

**AN ASSESSMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS' ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THE PRONUNCIATION OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN
ENGLISH**

BY

S.F. VAN ROOYEN

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S.F. VAN ROOYEN

BA, HONS BA

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SUPERVISOR: Dr H.G. van Wyk

**CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr A.J. van Rooy
Potchefstroom**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“To speak, or not to speak BSAE?”

1.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

On 8 May 1996 the Republic of South Africa adopted a new democratic constitution. The immensely multilingual, multicultural character of South African society is acknowledged by the Constitution's provision for eleven official languages. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language in general may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, the degree of importance or status it enjoys in a particular community, or even the importance of the people who use it as a first or second language (Schmied, 1991: 164 - 165). The socio-political changes which have taken place in South Africa since 1994 have had a significant influence on Black¹ South African English (hereafter referred to as BSAE) as a variety of South African English (hereafter referred to as SAE). BSAE is regarded as the English of English second language speakers whose first languages are Bantu² languages.

¹ The term “black” is used to refer to black South Africans who are first language speakers of an African language and who speak English as a second language. They are to be distinguished from Afrikaans first language speakers who are also English second language speakers. No political connotation should be attached to the use of the term here.

² The term “Bantu” is used here solely in reference to a linguistic family - black first language speakers of a related group of African languages - and no political connotation should be inferred from it.

BSAE used to be viewed as a minor second language variety of relatively low social status (Smit & Wissing, 2000: 11). It deviated from standard SAE, was usually difficult to understand and generally regarded as unimportant. Since 1994 the social milieu in South Africa has changed to the extent that previously established social groups have lost their sharp boundaries and the speakers of BSAE have started taking up the majority position they have always had numerically (Smit & Wissing, 2000: 10 - 11). Strong feelings against everything previously associated with apartheid resulted in Afrikaans losing some of its status, while many varieties of English have been brought to the upper levels of South African society and, with them, the question of what are acceptable standards of spoken English (Van der Schyf & Wissing, 2000: 21). BSAE today enjoys public attention as a distinct variety of SAE and it is used extensively in the public broadcasting media. Given its distinct accent and other linguistic properties, the question is how it is perceived by English first language speakers and second language speakers countrywide. The primary focus of this study, therefore, is the perception of English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils towards BSAE.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In South Africa, before 1994, English was the language used in the political struggle against apartheid (Titlestad, 1996:172). After the 1994 elections political restructuring in South Africa emphasised the need for affirmative action and black empowerment, providing equal opportunities to members of all racial groups. Even the linguistic sphere was affected with the recognition of eleven official languages, putting South Africa in a uniquely complex linguistic situation. In the field of public broadcasting members of

historically disadvantaged communities who never had any free access to it due to the apartheid era, were appointed as television presenters and commentators. The majority of these were not native speakers of English (Lanham, 1996: 30). Consequently, Black South Africans - second and third language speakers of English - are employed as television commentators and a wide range of SAE accents are represented professionally in the broadcasting media (Wright, 1996: 158).

When a speaker starts learning a second language, acquisition of his/her mother tongue has already been achieved intuitively during his/her early stages of development. This means that all normal children acquire the language that they hear around them without special instruction. A person loses this ability after the so-called "critical age" for language acquisition, which coincides with the lateralization of the brain (between the age of two and the onset of puberty). Therefore second language acquisition takes place slightly differently from mother-tongue acquisition (Lyons, 1981: 248 - 253).

The structure of the target language always differs from that of the mother language, resulting in differences in pronunciation of the target language in an inter-ethnic communication context (Van Dyk, 1991: 43-44). The technical term "interference" was initially used to denote this influence of the first language on a second or third language, but it has since been replaced with the term "transfer" (Mesthrie, 1999: 7). Positive transfer occurs when similarities between a first language and the target language aid the acquisition process. Negative transfer occurs when the learner chooses a construction more similar to the mother tongue than to the target language (Mesthrie, 1999: 7 - 8).

When the learner of a target language pronounces its sounds differently from the (standard) pronunciation of its mother-tongue speakers, he/she is said to talk with an accent (Strevens, 1977: 134). Bantu languages like Zulu, Tswana and Sotho have different sound systems from English. The Nguni group of languages to which Zulu belongs, for example, has five basic vowels as opposed to the twenty-one basic vowels and diphthongs distinguished in English. A Zulu speaker's pronunciation of words like *bed*, *bird* and *bad* might sound similar and make it difficult for a listener to interpret meaning, especially in an ambiguous context (Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993:240). The Sotho languages like Southern Sotho which is spoken in the Free State, have a seven-vowel system (Van den Heever, 1999: 17).

Accent remains the primary target of "social stigmatisation" (Webb, 1996: 183). In reality pronunciation of black South Africans' English is often ridiculed and imitated, both privately and publicly. During his 1998 one-man show the well-known South African satirist, Casper de Vries, ridiculed various deviations from standard English pronunciation which occur in BSAE.

Since the 1994 elections a "more tolerant approach" (Webb, 1996: 186) has been advocated on all spheres of life in South Africa. This implies that an attitude of linguistic chauvinism has to be replaced with an attitude of linguistic tolerance, displaying appreciation and encouragement of Third World varieties of English (Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984: 161). Attitude can be regarded as a "hypothetical construct to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour" (De Klerk & Bosch, 1993: 209). Smit and Wissing (2000: 10) define attitude as "complex, object-directed and situation-specific, affective

and cognitive, partly subconscious”.

As a result of the shift in power since the elections in 1994 and the advent of black empowerment, the role of BSAE has undergone dramatic changes. The question is whether the attitudes of South Africans towards BSAE and its distinctive pronunciation have changed for the better or not. Relatively little attention is paid to pronunciation in teaching English as a second or third language in schools, one reason being that language teachers themselves are often ignorant of basic language differences (Van Dyk, 1991: 43). Lanham's report on the teaching of English in Bantu primary schools (1967: 3) states that literary studies were emphasised in English teaching, instead of focussing on the spoken word.

Another aspect to consider regarding attitudes toward BSAE is whether these attitudes originate because speakers experience the language as linguistically or acoustically unacceptable, or whether their judgements are based on the skin colour of the speaker. Carrier (1999: 66) determined that social interaction is influenced by the structure of the society in which people live and work. Factors involved in social interaction include a speaker's lineage, wealth, occupation and, in the South African context, also ethnicity and the political affiliations of speakers. Speakers react to one another by evaluating their relationship to each other (Carrier, 1999: 70). Because attitude is a reflection of “human behaviour” it is only logical to assume that the political and social milieu in a community will inevitably colour the attitudes of the members of that community. Given South Africa's turbulent political history and the apartheid policy it is equally inevitable that the youth of today might still, to some extent, adhere to the convictions of their parents,

whether they be black, white or coloured. Alexander (1989: 10) points out that racial prejudice and racism are reinforced and maintained by language barriers as well as by group areas, separate schools and separate amenities. Although the democratic elections of 1994 have to a large extent abolished formal apartheid in South Africa, the process of integration and acceptance of the "new South Africa" is not an overnight process. It is questionable whether speaking the same language - English - will cause white, black or coloured speakers to regard themselves as one nation or one culture. The distinction "Black SAE" in itself indicates the opposite. It is quite feasible, then, that political convictions ingrained in speakers will cause them to (perhaps subconsciously) evaluate a language variety such as BSAE not according to its linguistic features, but according to personal political/racial prejudices.

The following questions arise:

- What are the attitudes of English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils towards BSAE?
- Are these attitudes based on linguistic deviations from the standard variety of English or are they based on racial bias?

1.3 AIMS

- 1.3.1 To determine what the attitudes of English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils are towards the pronunciation of BSAE.

- 1.3.2 To determine whether the attitudes revealed in section 4.1 (Chapter 4) are based on linguistic variations from so-called Standard English or whether they are based on racial bias.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

- 1.4.1 English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils will have different attitudes regarding deviations in the pronunciation of BSAE, with the English first language pupils being the least tolerant.
- 1.4.2 Attitudes of English first language pupils will be based on linguistic variations from their own standard pronunciation, whereas the attitudes of Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils might be politically/racially biased.

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.5.1 Literature Study

Various studies have been conducted regarding SAE, like those of Lanham (1985), Cooper (1989), De Klerk and Bosch (1993), Nortje (1995), Gough (1996), Smit (1996), Mesthrie (1999), Van den Heever (1999) and Van Rooy (2000) and (to appear). Chapter 2 provides a historical background of English in South Africa and takes a closer look at the sociolinguistic significance of its pronunciation. The terms “accent” and “attitude” are defined and the integration of the two aspects is pointed out. Previous studies in

language attitude are discussed, with specific focus on contributions to be made by the current study. The sound systems of English and Southern African Bantu languages are compared and the main effects of these differences on English second language pronunciation are pointed out.

The following databases were consulted beforehand:

- a Nexus - HSRC
- b Potchefstroom University Library Catalogue
- c Repertorium of South African Magazines
- d ERIC
- e MLA Bibliography

Key terms used in the computer search:

English or Engels; second and language; tweede taal or/and mother and tongue; nie moedertaal; uitspraak; uitspreek; aksent; accent; pronunciation; omroep; uitsaai; broadcast; television; attitude; houding; persepsie; perception.

1.5.2 Empirical Study

In Chapter 3 the empirical research of this study is presented. The design of the test, which was conducted with the aid of a personality questionnaire, is explained. The procedure includes a description of the test population, instruments used in the data collection, as well as the practical execution of the test.

1.5.3 Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaires was done in cooperation with the Statistical Consultation Service at the Potchefstroom University. The results of the empirical research described in Chapter 3 are discussed in Chapter 4. The statistics rendered by the analysis are presented in various tables which indicate the differences in perception towards BSAE among the three different language groups and possible explanations are offered for these differences.

1.5.4 Conclusion

In Chapter 5 the conclusion of this study is presented, along with recommendations for further study and research to find answers to unresolved issues mentioned in the present study.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE AND ATTITUDE IN A MULTILINGUAL SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the theoretical background to this study on language attitudes and attempts to lay the groundwork for the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1. The historical background puts English in South Africa in perspective and introduces some of the aspects that make BSAE such an interesting field of study. It is followed by a discussion on BSAE and the characteristics which make it a distinct variety of SAE. The terms “accent” and “attitude” are defined next and the importance of an integration of the two aspects is explained. The significance of this study is elaborated on, followed by a literary overview of previous attitude studies regarding SAE. The sound systems of English and African languages are compared in order to account for some of the distinctive features of BSAE.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

English as a language was introduced to South Africa in the early nineteenth century when the tentacles of British Colonisation finally reached the most southern point of the African continent. What makes the study of South African English so interesting is the fact that the vast majority of SAE speakers are first language speakers of indigenous Bantu

languages, with the minority of SAE speakers being first language speakers of English (Simo Bobda, 2000: 252).

After the democratic elections in 1994 South Africa declared 11 official languages. The 1991 census (Schuring, 1993) listed the speakers of the official languages as follows:

- English - 3,4 million
- Afrikaans - 5,8 million
- 9 Bantu languages, including Xhosa,
North and South Ndebele,
North and South Sotho, Tswana,
Tsonga, Venda and Zulu - 37,5 million

In the early 1960's the principle of first language education was applied in black schools as part of the Nationalist government's policy of apartheid and its effort to reinforce separateness between blacks and whites in the country. The policy failed, mainly due to the black people's belief that their own language did not facilitate access to participation and mobility in wider society (De Klerk, 1997: 99). English is the one medium of communication acceptable to inhabitants of all races in all nine provinces in South Africa, and this alone emphasises its importance as a language of wider communication.

With the political, economic and social changes in South Africa in the recent past, English has come to be viewed by Africans as a world-wide language of wider communication and many Africans are eager to acquire it. Herriman and Burnaby (1996: 18) point out that a survey done in 1993 among African men and women indicated that "English was the

preferred language in all categories of the respondents” for use as their official language. English is furthermore viewed by Africans as the “language of liberation” (Schmied, 1991: 94). Coetzee-Van Rooy (2000: 34) points out that social mobilisation can be linked to phenomena like ethnicity and nationalism. Language (in South Africa’s case, English) is seen as a resource used by an ethnic group to enable a struggle against social disadvantages. Although the State initially tried to enforce the use of Afrikaans, the economy provided a strong instrumental motivation for learning English. English is accordingly preferred as the language of education and employment, especially in areas of non-manual employment (Buthelezi, 1995: 243). According to Extra and Maartens (1998: 110) English is frequently regarded as a gateway to the world for all people, regardless of their roots, and those who lack English competency are regarded as being “linguistically deprived.”

Immediately linked with the domination of the former two official languages are negative stereotypes regarding the African languages that are held by Afrikaans and English speakers and often by speakers of the African languages themselves. African languages are regarded as subordinate instruments restricted to the domestic and religious domains (Departments of Art, Culture, Science and Technology, 1998: 4). Coetzee-Van Rooy (2000: 193) determined in her research on language planning that South Sotho respondents preferred their first language for communicating with their families, but they preferred English as medium of instruction, as well as for communicating with friends and to read and write in an educational environment.

From the beginning English and Afrikaans had various advantages over the African languages, or Bantu languages, to be more precise, being spoken in the country:

- Both were official languages of the country.
- Both were spoken by a culturally, politically and economically dominant white population.
- Both offered access to technological and scientific knowledge (Gramley and Pätzold, 1992: 409).

English also carries positive connotations as the language of liberation and resistance to apartheid domination because of its role in the ANC and the PAC as the language of the struggle prior to 1994. Due to the changes on the political and social scenes in the country since 1994, English is showing an increasing tendency to monopolise many areas of public administration in South Africa. It has also become the most popular language in other multilingual contexts such as schools, universities and even military camps (De Klerk & Gough, to appear). The phenomenon of black empowerment which has prevailed in the country since 1994 created the perfect opportunity for BSAE to thrive.

2.3 BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH

De Klerk and Gough (to appear) define BSAE as the English spoken by about 7 million black people in South Africa as “other language”. Initially it was not acceptable in formal contexts due to deficiencies such as non-standard pronunciation or grammatical errors, caused by mother-tongue interference or poor instruction. Reasons for typical BSAE

forms are given as general language-learning strategies, lack of exposure to written language and influence of various English native speakers as models (Schmied, 1991: 52 - 54). Buthelezi (1995: 242) identifies education experience of the speakers, their culture, and lifestyles which encourage code-switching, a high degree of enclosure which encourages group cohesiveness, religious affiliations and the overall black political experience in South Africa as main reasons for deviations in BSAE. Verhoef and Smit (2000: 16iv - 16v) also state that "studies in BSAE are clear on the fact that this variety mainly emerged from an educational language acquisition situation", where learners are predominantly taught by non-native speakers of English and they do not really come into contact with native speakers.

Two factors which contribute to the heterogeneous character of BSAE are the fact that it is a second language, and that it originates from a wide range of first languages. Lass (1995:95) observes that the most salient sociolinguistic markers of a speaker's language tend to be phonological. A person tends to evaluate a speaker's social position, regional origin and other factors first on the basis of his/her accent, that is, a combination of phonetic details and phonological properties. Pronunciation of the English by African speakers is of particular importance, since non-standard pronunciation seems to be the most persistent in these varieties of English, even in the most educated speaker's language. Standard SAE is perceived as having informal British correctness, which has always been regarded as the only "correct" version to be used (Van der Schyf & Wissing, 2000: 22). Pronunciation is a flexible element and can be used (sub-consciously) to express subtle sociolinguistic messages of speaker identity and of distance from, or solidarity with, the listener (Schmied, 1991: 57). Apart from communicating information,

speech is also used to maintain relationships, signify or defuse power and to communicate aspects of one's social identity: who we are, where we come from, where we hope to be going and what relations we hope to establish with the people we happen to be speaking to (Mesthrie, 1999: 5). For many years in South Africa, Afrikaans was regarded as "the language of the oppressor" (Alexander, 1989: 38) and English as the language of liberation during the struggle against apartheid. In practice the implications are as follows: a Sotho mother-tongue speaker may use Sotho to communicate with his/her friends or relatives, showing solidarity. Although capable of doing so, he/she may refuse to speak Afrikaans to an Afrikaans mother-tongue speaker in order to make a rather overt political statement, instead preferring to address the person in English, thereby making clear his/her socio-political affiliations.

Lanham (1990: 244) identifies the biggest problem with BSAE as the fact that it is acquired in school through instruction by black teachers who are non-native speakers of English themselves. Since the 1994 elections in South Africa there has been increasing contact both in and outside the classroom with a diversity of pronunciation norms and patterns. Before that, ethnic homogeneity was the norm in South African classrooms, with limited linguistic variation and contact across racial lines (Adendorff and Savini-Beck, 1993: 232).

Few teachers in black schools have a sufficiently good command of English to offer a native speaker-like model. Buthelezi (1995: 242) points out that, under apartheid rule, the schools most black children attended had been run almost exclusively by black non-native speakers of English. The teaching of English as a second language had been in the

hands of non-native speakers of the language who were often unqualified or under-qualified for their task. In Lanham's report on teaching English in primary schools in Africa (1967: 6), statistics indicate that only a small percentage of older teachers, who were mainly located in English speaking cities, had a good command of English. The majority - 70% - of younger teachers were totally unequipped for an oral-aural approach in the primary school classroom. Seeing that the teacher is the "keystone" in the structure of English education (Lanham, 1967: 8), it becomes obvious why the most non-standard features of BSAE are regarded as having been teacher-induced. Learners, therefore, acquired features of BSAE from their teachers and then reproduced those forms unwittingly as what they perceived as "standard", fossilising certain aspects of BSAE. Lanham's research (1967: 11) determined that not 1% of African teachers had a sufficient grasp of English pronunciation in order to provide the correct pronunciation to the pupils. BSAE thus reflects the speaker's first language phonology, idioms and fixed expressions. Phonetically BSAE is shaped by the pronunciation patterns of the first languages. The speakers of BSAE are mainly urban dwellers who read English newspapers, listen to English media on television and who need English in their work and lives. The higher the speaker is on the social-educational scale, the more his/her English will resemble white South African English (Gramley and Pätzold, 1992: 413).

2.4 ACCENT AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Language attitudes abound in all societies and all the more so in multilingual societies. The multiplicity of ethnolinguistic groups heightens language consciousness (Fishman, 1991: 179). In his comparison of African accents of English, Simo Bobda (2000: 252)

distinguished a major sociolinguistic feature of SAE, namely the racial distribution of accents - white South African accent, black South African accent and an African Indian accent. What exactly does the term "accent" refer to?

Fromkin and Rodman (1978: 315) give an elementary account of accent as being the "diversity of pronunciation". Lyons (1981: 24) says that "accent refers solely to the way in which sounds in a language are pronounced and it carries no implications whatsoever with respect to grammar and vocabulary". Giles (1970: 211) distinguishes between dialects and accents - dialects are variations from the standard code at most linguistic levels, whereas accent refers only to a manner of pronunciation different from the standard pronunciation. "Standard" language or, in this case, standard English, is regarded as "the universal non-regional dialect" (Stevens, 1977: 136). Stevens (1977) points out that the majority of all native speakers of English do not use the standard English dialect and that the word "standard" does not necessarily mean "better" than any other dialect. Titlestad (1995: 180 - 182) is of the opinion that Standard English can be spoken with any accent. He states, however, that it is Standard English which brings empowerment to its speakers, the implication being that non-standard English usage will have the opposite effect. He states that "those who foster prejudice against the concept of Standard English are acting destructively" (Titlestad, 1995: 182). There is a wide range of opinions on the issue of Standard English in South Africa (Van Rooy, to appear), varying from rejection of a standard norm, because it is elitist, to demands for a standard norm to ensure effective communication in a multilingual society. As mentioned before, Standard SAE, seen as having informal British correctness, has always been regarded as the only acceptable version to be used (Van der Schyf & Wissing, 2000: 22).

Ndebele (1987: 11) makes the observation that the problems of a particular society will also be the problems of the predominant language of that society, since the language carries a range of social perceptions, attitudes and goals. Speakers absorb entrenched attitudes through the language - attitudes which are revealed in their evaluation of accent.

“Attitudes” are regarded as “hypothetical mental constructs used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour”. They influence a person to act in certain ways in response to certain objects, people, situations and issues and they are very complex (Young, 1991: 5). This complexity is reflected very well in Eagley and Chaiken’s definition (cited in Smit, to appear: 4) that attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. Evaluation refers to all classes of evaluative responding, whether overt or covert, cognitive, affective or behavioural. The link between attitude and behaviour has long since been researched - consider contributions to this field made by Lanham (1985), Cooper (1989), De Klerk (1996 (a)), (1996 (b)), (1997), and Van der Schyf and Wissing (2000), to name but a few. Originally, attitude was seen as directly causing certain behaviour; therefore, behaviour was thought to be analysable and predictable from underlying attitudes (Smit, to appear: 3). A speaker’s attitude will therefore determine whether he/she approves or disapproves of a certain language variety such as BSAE. Language attitude involves certain aspects of languages in use and groups of language users as attitude holders and attitude targets. Language attitude research deals with individuals who have specific emotive, cognitive and behavioural evaluations of specific language varieties. The research has to focus on what the underlying reasons are for certain attitudes, and what are causing them. It should focus on the interplay between

the individual and the group, as language is regarded as the main identification factor of social groups (Smit, to appear: 5).

If what Ndebele (1987: 11) said is true, then it can be expected that the racial problems in South African society will also be visited on the predominant language of the country, namely English. Carrier (1999: 66) points out that a number of studies have already proved that social relationships in a society can affect the language behaviour of its inhabitants. A typical example is the way in which ethnicity can cause phonological variation when a speaker tries to acquire a foreign or second language. Behaviour in social interactions is influenced by the structure of the particular society in which people live. The social position of a person in his/her society is determined by a hierarchy based on lineage, wealth, occupation, prestige or power (Carrier, 1999: 66) and, in the South African context, also ethnicity. The social and cultural background of a person will determine his/her status in the society - a status which is not static, but dynamic, as it may vary in accordance with the situation in which the individual finds himself/herself at a particular time. In any communicative situation, a person's behaviour is influenced by his/her perception of his/her relationship with his/her speech partner. Speakers react to one another by judging their relationship to each other (Carrier, 1999: 71).

Looking at South Africa and its political past, it becomes evident that the apartheid policies of the previous government seriously hampered the domain of English usage for black learners. Despite widespread acknowledgement of the importance of English in South Africa, there is a huge lack of competence in this language. According to De Klerk (1997: 98) the 1991 census revealed that the percentage of black South Africans who have

a knowledge of English varies from 6% to 32%. Their level of competence also varies quite substantially, from being completely fluent to those who know very little English or none at all.

With recent political changes in the country and policies of equal opportunities for all, schools were opened up for all races. Increasing numbers of black pupils have entered formerly whites-only English medium schools, thereby causing an upward shift in their status. For the majority of blacks, however, the quality of education has been extremely low and access to English fairly limited (De Klerk, 1997: 100), resulting in non-standard usage and accents. If the primary function of a language is communication, then intelligibility must be demanded from any language variety used to communicate publicly (Van Rooy, 2000).

2.5 LITERARY OVERVIEW

Through the years various studies have been conducted regarding language attitudes in South Africa. Although studies subsequent to the democratic elections of 1994 are probably more relevant to the current socio-linguistic situation in the country, earlier works already indicate the preference of black South Africans for English. Studies on BSAE can be grouped together in three major categories, namely studies on attitude generally, studies on attitude and pronunciation, and studies on accent/pronunciation only. There were also a few studies on other aspects of English as a second language, for example, grammar.

2.5.1 Studies on attitude generally

Schuring *et al.* (1983) conducted a survey involving 3 000 black respondents, using fieldworkers. The study revealed a preference for English as socio-economic status increased, although it showed little bias towards one of the two national languages at that stage.

In 1990 Schmied's research in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia revealed a general positive rating for English across the board in both education and business. A study by Harlech-Jones (1990) among teachers in Namibia and Sure's (1991) study in Kenya furthermore revealed a definite preference for English.

In 1991 Young researched the attitudes of pupils in Western Cape schools with specific reference to the role and status of English. Again English was favoured as the major language of instruction in schools and the major or only official language of the country.

In 1993, De Klerk and Bosch conducted a survey of English from an Eastern Cape perspective, mainly because they found a gap in research with regard to the population of this area, the last attitude test having been done there in 1976 (De Klerk & Bosch, 1993: 212). Their research among Afrikaans, English and Xhosa speakers indicated strong support for English, even though some of the less-educated informants - mainly Xhosa speakers - gave negative ratings (De Klerk & Bosch, 1993: 223).

De Klerk (1996 (b)) researched the attitudes to English of students at Rhodes University

in Grahamstown and discovered that the majority of multilingual students preferred English as medium of instruction at the university. De Klerk (1997) also investigated the attitudes to SAE of Xhosa women across three generations, establishing that the younger generation is much more positive towards English than the other two.

More recent studies include De Klerk and Gough's (to appear) "Black South African English", which gives a review of the language, its historical and sociolinguistic contexts, as well as its most prominent features: phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse patterns, stylistic features and code-switching between BSAE and vernaculars. They also point out that attitudes towards BSAE are still undergoing rapid changes, but warn that the educational system will have to provide proper instruction in English to the speakers of BSAE in order to prevent this variety from drifting too far away from recognised standard forms of English.

The most recent study regarding attitude towards BSAE probably belongs to Coetzee-Van Rooy (2000), in which she investigated language acquisition planning with specific reference to the cultural identity of South Sotho speakers. She compared the proficiency of two groups of English second language learners, namely Afrikaans and South Sotho first language speakers and tried to determine whether cultural identity is related to English second language proficiency. Her research revealed that acquisition planning of English second language for Afrikaans speakers functions fairly well, but that is not the case for South Sotho. Although the Afrikaans test subjects achieved better English second language scores than the Sotho test subjects, the latter were much more positive and confident about their proficiency than the Afrikaans speakers. Both groups revealed

a positive attitude towards their own culture, but the South Sotho speakers showed that they experience their Black racial identity very positively.

2.5.2 Studies on attitude and pronunciation

Before the 1990's the major contributions probably came from Vorster and Proctor (1976). They used a matched-guise technique to establish the attitudes of black speakers towards the so-called "white" languages, namely English and Afrikaans, in the Eastern Cape. Even then the results revealed a significant bias in favour of English and the English speaker was regarded as having higher job status than the Afrikaans speaker.

Cooper (1989) did an evaluation of attitudes towards conservative and extreme South African English dialects. The aim of the study was to determine the responses of black speakers towards white English. She used a matched- guise technique where two readers read a passage in the different dialects and then thirty-five black standard nine pupils had to evaluate the personality of each speaker according to a questionnaire with eleven personality traits, grouped together in three categories. The results of her research revealed that the test population evaluated the extreme dialect negatively, supporting Cooper's view that there is indeed a relationship between Afrikaans and extreme SAE. She suggested that further studies should concentrate on whether ethnic differences between speakers and test subjects influence the way in which they rate a speaker's personality.

Since the 1994 democratic elections in the country the emergence of black upperclass

English speakers caused renewed interest in attitude studies with regard to the varieties of English in the country. Nortje (1995) used an adaptation of the matched-guise technique to evaluate the attitude of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa high school pupils towards Standard SAE, Afrikaans English and BSAE. Both the English pupils and the Afrikaans pupils rated their own accent lower than that of the Xhosa pupils. Nortje (1995: 41) attributed this phenomenon to the fact that accent can be favourably evaluated when the non-standard speaker's group is demanding equality and recognition.

In 1996, Smit published earlier research which tested the influence of minority group membership on the attitudes to English, using Xhosa and Zulu-speaking pupils in Grahamstown's model C and private schools. This group of pupils belonged to an ethnolinguistic minority group in the school; "minority" in this sense referred not only to numerical distribution, but also to a group of people that, in contrast to the dominant group, "lacks power and holds the subordinate position" (Smit, 1996: 177). These pupils from former black schools rated the accented variety of English the highest, whereas the white pupils rated the standard dialect the highest. The minority group from former white schools (Xhosa speakers) rated standard English the highest, while at the same time evaluating Afrikaans English more negatively.

Van der Schyf and Wissing (2000) gave language attitude studies in SAE a new dimension with their comparative assessment of the attitudes of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, English-speaking South Africans and Americans. They tried to widen the focus on the sociolinguistic situation in South Africa to a global perspective. They used open as well as closed questionnaires in the relative neutrality of the American background and

established that stronger negative attitudes exist towards the English accent of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans as compared to the two other groups. The data furthermore revealed a covert endorsement of the American accent, which was ascribed to the USA's global domination of the mass media, the computer and entertainment industry and the internet (Van der Schyf & Wissing, 2000: 21).

Schmied (1991: 173) is of the view that there is a certain amount of linguistic schizophrenia in Africa, causing Africans to admire and cultivate educated English, but at the same time they avoid speaking it too well or with a standard accent. He makes valuable comments on attitudes towards what he calls African varieties of English. Language attitudes are seen as a central element in language policy (Schmied, 1991: 163). He also comments on the stereotyped notions about English and he emphasises the relationship of English to the identity of African individuals and nations today.

2.5.3 Studies on accent/pronunciation only

Lanham (1967) researched the teaching of English in Bantu primary schools and determined that the systematic teaching of English pronunciation could stop the deterioration in pronunciation and ensure that pupils use socially acceptable norms in English. Another contribution to the studies on BSAE involves the work done by Adendorff and Savini-Beck (1993: 248). They compared the sound systems of Zulu and English and made suggestions for effective pronunciation teaching in South African schools.

Where most of the previous studies in BSAE involved Xhosa or Zulu speakers, Van den Heever (1999) investigated the interference of Tswana as first language on English vowels. His research indicated that Tswana speakers (just like Xhosa or Zulu speakers) cannot differentiate between certain vowels where the same distinction does not occur in their native language; instead, they use a vowel which does occur in the Tswana sound system to represent an unfamiliar vowel, such as the case with vowels like /ɪ/, /æ/ and /ɜ/ (Van den Heever, 1999: 64). Negative language transfer therefore occurs when a Tswana first language speaker pronounces certain English vowels.

Various studies on BSAE have been undertaken by Van Rooy, for example, "A phonological perspective on second language pronunciation of English in SA" (2000), "The phonetics and phonology of BSAE: current knowledge and future prospects" (to appear) and "Second language acquisition through constraint demotion" (to appear), which was co-written by Janet Grijzenhout. His studies focus mainly on the variations in the vowels, consonants and suprasegmental phenomena of so-called BSAE (from the Sotho and Nguni groups of languages).

Dreyer, Wissing and Wissing (1996: 38) approached pronunciation accuracy from a cognitive point of view by investigating the role played by the left and right hemispheres of the brain in the acquisition of a second language. They found that in the perception of word final consonants, the right hemisphere of the brain is dominant; in the production of consonants, the left hemisphere of the brain dominates (Dreyer, Wissing & Wissing, 1996: 54). They recommended that pronunciation teaching should help students to

develop the flexible use of both the left and the right hemispheres of their brains (Dreyer, Wissing & Wissing, 1996: 58).

In 1995, Mesthrie edited a number of papers on a variety of languages in social interaction in South Africa, including comments on (black) South African language by Roger Lass (1995: 89 - 106) and Buthelezi (1995: 242 - 250). Titlestad (1995: 178 - 193) discusses the question of what exactly can be regarded as 'Standard' SAE and he states explicitly that "accent is no longer regarded as being part of the Standard English package" (Titlestad, 1995: 184). Wade (1995: 189 - 202) proposes a "new English for the new South Africa", necessitating a restandardisation of SAE to include features of BSAE in domains which have previously been the preserve of the standard variety of SAE. His article focusses mainly on syntactic features of BSAE.

If one looks at the work done on BSAE thus far, it becomes clear that the majority of research has revealed a definite preference for English, with increasing status ascribed to the use of the language by second language speakers.

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRENT STUDY

Looking at previous research done on BSAE, it becomes clear that there are two major differences between those and the current study:

- Previous studies focus mainly on comparisons between English and languages from the Nguni language family, like Zulu and Xhosa; this study makes use of Sotho first language speakers.

- The current study tries to establish whether there is a correlation between race and language attitude, in other words, whether a variety such as BSAE is evaluated negatively because of racial prejudice, or whether such an evaluation is formed on linguistic features alone.
- Another aim of the survey is to establish whether there has been a change in attitude regarding the status of the three languages involved since the 1994 democratic elections. According to De Klerk and Bosch (1993: 226), attitudes change due to social influence and they are a matter of ideology, power, prestige, conflict, class and fashion. Studying the attitudes of the various language groups ought to give an indication of the effect that the power shift in the country from minority government to majority government has had on its citizens.

In the so-called 'democratic' South Africa, proficiency in English has become increasingly important, for reasons already mentioned elsewhere. The question, however, is which English should be taught? The English of the few (white) speakers which used to be regarded as the standard in the past, or rather one of the BSAE varieties? In order to find answers to these questions, Smit (to appear) proposes that not only objective facts such as numbers of speakers and learners, varieties of English and when and where these are used should be considered; instead, subjective reactions to the varieties of English and how and when they are used, should also be taken into account. It is in the case of subjective opinions of a language that people's evaluations and perceptions about a particular language variety can make a significant contribution.

Amuzu (1992: 129 -139) points out that education in the New South Africa should be removed from politics, - “or rather, politics removed from our education” (1992: 138). He regards the apartheid system as the culprit for the current problems in our educational system, the latter having been too much “a part of the politics of the country”. Due to its political and historical past, South Africa is a country with a complex linguistic situation, especially in cases where the languages do not have equal status. Insight into the attitudes of pupils towards the different dialects of a language such as SAE, and specifically BSAE, can provide an important indicator of the prevailing beliefs, preferences and trends in a particular community. Language attitude studies can therefore contribute largely to making sensible, informed decisions on the choice of the variety of SAE to be taught in schools.

The questionnaires completed by the test population in this study should give an indication of the extent of linguistic tolerance, or lack thereof, six years down the line in the “new”, democratic South Africa. This should give an indication of mutual acceptance of differences between pupils attending multicultural schools in the country and the extent to which apartheid has been eradicated in our society since 1994.

2.7 THE SOUND SYSTEMS OF ENGLISH AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES

There are major differences between the sound systems of English and Southern Bantu languages like Zulu, Tswana and Sotho. These differences affect the success of English second language acquisition, with specific reference to pronunciation. Many of the indigenous African languages have similar sound systems and therefore the differences

pointed out here may be generalized to include a wide variety of indigenous languages (Adendorff and Savini-Beck, 1993: 233) with elements common to both the Nguni and Sotho groups. Van Rooy (to appear) explains that research on the vowel systems of various forms of BSAE has revealed that there is little difference between the vowel pronunciation of BSAE speakers with different first languages. This can be ascribed to the phenomenon of seven vowel phones which are phonemic in the Sotho languages, while there are five phonemes with an additional two allophones in the Nguni languages (Van Rooy, to appear). Two aspects which are affected by second language pronunciation are vowel quality and vowel length. This study focuses specifically on vowel pronunciation. Van Rooy (to appear) contains detailed information on consonants and suprasegmental properties, including phonological quantity, stress placement and intonation.

2.7.1 Vowel quality

The term “vowels” is generally used to refer to the sounds *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u* which are formed when air flows unhindered through the vocal tract during the production of speech sounds. The same orthographic symbol may represent different vowels, depending on the word in which it appears. Compare, for example, the *o* in *go* and *undone*. Phonetic symbols are used to represent each speech sound.

Vowels are classified according to the position where they are formed in the mouth of the speaker - front, centre or back - as well as the position of the tongue during the formation of the vowel - high, middle or low.

Zulu has five basic vowels, namely:

- [i] as in “lima” (plough)
- [ɛ] as in “thenga” (buy)
- [a] as in “thanda” (love)
- [ɔ] as in “bona” (see)
- [u] as in “funa” (seek)

Sotho languages have seven basic vowels - the same five as Zulu, but with two additional mid-high vowels:

- [e] as in “go lema” (plough)
- [o] as in “tsoma” (to hunt) (Van den Heever, 1999: 18).

Vowels in Southern Bantu languages are articulated mainly as high or low vowels, with no mid-central vowels. In comparison to the above mentioned African languages there are twelve basic vowels to be distinguished in English:

- [ɪ] as in “hit” - lax high front vowel
- [i] as in “heat” - tense front vowel
- [ɛ] as in “bed” - tense mid-front vowel
- [ɜ] as in “bird” - central vowel
- [æ] as in “bad” - mid-low front vowel
- [ʌ] as in “cut” - low central vowel

[ɒ]	as in “cot”	-	lax mid-low back vowel
[a]	as in “cart”	-	low back vowel
[ɔ]	as in “caught”	-	tense mid-low back vowel
[ʊ]	as in “pull”	-	lax mid-high back vowel
[u]	as in “pool”	-	tense high back vowel
[ə]	as in the first vowel in “about”	-	lax central vowel

(Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993: 233 - 234)

In addition to the twelve basic vowels, English also has a number of diphthongs, i.e. vowels which are articulated with the tongue starting in one position and ending with the tongue in another position. Examples of diphthongs are:

[ɔɪ]	as in “boy”
[eɪ]	as in “hay”
[ɔʊ]	as in “code”
[aɪ]	as in “hide”
[ɪə]	as in “beard”
[ɛə]	as in “hair”
[aʊ]	as in “how”
[ʊə]	as in “tour”
[ɪʊ]	as in “cute”

Including the diphthongs, English then has twenty-one vowels as opposed to the five of Zulu (Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993: 237). As far as articulation is concerned, Zulu and

Sotho vowels are mainly front or back vowels; English vowels are spread throughout the vowel chart with clusters of vowels where Zulu has only one vowel. A vowel chart can be used to indicate the position in the mouth where vowels are articulated during the formation of speech sounds:

Front	Central	Back	
<u>i</u> i		<u>u</u>	High
<u>e</u> ɪ	ʊ ʊ	<u>o</u>	Mid-high
e	ə	o:	
<u>ɛ</u>	ɜ	<u>ɔ</u>	Mid-low
æ	<u>a</u>	ɑ:	Low
		:D	

(Van den Heever, 1999: 18, 26)

The above vowel chart indicates the articulation of English vowels and vowels from the Sotho languages (of which the latter are in bold print and underlined).

2.7.2 Vowel length

In English some vowels have inherently short articulations, while others have long articulations. The length of a vowel can either be phonetically conditioned, depending on whether it is followed by a voiced/voiceless consonant, for example, “back” vs “bag”, or it can be phonemically conditioned where the semantic difference is crucial, for example, “fullish” vs. “foolish” or “pitch” vs. “peach” (Dreyer, Wissing & Wissing, 1996: 45).

In English vowel length is therefore crucial in the distinction of meaning between two

similar sounding words. In Zulu, on the other hand, a change in vowel length does not change the intrinsic meaning of the word. In Bantu languages vowels are often lengthened in the penultimate syllable of a sentence to indicate the approaching end of the sentence, or to indicate a remote past tense interpretation of the verb. There are no pairs of vowels with differences in vowel length as is the case in English (Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993: 238).

Four major differences between English vowels and vowels from the African languages concerned here, can therefore be distinguished:

- English, Nguni and Sotho languages differ with regard to the quality and the quantity of vowels. English has more vowels - twenty-one as opposed to seven or five.
- English has vowel clusters where Nguni and Sotho languages use only a single vowel.
- In Sotho languages the mid-low vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ also have a raised variant each, which may be used as the vowels for “face” and “goat” (De Klerk & Gough, to appear).
- In Zulu and Sotho vowel length is not used to distinguish meaning as is the case in English, where changes in vowel length lead to changes in meaning.

BSAE is therefore characterised by a reduction of vowel contrasts and the creation of new homophones. Empirical studies revealed that fewer differences exist between the consonant inventories of BSAE and English as a first language variety. English dental

fricatives such as /θ/ and /ð/ are replaced by dental plosives /d/ and /t/ in BSAE; final plosive devoicing at the beginning of words seems specific to Zulu - "girl" will be pronounced as /kɛl/ (Van Rooy, 2000). Since it appears that the major differences between BSAE and SAE occur between the pronunciation of vowels, this study will not focus on the consonants.

2.8 THE EFFECT OF SOUND DIFFERENCES ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ENGLISH

Although there are many theories about the forces at work during second language acquisition, they will not be discussed at length in this study; an overview of the most prevalent theories is provided and certain phonological and sociolinguistic implications of second language acquisition are emphasised.

When major differences occur between the first language and the target language which a person tries to acquire - as is the case with Sotho and English - the second language learner has to overcome various difficulties. There are many theories about second language acquisition. Some are of the opinion that the second language learner is likely to rely on mother-tongue preferences when he/she has to articulate (English) vowels spoken in discourse, for example Adendorff and Savini-Beck (1993: 240). Van Rooy and Grijzenhout (to appear) mention some of the research done on interlanguage phonology, for example, the contrastive analysis hypothesis, the markedness differential hypothesis, the interlanguage hypothesis and the optimality theory. According to the optimality

theory, a person's first language is acquired in a process through which an initially unordered set of universal constraints gradually moves towards the actual ranking order of a particular native language through minimal demotion of constraints. Van Rooy and Grijzenhout (to appear) propose that second language acquisition proceeds from the ranking of universal constraints already established for the first language.

Ellis (1985) distinguishes seven different theories regarding second language acquisition. The acculturation model is based on the idea that a second language learner becomes adapted to the culture of the target language group. The degree to which the learner acculturates will control the degree to which he/she acquires the second language (Ellis, 1985: 251). The accommodation theory involves the intergroup uses of language in a multilingual community and the way in which these uses reflect basic social and psychological attitudes in inter-ethnic communication (Ellis, 1985: 255). According to the discourse theory, a second language is acquired by communication with other speakers; and language development should be considered in terms of how the learner discovers the meaning potential of language by participating in communication; first language speakers adjust their speech in order to negotiate meaning with second language speakers. The strategies used to negotiate meaning in conversation influence the rate of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1985: 259). The monitor model (Ellis, 1985: 261 - 266) is based on five hypotheses - the acquisition learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. The variable competence model (Ellis, 1985: 266 - 270) is based on two distinctions, namely the process of language use and the product of language use. The former refers to the distinction between linguistic knowledge (rules) and the ability to make use of this

knowledge (procedures). The product of language refers to a continuum of discourse types ranging from the unplanned to the planned. The universal hypothesis is based on the notion that there are certain core rules to be found in all natural languages, the linguistic features and processes which are common to all natural languages and all language learners (Ellis, 1985: 14). The neurofunctional theory differs from the previous theories, because it involves neurolinguistic research, as opposed to the psycholinguistic terms involved in the other theories. It implies that there is a connection between language function and the neural anatomy (Ellis, 1985: 271). Whatever the theory, it is clear that the first language inevitably interferes with the second language acquired by a speaker.

Lewis (1998: 18) says that one of the main issues in second language acquisition is the cross-language transfer from the first language to the second language. When a person starts learning a second language, he is already in possession of his first language and, unless he recognises the differences between the two languages, he will continue to apply the rules of his first language to the second language he is learning. Mesthrie (1999: 7) points out that the judgmental term "interference" has been replaced by the term "transfer". He distinguishes between positive and negative transfer: positive transfer occurs when similarities between the first language and the second language aid the acquisition process; negative transfer occurs when the learner chooses a construction more like that of the first language than that of the target language. Weinrich (1953: 14) points out that interference or negative transfer between a first language and a second language occurs when a speaker reproduces the sounds of one language in terms of another language. A speaker will therefore identify the phonemes of the second language

with others from his first language and subject them to the phonetic rules of his first language when reproducing them.

Another opinion regarding second language acquisition is that of the so-called "interlanguage". The second language learner often creates a kind of interlanguage, which comprises various compromises with mother-tongue structures, some of which may become fossilised or permanent fixtures of the speaker's second language (Titelstad, 1995: 188). Interlanguage refers to the systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner's first language and the target language. Five principal processes operate in an interlanguage, namely language transfer, over-generalization of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication (Ellis, 1985: 48 - 49). According to this theory, accented speech of a second or foreign language speaker is not simply the result of negative transfer; it is more a case of an interlanguage, a gradual development of linguistic ability towards the target language. The more problems a speaker has to produce a sound from the target language, the more difficult it will be for a listener to understand what he is trying to say (Van den Heever, 1999: 13 - 15).

What, then, are the implications of second language acquisition in the South African context? In the case of Zulu and Sotho it has already been mentioned that these languages do not contain a mid-central vowel such as appears in the word "bird"; nor do they have the low, front vowel found in the word "bad". They do have a vowel such as appears in the word "bed" or the Zulu word "thenga". Consequently, when the second language English learner has to pronounce the words "bird" or "bed" he/she will substitute the

unknown vowels with the closest vowel that he/she is familiar with, namely the same vowel which appears in “thenga”. The result is that the learner’s pronunciation of word such as “bird”, “bed” and “bad” will sound fairly similar if not the same. The listener will find it difficult to work out which word is being used in an ambiguous context (Adendorff & Savini-Beck, 1993: 240).

The phonological difficulties which are experienced by learners of a second language could have serious sociolinguistic implications for such speakers. For many language students pronunciation is very important for their future occupations, for example air traffic controllers, telephone operators and people looking for a job in broadcasting. Oral proficiency - or lack thereof - could thus play a crucial role in any person’s chances to get employment (Dreyer, Wissing & Wissing, 1996: 38).

Sociolinguistic research has confirmed the close relationship between language and identity; people can identify themselves with a group, a tradition, an attribute shared by others, etc. Speakers can use language to signal a particular identity and listeners take up those clues (Schmied, 1991: 177).

Apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act and others leading to segregated and unequal education limited the potential social interaction between first and second language speakers of English. In spite of such forbidding forces operating against the black English second language learner in South Africa, they still managed to achieve some level of competence in the language. This level of competence is often reflected in the pronunciation of the second language speaker.

In Chapter 3 the design of the empirical research, as well as the statistical analysis of the results, are discussed. The empirical research was aimed at determining what the attitudes are of pupils from different first language backgrounds towards BSAE, and also to establish whether ethnicity or racial bias influence the pupils' attitudes towards BSAE.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the methodology used in this study is explained. There are two main sections in the chapter, namely design and procedure. The procedure followed will be elaborated on in terms of the test population and its characteristics, the instruments used to collect the required data, the actual execution of the test and processing of the data involved.

Cooper (1989: 39) claims that the pupils who learn language in a multicultural society are aware that each language is characteristic of a particular group, and that the dialect of a particular language group serves as a linguistic marker, indicating the social standing of that particular language group in the society. In the light of South Africa's multilingual society, the following two problem questions were formulated in Chapter 1:

- * What are the attitudes of English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils towards BSAE?
- * Are these attitudes based on linguistic deviations from the standard variety of English or are they based on racial bias?

This research is therefore aimed at ascertaining, first of all, the attitudes towards BSAE of high school pupils from different first language backgrounds in an integrated school. Secondly, it is aimed at determining whether English first language speakers, Afrikaans first language speakers and Sotho first language speakers evaluate a speaker of BSAE only on the basis of what they *hear*, i.e. the language properties, or if their evaluation is based on what they *see*, i. e. the skin colour or race of the speaker.

The following hypotheses were formulated in Chapter 1:

1. English first language pupils, Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils will have different attitudes regarding deviations in the pronunciation of BSAE, with the English first language pupils being the least tolerant.
2. Attitudes of English first language pupils will be based on linguistic variations from their own standard pronunciation, whereas the attitudes of Afrikaans first language pupils and Sotho first language pupils will be politically/racially biased.

In the next section an explanation is presented of the steps taken to test the hypotheses mentioned above.

3.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.2.1 Design

This test was designed along principles used by Cooper (1989) in her study of extreme South African English dialects. It is based on a mentalistic approach, where attitudes towards a particular variant of English are measured in terms of ratings of recorded speech samples of different accents. Four different dialects of SAE were recorded both on a video cassette and on a cassette tape. One group of test subjects watched the video and evaluated the speakers according to what they heard and saw, using a personality questionnaire. The second group listened to the cassette tape and evaluated the speakers according to what they heard, using the same questionnaire. Thus the perceptions of the two groups were studied.

3.2.2 Procedure

3.2.2.1 Test population

One hundred and six grade 11 pupils from the only double medium school in Bethlehem were used. Two classes of grade 11 pupils completed the questionnaires. One class consisted of pupils doing English first language as a subject. These pupils were English first language speakers or Sotho first language speakers (Group 1). The other class consisted of Afrikaans or Sotho first language pupils doing English second language in school. The two classes were then divided into two different groups each, so that one group from the English first language class could fill in the questionnaire based on the

video input (Group 1A), while the other first language group could complete the questionnaire of the sound input (Group 1B). The English second language group was similarly divided (Group 2A and Group 2B). The average age of the pupils was 17 years. An availability sample was used, so the results presented in chapter 4 are not necessarily representative of other pupils in Bethlehem.

3.2.2.2 Instrumentation

3.2.2.2.1 Video and sound input recordings

Four different dialects of SAE were recorded on a video cassette. These recordings were made from news broadcasts featuring members of the public in short, informative interviews. The recordings feature three black SAE speakers and a white SAE speaker. The white speaker used a dialect which is generally accepted as standard SAE. The black speakers' language can be classified according to three categories which are applied in research on pidgin and creole languages, as well as in that of the so-called "New Englishes", of which BSAE is one (Schmied, 1991: 47). The most elevated level of BSAE, the acrolect, closely resembles standard English. It differs from the standard in phonetics, semantics, discourse and content, but is fairly similar in phonology, grammar and lexis. Speakers of acrolectal English (English second language) are usually found in positions such as newspaper editors and senior officials in the civil service and business firms, whereas first language speakers of the acrolect are usually university lecturers, medical doctors or business managers. From the mesolect downwards, mergers of vowels change the whole phonological system and grammatical structures often become more and more distorted. Mesolect speakers normally occupy positions as junior civil servants,

senior secretaries, typists or even senior civil servants. At the lower end of the continuum is the basilect, which is still English, but Africanised to such an extent that it is almost unintelligible for listeners who are not accustomed to it. They normally work as nurses, shop assistants, taxi drivers or junior civil servants (Schmied, 1991: 48 - 49).

The first BSAE speaker in both the recordings (P1) represents a basilect; the second BSAE (P2) uses mesolectal English, while the last BSAE speaker (P4) uses English which closely resembles standard English and can therefore be classified as an acrolect. The two standard dialects (P3 and P4) were recorded in succession in order to prevent presenting a non-standard speaker immediately before or after a standard speaker. These samples of BSAE show the typical deviations regarding vowel quality and vowel length as previously discussed under 7.1 and 7.2 in Chapter 2. The following transcripts of a selection of words/phrases from the speech samples give an indication of the distinguishing phonetic characteristics of the three BSAE speakers:

Person 1:

Vowel quality:	devastated	⇒	[divastədəd] instead of [dɛvəstɛrtət]
	believe	⇒	[bɪlɪf] instead of [bəli:f]
Vowel length:	I	⇒	[a] instead of [aɪ]
	lying	⇒	[ləjɪŋ] instead of [laɪŋ]

This speaker's speech showed the typical BSAE phenomenon of raised vowels and indiscriminate use of vowel length. He paused during his speech, as if seeking for the correct word. In certain cases he failed to articulate certain speech sounds, as in the case of "couldn't", which he pronounced as [kʊdʒt].

Person 2:

Vowel quality:	another	⇒	[anaða] instead of [ənaðə]
	finalised	⇒	[fainalaɪst] instead of [fainəlaɪsd]
	cases	⇒	[kesɛs] instead of [keɪsɛs]
	valuable	⇒	[valjʊabəl] instead of [væljɪvəbəl]
	process	⇒	[prɔsɛs] instead of [prɒsɛs]
Vowel length:	in	⇒	[ɪn] instead of [ɪn]

This speaker used the trilled /r/ sound very distinctively, and in two cases he interrupted or corrected himself.

Person 4:

Vowel quality:	only two cases of deviation detected:		
	assisted	⇒	[asɜstət] instead of [əsɜstət]
	people	⇒	[pipʊl] instead of [pipəl]

Although he used a trilled /r/-sound instead of the liquid /r/, this person's language closely resembled standard English pronunciation, with proper aspiration of explosives such as /t/ and /p/. His range of vocabulary was also quite extensive.

The video clips were approximately 20 seconds long and gave no indication of the speaker's position, either in the business world or in society. All speakers were male. The first non-standard speaker was a domestic worker, dressed casually, but neatly, who saw his employer being murdered. The other three speakers were all dressed in suits and were employed as a public prosecutor, an economist and a businessman. A few seconds of blank tape was left in between the speakers to prevent cutting off some of the speech

sample during playback, seeing that the video had to be stopped after each speaker to allow test subjects to evaluate the speaker. The video recording was then recorded at normal speed onto a TDK cassette tape, using a Sharp video recorder and a Technics tape deck. The exact sound input of the video cassette was now also available on cassette tape.

3.2.2.2.2 Questionnaires

A personality questionnaire was given to each test person to evaluate the speakers they heard and saw in the recordings. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the language loyalties and personal attitudes of the test population towards the different accents presented in the test material. The attitude of the test person is perceived as an intervening cognitive variable between the stimulus provided in the test - the video and audio recordings of the four different speakers - and the person's response. The affective component includes emotions, motivations and attitudes and may be measured by verbal statements which reflect the test person's opinion on a specific issue (Cooper, 1989: 41).

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) is an adaptation of the one used by Cooper (1989), with a few significant changes. As Cooper (1989) did, religiousness and physical attractiveness were included, as it was felt that these traits play an important role in the evaluation of the speakers' personalities. The same accounts for the inclusion of the trait "Strong/Not strong".

The personality traits were grouped together according to three categories identified by Lambert (1972: 339):

- competence: education, intelligence;
- personal integrity: likability, honesty, generosity, reliability, good father; and
- social attractiveness: friendliness, politeness.

The list of most likely occupations of the speakers was also altered. The two possibilities, "factory worker" and "factory foreman" were replaced with "farm worker" and "farm foreman", as Bethlehem is mainly a farming community with limited industrial activities. The occupations listed would therefore be totally familiar to the test population and they would vary in status. None of them involves high political profile or being employed by a media institution.

The questionnaires were completed anonymously, with test subjects only providing their grade, age, sex and home language. It contained twelve personality characteristics and a four-point scale according to which each speaker had to be evaluated. The four-point scale was used in order to ensure more accurate results, as it offered no middle road for the test person - he/she had to make a definite choice. The scale assigned a 4 to the positive end of the scale and a 1 to the negative end.

The number of their choice on the scale had to be marked with a cross. Test subjects also had to choose the most likely occupation for each speaker from a list of five possibilities. These possible occupations were listed in random order on the questionnaire. During the

analysis they were ranked according to status and level of education assigned to each position, 1 being the occupation with the lowest status:

- 1 - farm worker;
- 2 - farm foreman;
- 3 - shop assistant;
- 4 - teacher; and
- 5 - doctor.

The speakers to be evaluated were numbered clearly on top of each page as "Person number 1", etc. Clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were printed on the first page. The questionnaires for the video and the sound input were printed on different colour paper to avoid confusion.

3.2.2.2.3 Execution of test

With permission of the principal of the school, the test was executed during normal school hours in order to ensure maximum attendance of the test population. With the co-operation of the English teacher, half the pupils of the class were sent to the school's media centre at the beginning of their English class (Group 1A). The other half (Group 1B) remained in the class with the teacher.

The English first language class completed the tests first, with the English second language class (Afrikaans/Sotho first language pupils who take English as a second

language in school) following immediately after that with the start of the next period. No mention was made as to the true purpose of the test; pupils were simply told that the aim of the test was to determine how accurately the personality of an unknown person can be judged on the basis of what the listener hears or sees. The English teacher was also requested specifically not to let pupils know what the test was all about.

Once in the media centre, pupils from Group 1A were assured that the test was to be completed anonymously and confidentially. An appeal was made to consider each question carefully before attempting to answer, mainly to impress upon the pupils the importance of their contribution. The first group watched the video of the speakers, played back on the standard audio-visual equipment provided by the school. The pupils were English first language speakers and Sotho first language speakers.

The instructions given to the pupils concerned with the rating of the speakers were that test subjects had to watch a video recording of four different speakers speaking about different topics in English carefully. Subjects were simply told that they had to try and evaluate the personality of each speaker; no mention was made of the term "Black South African English". The contents of the questionnaire were briefly explained in English in order to ensure that pupils understood the instructions and terms used. They were told to rate each speaker's personality during and immediately after each insert was played back individually.

The complete video recording was played back once in order to familiarise the test subjects with the language samples. Pupils were told again not to rate the speakers at that

point. After rewinding the recording, the first speaker's insert was played back. The video was stopped, and pupils were told to complete the questionnaire for the first person. They immediately rated the speaker according to the personality traits listed in the questionnaires. The same procedure was followed for the remaining three speakers. Upon completion of the questionnaires, they were collected, pupils were thanked for their contribution and they returned to their class. The second half of the class were then brought to the media centre. The teacher accompanied them in order to prevent interaction with the first group on the way back to class.

This second group of pupils - Group 1B - also containing both English and Sotho first language speakers - had to listen to the tape recording of the speakers' voices. Since the television set in the media centre could be adjusted to project the sound input without the images, no tape recorder was used. The video was played back instead, but with only the sound of the voices and no images. The groups listening to the sound input were therefore presented with the exact sound quality as the groups watching the video. Again the instructions were repeated to the test persons, the recording was played back once, then played back again for each individual speaker to be evaluated. The same procedure was followed for the remaining three speakers, after which the questionnaires were collected.

Immediately afterwards the first English second language group came to the media centre to complete the test. As in the case with the English first language class, this class was also divided into two groups of similar size (Group 2A and 2B), both groups containing Afrikaans or Sotho first language speakers. The same procedure was followed as with the

first two groups. Group 2A watched the video recording, while Group 2B listened to the sound input only.

After all the questionnaires had been completed, they were sorted into six different categories based on home language:

Video recording: Sotho first language pupils;
 English first language pupils; and
 Afrikaans first language pupils.

Sound input: English first language pupils;
 Sotho first language pupils; and
 Afrikaans first language pupils

The questionnaires were then sent per courier to the Statistical Consultation Service at the Potchefstroom University to be analysed.

3.2.2.2.4 Analysis of data

The data was analysed with the SAS System for Windows Release 6.12 (1996).

For questions 1 - 11 the evaluation scores for each personality trait for each speaker were calculated, after which a tally was made of the number of evaluation scores. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for each personality trait for each speaker, as well as the average for all personality traits per speaker. The same accounts for question 12,

in which the test subjects had to indicate the extent to which they liked each of the four speakers. The results were converted into percentages and rounded off to the second decimal.

The following sets of data were calculated:

- averages of differences between the personality traits of the four individual speakers for each of the three language groups, namely Sotho, English and Afrikaans, for both the video input and the sound input;
- overall mean score and standard deviation between the personality traits of the four individual speakers for all three language groups for both the video input and the sound track;
- the mean and standard deviation for question 12, i. e. the question about liking the speaker or not, since this question would probably reveal the social perceptions and covert racism in the pupils, for all three language groups in both the visual and the sound input;
- the frequency of the most likely occupation of each speaker as indicated by the pupils from each language group for both the video and the sound input

Steyn's (1999) contribution on practical significance was used for the interpretation of the statistics. The practical significance of variations in the data as supplied by the pupils was determined by using d-values. The d-value refers to the effect size of the difference in population averages. The guidelines from Cohen (1988) below were followed in the

discussion of the data:

- $d \geq 0.2$: small effect and an insignificant result;
- $d \geq 0.5$: medium effect which might be indicative of significant results;
- $d \geq 0.8$: large effect and results are significant.

The d-values were calculated by subtracting the smaller mean from the bigger one and dividing the answer by the larger standard deviation of the two. The following formula was used:

$$d = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{SD}$$

Effect size will be indicated in a table as follows:

- * small effect size
- ** medium effect size
- *** large effect size

The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient figure is used to determine if an average is a reliable reflection of its components. An analysis of the combined average for questions 1 - 11 was done in order to determine if the averages reflected the various individual traits for

the four speakers. The cut-off point is 0.5, with any average lower than 0.5 regarded as less reliable and averages of more than 0.5 regarded as useful.

The speakers in the video input and in the sound input, as well as the three first language groups involved, were labelled as follows in the analysis and the discussion in chapter 4:

Speaker 1: Strongly accented basilectal BSAE (P1)

Speaker 2: Typical mesolectal BSAE (P 2)

Speaker 3: Standard SAE, white speaker (P3)

Speaker 4: Acrolectal BSAE with close resemblance to standard SAE (P4)

Sotho first language: Language 1

English first language: Language 2

Afrikaans first language: Language 3

The results will be presented in the form of tables in Chapter 4, followed by an interpretation of the significant differences in pupils' responses.