language problems specific to the Black South African learner should be incorporated in drill exercises. The necessity for language exercises is substantiated by Paulston in Roos (1991 : 26) who states that drill exercises provide the practice which is necessary to automatize the use of grammatical structures and language functions. Palmer in Knight (1991 : 13) maintains that it is necessary to teach grammar since it makes it possible for us to form and understand an infinite number of sentences.

Creative writing, starting with sentence building, paragraph building and logical sequencing of thoughts, should also form part of the course. Gardner in Alant (1988 : 16) identified illogical sequencing of thoughts as one of the problem areas in a study in the Transkei. Illogical sequencing of

thoughts and poor paragraphing were among the complaints made by colleagues at the university where this study was conducted. Punctuation exercises are also necessary as are vocabulary building exercises. Practice in these areas will prepare the students for the writing of academic essays as part of his university studies.

In other words, all the facets of English which are usually included in a high school course should form part of this course. The aim should be to bring the students to the level of proficiency required by first-language users of English who are about to enter university. If the students can achieve this level of proficiency, they should not experience unnecessary language difficulties when they approach their studies.

4.6 CONCLUSION

There are many instances when Black South African English results in reduced communication or a breakdown in communication. It is only possible within the scope of a mini-dissertation to mention a few examples to illustrate the various problematic

areas. Most of these errors are the result of mother-tongue interference and/or isolation from first language users of English.

The study population comprised both men and women students all of whom were students in the faculty of education at an historically Black university. All the students had attended school during the apartheid era when children attended schools according to their race which effectively reduced their exposure to mother-tongue English speakers.

All of the students displayed some of the problems highlighted by the research; some of the students displayed all of the problems, and certain problems such as the incorrect usage of articles, prepositions and idiomatic expressions were displayed by all of the students. It was not the purpose of this mini-dissertation to quantify the errors, but merely to describe, explain and categorize the errors which are common and which result in reduced communication or a breakdown of communication.

A variety of suggestions which could promote

communicative competency among second language users were made. The suggestions approached the problem from a three-fold perspective, that is with reference to the improvement of the competency of the teacher, the child and the student.

Chapter 5 constitutes a conclusion of the mini-dissertation.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

5.1 SUMMARY

It has been established that English has evolved as the lingua franca of many countries in Africa especially, but not only, those countries with a British colonial heritage. In South Africa it has become the dominant language in a multi-cultural society.

English is variously seen as a neutral language, a language of liberation and a language of unity. In many African countries, it is an official language without being the mother tongue of any of the diverse people of those countries. In South Africa, it is the mother tongue of approximately 3 million people but it is spoken as a second or foreign language by approximately 90% of the population.

English, in South Africa, has become the language of Black education in addition to its status as the language of education for English mother-tongue speakers. It is also an important language of

science, technology, business and commerce. It is increasingly becoming the language of industry and politics as well as being the language of diplomacy.

It was necessary to compare Black South African English with some other form of English. Standard English was chosen because it is the language used by educated people all over the world. It is also the form used in textbooks and other forms of literature. In addition it is the language preferred by government, parents and employers.

It has further been established that Black South African English is a non-standard or deviant form of English which can result in reduced communication or a breakdown of communication. This can have dire effects in the working world or in political situations. It cannot be regarded as dialect because it is not the mother tongue of the speakers thereof and a dialect is a variation of the mother-tongue language.

As a deviant form of English, it arose out of the apartheid era when there was little communication between different language groups. In addition,

mother-tongue interference and demographic factors contributed to the development of Black South African English.

Although certain aspects of Black South African English are the result of mother-tongue interference, or, of the superimposition of aspects of the mother tongue upon the English, it cannot be equated with the Caribbean dialect of English because English is the mother tongue of the speakers of this dialect whereas it is a second language for Black South Africans.

Many of the idiosyncrasies of Black South African English developed because of the isolation from mother-tongue speakers. They were propagated in an education system where the teachers were teaching through the medium of a language not their own, a language in which they were often not fluent. The majority of the teachers and the pupils in historically Black schools seldom use English outside the classroom situation. This lack of communicative interaction deprives them of the opportunity to monitor their English against that of mother-tongue speakers. Many of the language errors

occur with great frequency and have become part of Black South African English.

It has been established that English is used in a variety of societal contexts by Black South Africans. It is used in the school situation as the official medium of instruction of the many Black South African children from the fifth year onwards, although nowadays, as a result of parental insistence and the opening up of schools to all population groups, it is the medium of instruction of many Black South African children from the first year of school. It is also the language of instruction at many tertiary institutions, particularly those which were historically Black.

Lack of competency in English on the part of the teacher and the pupils in historically Black schools, as well as non-standard English has a negative effect upon teaching and learning. This negative effect is also felt at tertiary level resulting in underachievement.

It has also been established that English is increasingly being used in national politics because

it is often the only language which the politician can use to reach all sections of society and because it is viewed as a neutral language. It has, furthermore, become the dominant language in international politics which includes the diplomatic field.

In the workplace, it has been established that English is gradually gaining a stronger foothold and there is greater insistence upon the use of English particularly at managerial and executive level by the various companies. The increasing use of English in South Africa is in line with emerging industrial countries in the Far East and is largely because English is an international language. In the working context, Black South African English draws a number of complaints because it often results in reduced communication or a breakdown in communication.

It has further been established that English is perceived by Black South Africans to be the language of education, and mastery of English is regarded as a means of access to a better economic life.

This research has concentrated on Black South African English as it is used in societal contexts and a number of problems have been revealed. These problems are largely the result of mother-tongue interference, the superimposition of the mother tongue upon English and isolation from first language speakers because of the political ideology imbedded in apartheid as well as demographic factors. The problems which have been revealed have the effect of reducing communication and at times breaking down communication altogether. The errors have become so common that users of Black South African English are usually unaware that their English is non-standard and is resulting in ineffective communication.

Suggestions were made with regard to means of improving the communicative competence of teachers, scholars and students. Remediation should incorporate the specific needs of Black South Africans.

It has been indicated that improvement of communicative English competency will have a positive effect on the achievement of learners at

all levels. The improvement will eventually be apparent in the workplace and in the greater competency of future teachers who are now students. Greater English competency is a means of empowerment which will contribute to the Black South African achieving his rightful place in society.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ADENDORFF, R. 1990. Interpretive Tasks in the ESL Classroom. Journal for Language Teaching. 24 (1): 1-27.
2. ADENDORFF, R. 1991. English now and in a future South Africa. Journal for Language Teaching. 25 (3): 65-74.
3. AGAR, D.L., & KNOPFMACHER, N. 1995. The learning and study strategies inventory: A South African application. Higher Education 30: 115-126.
4. AITCHISON, J. 1987. Teach yourself Linguistics. Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton.
5. ALANT, E. 1988. The strengths and weaknesses of written English of black high school pupils. Per Linguam. 4: 16-24.
6. ASKES, H. 1985. Second language teaching: Techniques and Activities. Goodwood: Via Africa.

7. BEUKES, A. 1991. The Politics of Language in Formal Education: The Position of Afrikaans. Journal for Language Teaching. 25. (1): 64-77.
8. BOBDA, A.S. 1991. Does Pronunciation Matter? Forum. XXIX (4), December: 28-30.
9. BAMGBOSE, A. 1994. Nigeria's Choice. Unesco Courier. February: 22-26.
10. BARNARD, Y. 1989. Spelling Strategies of Afrikaans-speaking Learners of English. The NESLATT Journal. 4: 55-68.
11. BROWN, H.D. 1987. Principles of language learning and teaching. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc.
12. BROWN, J. 1987. The application of applied linguistic theory to school content subjects. In Young, D. (ed) Bridging the Gap between theory and practice in English language teaching. Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman. 41-51.

13. BRUMFIT, C.J. 1984. Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching. The roles of fluency and accuracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
14. BURGESS, C. 1990. Proficiency in English with ease. Southern Africa Today. June: 14-15.
15. BURNETT, M. 1989. The Molteno Project. Crux. August: 56-59.
16. CACHALIA, N. 1995. A Survey of Johannesburg English Teachers' Opinions on a Language Policy for Education in a Post-Apartheid South Africa. Perspectives Education. 16 , 1: 147-161.
17. CARNEY, E. 1994. A Survey of English Spelling. London: Routledge.
18. CHAPMAN, M.J.F., DORNER, H.H.T. JACKSON, E.R., SAYCELL, K.J. 1981. Subject Didactics: English (Higher Education Diploma). Pretoria: Unisa.

19. CLUVER, A.D.DE V. 1993. The Decline of Afrikaans. Language Matters: Studies in the languages of South Africa. 24: 15-46.
20. COBBLEIGH, T. 1995. Times Diary. Sunday Times. 28 May. 23.
21. COUZENS, T. 1995. Have you cuddled your comma today? Sunday Times. 17 September. 18.
22. DAVIS, C. 1995. Extensive reading: an expensive extravaganza? ELT Journal. 49/4: 329-336.
23. DULAY, H., BURT, M. & KRASHEN, S. 1987. Language Two. New York: Oxford Press.
24. DU TOIT, F. 1992. LPR100/110 component 1 STUDY MANUAL. Pretoria: Vista University.
25. DU TOIT, F., LEIGHTON, V., DAVEY, C., FOURIE, M. 1990. ENG20D COMPONENT 1 STUDY MANUAL SUBJECT DIDACTICS: ENGLISH. Pretoria: Vista University.

26. ELLIS, R. 1987. Using the English Medium in African Schools. In Young, D. (ed) Bridging the Gap between theory and practice in English language teaching. Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman. 82-99.
27. EVANS, T. 1982. Teaching English. London: Crook Helm.
28. FRANCIS, W.N. 1967. The English Language An Introduction. London: The English Universities Press.
29. FROMKIN, V. & RODMAN, R. 1983. An Introduction to Language. Third Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
30. GAGANAKIS, P.S. 1992. Language and Ethnic Group Relations in Non-Racial Schools. The English Academy Review. 9: 46-55.
31. GARSON, P. 1995. Recipe for Finding a Job. INTERCOM. 7: September: 8. Pretoria:

Vista.

32. GUPTA, R. & SARAIVAN, V. 1995. Old Beliefs Impede Student Teacher Learning of Reading Instruction. Journal of Education for Teaching: international research and pedagogy. 21: 3. 347-360.
33. HOLLINGWORTH, B. 1989. Teach English Well. Pietermaritzburg: Schuter and Shooter.
34. HONEY, J. 1991. Does Accent Matter. London: Faber and Faber.
35. KILFOIL, W.R. & van der WALT, C. 1989. Learn to Teach. Pretoria: Academica.
36. KNIGHT, K. 1991. Do we need to teach English Grammar? How? Educamus 37:3 March: 13-17.
37. KRASHEN, S. 1981. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
38. KRASHEN, S. 1989. We Acquire Vocabulary and

Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for
the Input Hypothesis. The Modern Language
Journal 73. (iv): 440-463.

39. LEIGHTON, V., DU TOIT, F., JAGGAN, V.A.J.
1993. English 30D/31D Component 1 Study
Manual Subject Didactics: English.
Pretoria, Vista.
40. MARSELLO, A.W. 1991. Boosting Student
Esteem All the Way--to Failure. English
Journal. 80: 1. January: 72-73.
41. MATHIANE, N. 1989. The Triumph of
English. Frontline. 9: 7-9.
42. MERSHAM, G. 1987. South African English
as a Medium of Intercultural
Communication. Lantern. 36. 3: 67-71
43. MOYO, T. 1994. The Relevance of
Attribution Theory to Language Learning
and Language Teaching. Language Matters.
25: 37-46.

44. PAASCHE, K.I. 1989. English Teaching in a multicultural context. Crux. August. 20-26.
45. POVEY, J. 1987. Literature and applied linguistics. In Young, D. (ed) Bridging the Gap between theory and practice in English language teaching. Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman. 52-61.
46. PRINSLOO, K.P. 1987. Review of findings from the HSRC's languages survey, 1973-1979: A tribute to L.W. Lanham as a research colleague. In Young, D. (ed) Bridging the Gap between theory and practice in English language teaching. Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman. 23-30.
47. ROOS, R. 1990. Language attitudes in the second language situation. Per Linguam. 6, 2: 25-30.
48. ROOS, R. 1991. Error Analysis: The Next Step. Journal for Language Teaching. 25, 2: 21-30.

49. RSA
see
South Africa (Republic)
50. RUPERTI, R.M. 1976. The Education System in Southern Africa. Pretoria: van Schaik.
51. SARINJEIVE, D. 1994. The influences of mother-tongue and oral traditions on students' writing in English. Journal for Language Teaching. 28, 3: 295 -305.
52. SARINJEIVE, D. 1995. Dialects, Standards, Myths. Unpublished.
53. SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). Ministry of Education. 1997. Call for comments on the draft statement on the National Curriculum for Grades 1-9 (No. 788.) Government Gazette. 384, June 6. No. 18051.
54. STREVEENS, P. 1977. New Orientations in the Teaching of English. Oxford: Oxford.
55. SYKES, J.B., (ed) 1983. The Concise Oxford

Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon.

56. THERON, F. 1993. Training beyond Literacy
Some thoughts on teaching English in a
future South Africa. Language matters:
Studies in the languages of Southern
Africa. 24: 76-90.
57. VAN DER WALT, J. 1989. Task-based
Language Teaching: Theory and Practice.
The NESLATT Journal. 4: 9-13.
58. VAN DER WALT, J.L., VAN DER WALT, I. &
DREYER, C. 1994. The Effect of Error
Correction on the Grammatical Competence of
ESL Students. Journal for Language
Teaching. 28, 1: 7-17.
59. WADE, J. 1992. Re-thinking Teaching
English for Another South Africa. Journal
of Literary Studies. 8 (3/4): 233-253.
60. WALKER, G. 1987. The design of English
language teaching materials for the Black
primary school in southern Africa. In Young, D.

(ed) Bridging the Gap between theory and practice in English language teaching.

Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman. 100-113.

61. WONG, R. 1993. Pronunciation Myths and Facts. Forum. XXX1 (4). October: 45-46.
62. ZOTWANA, S.Z. 1989. The Problems of Black Learners with English as a Second Language. The NESLATT Journal. 4: 1-8.