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An investigation of student teachers' attitudes toward varieties of spoken English

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

With the advent of a democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the new ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), assigned eleven languages official status[1]. Of these, only English is an internationally-spoken language. Under the previous government of the National Party, Afrikaans and English were the two official languages. Adopted by the ANC and the medium of instruction preferred by teachers and learners in Black schools, English emerged as the favoured language (Kamwangamalu 2007; Makalela 2004). Its status as an international language and the support that it received from those who opposed Afrikaans has secured its position as the dominant language of South Africa in the post-Apartheid era.

In 1795, the arrival of British settlers brought English to South Africa (Lass 2004). This led to the development of South African English, a variety founded on British English. Over the past 200 years, this English has evolved into distinct varieties of English. Four of these varieties are investigated in this research. They are Afrikaans South African English (ASAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Indian South African English (ISAE) and White South African English (WSAE).

1.2 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

1.2.1 DEFINITION OF VARIETY

The terms “accent”, “dialect” and “variety” are all associated with divisions within a language. However, agreement as to exact definitions of these terms is lacking. Stringer (1973) states that a variety of a language is often equated with the terms dialect and accent. He explains that a variety is composed of common linguistic features that distinguish it from other varieties within the same language. He argues that while “accent” and “dialect” are associated with positive and negative terms respectively,

[1] These languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sepedi, SeSotho, SiSwati, XiTsonga, Setswana, TshiVenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Mesthrie 2002a: 23).

"variety" is a neutral term. The terms "dialect" and "variety" are commonly defined as having equal meaning. This is evident in the following definitions of these two terms. The British Library Board (2008) defines a dialect as "a specific variety of English that differs from other varieties in lexis…, grammar… and phonology". Yule (2006) considers differences in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation to be the distinguishing features of a dialect and Crystal (1994) states that a variety is "a distinctive combination of distinguishing features".

Stringer's view that "accent", "dialect" and "variety" can all be equated is brought into question, as accent is frequently described as only one aspect of a variety. Accent is seen to refer to one's pronunciation and differences in sound patterns or phonological variation (British Library Board 2008; Fromkin *et al* 2003).

Due to these similarities between "dialect" and "variety", and the negative connotations that Stringer (1973) attaches to "dialect", the term "variety" will be used to refer to "dialect" and "variety". "Accent" will be considered separately.

1.2.2 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Distinguishing between varieties of English in South Africa is problematic. There are no clear-cut boundaries as to defining a speaker's variety of English. Historically, varieties of English in South Africa have been defined along racial lines. McKinney (2007) argues that this is not a true reflection of the position of varieties of English within South Africa as many speakers cross the racial boundaries used in defining varieties of English. However, as yet, there appears to be no suitable approach to distinguishing between varieties of English. Thus, I have employed the terms Afrikaans South African English (ASAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Indian South African English (ISAE) and White South African English (WSAE) as they continue to appear in the relevant literature. Here, each variety will be briefly introduced.

As a variety, ASAE exists to enable communication between Afrikaners and English speakers. These English speakers include L1 English speakers and those who use English

as a *lingua franca.* The growth of ASAE is largely due to the decreasing influence of Afrikaans. This has meant that L1 Afrikaans speakers have found it necessary to speak English. In the context of this study, I have followed Watermeyer's (1996) approach and define ASAE as the English spoken by White Afrikaners.

BSAE's origins are largely based in Apartheid. Used in schools and by the ANC, it grew into a variety of English that was spoken as an additional language throughout South Africa (de Klerk and Gough 2002). Under the rule of the ANC, it has assumed greater status and its present role in government, business and other formal sectors shows recognition of its influential role in English in South Africa (de Klerk 1999).

Influenced mainly by Indian English and WSAE, ISAE is an L1 variety of English that stems from the arrival of Indians to South Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Mesthrie 2002b). It was originally spoken to communicate with English speaking Whites in KwaZulu-Natal (then Natal) and as a *lingua franca* of Indians who did not share a common language.

WSAE has traditionally been regarded as the dominant variety of English in South Africa. As the first South African variety and the variety spoken by White English speakers in South Africa, it was viewed as the superior variety of English in Apartheid (Lass 2004). Although other Englishes are more widely accepted and spoken post-Apartheid, WSAE has maintained much of its power and status.

These four varieties alone do not account for English in South Africa. However, as they are commonly-spoken varieties, they merit exploration.

Within each of these varieties, sub-varieties exist. For example, de Klerk (2006) identifies Xhosa English and Tswana English as sub-varieties of BSAE. However, analysing these four varieties along with their sub-varieties is beyond the scope of this research report. Where pertinent, these sub-varieties will be noted but this discussion is centred on the four varieties of English introduced above.

1.3 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Globally, studies detailing the effect that language can have on a hearer's attitude towards a speaker appear frequently (Blake and Cutler 2003; Callon and Gallois 1987; Cross *et al* 2001; Edwards 1986 and Labov 1969a, 1969b, 1972). These attitudes occur toward languages and varieties within languages. Attitudes can be influenced both by the written or spoken word. Here, spoken English is considered.

In order to place varieties of English in context and to provide an outline as to how attitudes toward varieties of English are formed, I have made use of Kachru's framework of the Three Concentric Circles (1996). There are two key reasons for this choice. Firstly, it differentiates between first language (L1) and additional language (AL) varieties of English. As both L1 and AL varieties are explored in this research, a framework that makes this distinction is valuable. Secondly, Kachru (1996) emphasises equality between varieties of English, a noteworthy factor in an investigation into language attitudes.

In defining language attitudes, a definition that encompasses all that is relevant to this research was necessary. For this, I drew on Cargile and Giles's definition which states:

> "It [the study of language attitudes] recognizes that language is a powerful social force that does more than convey intended referential information; for better or worse, hearers may react to linguistic and paralinguistic variation in messages as though they indicate both personal and social characteristics of the speaker."
>
> (Cargile and Giles 1997: 195)

Of importance is that this definition offers a succinct explanation as to why language attitudes are formed. The relevance of this definition is apparent in the literature that is explored in Chapter Two and in participants' attitudes toward the radio speakers and their respective varieties of English.

1.4 AIMS

In this research report I hoped to achieve two aims. These were:

- to investigate the attitudes that a group of student teachers of English, Mathematics and Science hold toward varieties of spoken English in South Africa.
- to ascertain the reasons for the attitudes that they hold.

1.5 RATIONALE

The influence of language attitudes is indisputable. Yet, within South Africa, these attitudes remain largely ignored. As the dominant language of South Africa, English features in the lives of so many. Despite its position, attitudes toward varieties of English have been little researched. This limited research necessitates a further exploration into language attitudes in South Africa.

The central focus of this research report is student teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English. I have chosen to interview student teachers because of the immense role that educators play in learners' lives. With so many learners (or their parents) opting for English as medium of instruction, numerous varieties of English can be found within one classroom (Kamwangamalu 2003; Setati 2002). Potentially, teachers' judgments of learners' English could affect the teaching and learning process. It is therefore necessary to determine if such prejudices do exist so as to establish if learners' education is compromised by their teachers' attitudes.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the attitudes of a group of student teachers of English, Mathematics and Science toward a range of varieties of spoken English?

1.7 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

In order to collect data that would assist in answering the research question, student teachers were invited to participate in focus groups. Focus groups were chosen because

they offer a more natural setting for interviews than other interview processes can. Also, interaction among participants was likely to evoke more discussion and expression of language attitudes than individual interviews would (Kitzinger 1995). In these focus groups, student teachers were asked to listen to four radio recordings. Each recording was of a speaker of one of the four varieties being investigated. They were requested to complete a questionnaire in response to these four radio speakers. This was followed by a discussion centred on these varieties of English with a specific focus on English within the classroom.

An analysis of the data collected in the focus groups took the form of a qualitative approach. An alternative to the qualitative method is to consider data within a quantitative framework. However, according to Neill (2007), such a framework is most suited to a numerical and statistical analysis. As this research investigated attitudes, participants' responses could not be considered quantitatively. Instead, following Opie's (2004) suggestion, an approach that was able to offer insight into the participants' attitudes was required. Hence, a qualitative approach has been used.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

This research report has been organised into six chapters.

Chapter 1 has served as an introduction to this study. Background to the topic has been given and the rationale behind this study was offered. The major aims of the study have been outlined and readers have been introduced to the research process and the methodology informing the research.

In *Chapter 2,* the theoretical framework and literature related to this study are presented. Within the theoretical framework, an outline of attitudes, with a specific reference to language attitudes, is presented. Then, the theoretical framework, Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996), is introduced and its relevance to this research is explained. Following the theoretical framework, an overview of the literature pertinent to this research is put forward. In this, the background to English in South Africa and a

summary of the major varieties of English in South Africa are examined. Literature regarding attitudes toward varieties of English is discussed so as to inform readers of current trends in this field.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the methodological approach adopted in this investigation. It examines the potential methodological approaches that could be used in this study and concludes that such research merits a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. Data collection occurred in two stages. Firstly, participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire and secondly, discussion was held in a focus group. An explanation for the use of focus groups is offered and the approach to the questionnaires and to conducting the focus groups is described. Lastly, the ethical considerations for this research are stated.

In *Chapter 4* the data collected from the focus groups are presented. The questionnaires from all three focus groups are analysed. Then, the data from each focus group discussion are reviewed separately.

In *Chapter 5* the data analysed in Chapter 4 are interpreted and discussed. The implications of these findings are put forward.

In the final chapter, *Chapter 6,* the findings of the investigation are summarized. Following this, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are presented.

The final chapter is followed by the bibliography and appendices. The appendices consist of the questionnaire, transcripts of the four radio recordings, transcripts of the three focus groups and the participants' letters of consent.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, the theoretical framework is discussed as a means of understanding the approach taken towards research in this study. This is followed by the literature review, in which existing literature on language attitudes will be presented. Special attention is focused on language attitudes within the classroom as it was student teachers who participated in the research. Secondly, there is a focus on English within South Africa and the varieties of English that are spoken across the country.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to situate language attitudes within a theoretical framework in order to understand participants' responses and to be able to analyse the data effectively. This will be achieved by defining language attitudes and then placing them in the context of attitudes toward varieties of English. Following this, Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) will be considered as the Concentric Circles provide a basis for understanding varieties of English and illustrate why varieties of English are not always judged equally.

2.2.2 ATTITUDES

As Agheyisi and Fishman (1970) state, there is no agreement as to a single definition of attitude. Instead, definitions range from Allport's mentalist definition that attitudes are a "mental and neural state of readiness" (Allport 1935 in Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 138) to Bain's behaviourist approach that states that attitudes can be inferred from observation of a person's actions (Bain 1928 in Agheyisi and Fishman 1970). Knowledge of this wide spectrum of definitions is necessary, as the definition of attitude that one uses in research could affect both the methodology and the results of the research. In defining attitudes, this study borrows what one deduces from Ajzen's (2005: 3) postulation that "attitude is a

disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event". In this research, disposition refers to participants' reactions to speakers based on the speakers' varieties of English. As indicated earlier, the aim of this study is to explore if a group of student teachers views four varieties of English in South Africa as linguistically and socially equal.

Examples of attitudes include those that are negative, positive, caring and liberal (Smith 2003). According to Ajzen (2005), once these attitudes are formulated they are directed at an object, idea, person, institution or language. Thus, a person's attitude may act as a predictor of his/her behaviour. However, the potential that a person's behaviour does not reflect his/her attitude cannot be ignored. As Baker (1992: 11) notes "…attitudes cannot be directly observed. A person's thoughts, processing system and feelings are hidden" and can only be "inferred from the direction and persistence of external behaviour". Ajzen (2005) and Hyrkstedt and Kalaja (1998) offer similar arguments. Cognisance needs to be taken of the possibility that a person might express an attitude and yet behave in a manner that does not reflect this attitude. During this research, participants were asked to express their attitudes, but their behaviour was not observed. There is consequently no guarantee that the attitudes that participants put forward are in line with their behaviour.

2.2.3 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Baker (1992), Cargile *et al* (1994), Gardner (1982) and Smith (2003) all indicate that, as is the case with general attitudes, when defining language attitudes, a multitude of beliefs and theories exist. As introduced in Chapter 1, Cargile and Giles's (1997) definition is used, as it offers a clear explanation as to what the study of language attitudes encompasses. They build on the notion of an attitude being a response to a person and to what one deduce this person's characteristics to be. They state:

> "It [the study of language attitudes] recognizes that language is a powerful social force that does more than convey intended referential information; for better or worse, hearers may react to linguistic and paralinguistic variation in messages as though they indicate both personal and social characteristics of the speaker."
>
> (Cargile and Giles 1997: 195)

Cargile and Giles (1997) maintain that it is the possibility that language attitudes could cause social bias and influence estimations of a speaker's ability that necessitates the study of language attitudes. It follows that if a hearer holds attitudes towards different languages, so too will he/she hold attitudes toward speakers of different varieties within a language. As a result, Cargile and Giles's (1997) definition and further remarks are pertinent to this investigation. From their definition, the potential effects of language attitudes are visible and a guideline as to what one needs to explore in language attitude studies is offered and provides a solid foundation for this study.

An examination of Cargile and Giles's (1997) definition indicates the value and significance of language attitude studies. By identifying language as a "powerful social force", the influence of language is apparent and its potential for it to have a significant effect on a hearer is highlighted. Importantly, Cargile and Giles note that language attitudes can result in hearers responding positively or negatively to a speaker. Thus, a speaker's language [or variety thereof] has the power to influence one hearer positively and another negatively. This occurs when a hearer's perception of a speaker is formed primarily on the speaker's language. The result is that a person might be judged as unintelligent based on his/her language. Alternatively, if a hearer favours a speaker's language he/she might judge the speaker as intelligent. Despite there being no conclusive evidence of the speakers' levels of intelligence, assumptions are made. This illustrates the power of language attitude studies, as hearers might form judgement of a speaker's character without sufficient knowledge.

In this investigation into attitudes toward varieties of English, a framework for exploring different varieties of English is required. In order to achieve this, Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) will be discussed below.

2.2.4. KACHRU'S THREE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES (1996)

Kachru (1996) introduced the Three Concentric Circles (Figure 1 below) as a means of explaining the global spread of English. Kachru (1996) labelled the circles the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The framework is appropriate for this study as it illustrates the existence of varieties of English and distinguishes between first language (L1) and additional language (AL) varieties of English. This distinction is necessary, as the varieties of English that are researched include both L1 and AL varieties. Furthermore, this framework is relevant in that Kachru (1996) does not place any variety of English as linguistically or socially superior to another. On the contrary, he stresses equality between varieties of English and rejects the philosophy that, as the origins of the language are with L1 speakers of English, L1 varieties of English should assume a position of dominance over other varieties of English. He acknowledges the growth in varieties of English within all three circles and outlines the specific role that the varieties in each circle hold. He reasons that, as varieties in each circle fulfil their respective role, no single circle is more worthy than another. The equality that he promotes is not universally accepted and there are respected theorists including Görlach (1988 in McArthur 1998), McArthur 1998 and Strevens 1977 who offer alternative viewpoints. This discord indicates that the theory behind Kachru's Concentric Circles (1996) cannot be accepted blindly. However, as he is able to motivate his theory and because, like this research, he distinguishes between L1 and additional language varieties of English, it remains pertinent to this investigation.

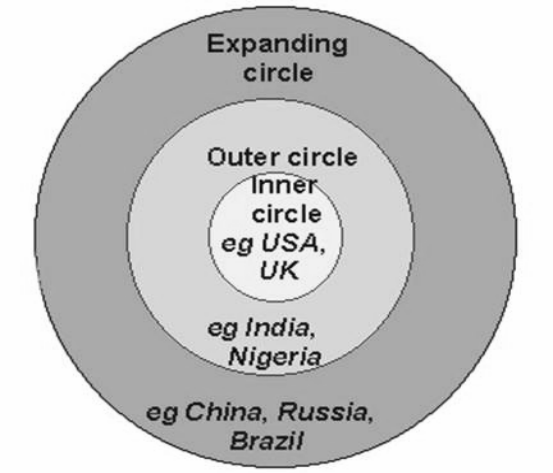


Figure 1 Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (Tan 2009).

Today, this theory remains of value when exploring varieties of English. This is because the framework offers a concise and comprehensible explanation of English across the world. Here, this theory will be used to clarify the distinction between the different varieties of English that are discussed in this research. It will inform the analytical process as it establishes a framework for analysing attitudes. Within this framework, Kachru (1996) positions countries according to the variety of English that the citizens speak.

The countries that Kachru (1996) places in the Inner Circle are those where English predominates as the first language, i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). The varieties within this circle are spoken by L1 English speakers and are said to be norm-providing i.e. varieties of non-native English stem from the varieties within the Inner Circle. Kachru (1996) employed the term "inner" to refer to the origin of English and not to indicate superiority.

Countries that Kachru (1996) assigns to the Outer Circle are those that were colonized by the UK or the USA. Examples of such countries include Nigeria, Kenya, India and Singapore. Varieties of English in these countries have come to be institutionalised and have developed their own standards and norms. Kachru (1996) thus refers to them as

norm-developing. These varieties are used extensively in areas such as education, administration and politics (Kachru and Nelson 1996).

Finally, Kachru (1996) states that the Expanding Circle encapsulates countries where English is spoken primarily as a foreign language. China, Brazil and Russia are examples of these countries. Speakers in the Expanding Circle use English for limited purposes, such as industry or education. The English spoken by speakers in the Expanding Circle relies heavily on the English of the Inner Circle and is consequently viewed as norm-depending.

Kachru's framework (1996) does not include South Africa within a specific circle. He explains that this exclusion is due to South Africa's complex sociolinguistic situation and the insufficient reliable data detailing the number of English speakers in South Africa. Admittedly, Kachru's (1996) theory of varieties of English does not offer an exact framework for the position of English in South Africa. Yet, his theory provides a simple framework for varieties of English across the globe. Although it may not accommodate South Africa within a specific circle, the distinction that it draws between English as an L1 variety and English as an AL variety provides an outline of the position of L1 and AL varieties of English in South Africa.

English, in its many varieties, occupies multiple roles in South Africa. In an analysis of Kachru's (1996) theory, Kamwangamalu (2006, 2007) asserts that South Africa cannot be positioned in one circle alone. L1 English speakers belong in the Inner Circle. However, the majority of those who speak English in South Africa speak it as an additional language which positions them in the Outer Circle. It is in the Outer Circle that Kachru (2001) perceives a shift to be occurring and the development of "New Englishes" taking place. The fact that Kachru devotes much attention to the Outer Circle is a primary reason for the use of this model. This shift is apparent in South Africa and has resulted in the emergence of new varieties of English. Some of these varieties of English have come to be institutionalised. Norms have been established and constructions, words and usage of English that were once perceived as incorrect are now accepted in some varieties of

English (Makalela 2004). Kachru (2001) believes that these emerging varieties indicate the need for a review of the English language. In South Africa, research in this field is limited. There is a need for a reconsideration of English in South Africa, as it plays a fundamental role in communication across the country. This re-evaluation requires an appraisal of English in all spheres, including the formation of attitudes toward a speaker based on his/her variety of English. In line with this, this study is centred on student teachers' attitudes toward four varieties of English in South Africa.

Kachru (1996) places first and additional language English varieties on an equal footing thereby indicating that no variety should be seen as inferior. Schneider (2007) reasons that it is this equality that renders Kachru's model valuable in that it does not assign primary status to L1 English speakers, but rather promotes equality among varieties. As Kachru (2008) reasons, the Inner Circle should not be viewed as the superior or preferred circle but rather as the core of the spread and origin of English. Hence, the Outer Circle is not inferior and Kachru (2008) uses the term "outer" to apply to the geographical spread of English. The equal status that he applies to varieties of English is relevant in a study such as this as attitudes toward both L1 and AL varieties are explored. As English is spoken as a first and an additional language in South Africa, the exploration of Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) is of value to this study.

2.2.5 CONCLUSION

Thus far, this chapter has offered insight into language attitudes. It has attempted to define language attitudes and, through this attempt, has revealed the difficulty of such a definition. I have drawn on Cargile and Giles's (1997) definition as it offers an intelligible explanation that can be applied to responses from the focus group participants. This has been followed by a consideration of Kachru's (1996) model of Englishes, the Three Concentric Circles. This model provides a framework for explaining the equality between different varieties of English; knowledge that is essential in South Africa, a country of many varieties of English. I will now progress to the second part of this chapter, the literature review.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review begins with a brief overview of English, both globally and within Africa. This is followed by a focus on English in South Africa that provides a brief history of the language in South Africa and identifies why English in South Africa consists of numerous varieties. Through a discussion of the history of English in South Africa, the reasons for the many varieties of English spoken in this country will become apparent. Similarly, language attitudes that some South Africans hold and the background to these attitudes will emerge.

Existing literature on language attitudes will be reviewed in an effort to situate this research within other studies. Both global and South African literature is presented. This literature is concerned with attitudes toward English and its varieties.

2.3.2 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Graddol (1997) states that as English is the language of technology, the economy and the internet, it acts as a global language and millions use it to communicate in their relevant fields across the world. Crystal (2001) notes that there are over 70 countries where English occupies some form of an official role in administration. This is an indication of the widespread use and influence of the language. Within the field of language studies, references to the global dominance of English are frequent (Crystal 2001; Graddol 1997, 2006; Kachru 1996; Kamwangamalu 2003; Smith 2003). Smith (2003) attributes this to the role that English has played in the global economy and in the increased sharing of information worldwide. Many regard English as a language of prestige and success. However, this does not imply that the world's population is unanimous in its support of English. Kamwangamalu (2003) comments that it is also seen as a language that has the potential to diminish the importance of other languages and to impact cultures negatively. This situation is paralleled in Africa and South Africa where English is both welcomed and resisted.

In the post-colonial era, many sub-Saharan African countries chose to adopt English as either a national or official language (Jenkins 2003; Leith 1997). This can be largely ascribed to the belief that English is a language that offers high status and many benefits. Aziakpono (2008) explains that English's position as the international language of business and its role as a *lingua franca* of some African countries contribute to this belief. For the majority of Africans, English remains an additional language and thus AL varieties of English are spoken. In line with international attitudes, Africans' attitudes toward English range from positive to a dislike for the language (Ominiyi 2006; Schmied 1995). South African citizens' attitudes toward English echo those of many other African countries. According to Statistics South Africa (2003), the percentage of L1 English speakers in South Africa is only 8.6%. Yet, English is the most widely used language and is the dominant language of education, commerce and government. Like elsewhere, many citizens aspire to speak English, while others begrudge the use of a non-native language (de Klerk 2000). This widespread use of English has resulted in AL varieties of English developing.

South Africa's political history has resulted in a unique linguistic situation. South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages[2]. Despite the government's call (South Africa 1996) for all official languages to hold equal status, English has emerged as the language of business, law and government. To understand why English is the dominant language, a review of the history of the English language in South Africa follows.

In 1795 the British invaded the Cape and, consequently, English was introduced to South Africa (Lass 2004). Since 1795, the language of power in South Africa has swung between Dutch or Afrikaans and English. Silva (1997) states that, in the 19th century, the arrival of British Settlers in both the Cape and Natal led to an increase in the role of English. In 1910, following the establishment of the Union of South Africa, English and Dutch were designated the official languages. By 1925, the growth of Afrikaans was such

[2] These languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sepedi, SeSotho, SiSwati, XiTsonga, Setswana, TshiVenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Mesthrie 2002a: 23).

that it replaced Dutch as an official language (Hall 2006). In 1948, the pendulum swung to Afrikaans as the National Party (NP) gained power. Both Afrikaans and English were installed as official languages. Despite the NP's efforts to promote Afrikaans, English retained an important role in business, higher education and science as well as being the language of international communication. Following the NP's loss of political power to the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994, the role of Afrikaans was much reduced. English, the language adopted by the ANC and favoured by many across the country, emerged as the dominant language of business, education and industry, a position it continues to maintain (Kamwangamalu 2003).

Although only a small percentage of South Africa count English as their L1, it is widely spoken as an additional language and frequently assumes the position of *lingua franca* (SAInfo Reporter; Statistics South Africa 2003). As English is a language that dominates in so many fields, it follows that many South Africans choose to learn English as an additional language. This is likely to result in a mixture of varieties of English being spoken. Sridhar (1996) states that one's L1 will influence the acquisition of an additional language. He explains that this is because distinctive characteristics of one's L1 and one's sociocultural context will influence the manner in which one acquires an additional language. Kachru (1996) terms this "mother tongue interference", suggesting that characteristics of an AL variety of English may stem from one's L1, i.e. a speaker's English will be influenced by and hold traits of his/her L1. This interference might be considered incorrect English. However, if such interference continues, the "error" may come to be institutionalised and be accepted in a particular non-native variety of English. English in South Africa is spoken by speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This accounts for the numerous varieties of English that exist within this country.

Within this research, Afrikaans South African English (ASAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Indian South African English (ISAE) and White South African English (WSAE) have each been considered a variety in itself. However, because of mother tongue interference, sub-varieties of these varieties exist (Kamwangamalu 2006). These sub-varieties cannot be ignored and the potential for participants to distinguish between

sub-varieties such as Venda English and Zulu English must be acknowledged, as these distinctions might influence their attitudes.

The growth in the number of speakers and varieties of English in South Africa is a worrying issue for some South Africans. Those who are concerned with the increasing number of English speakers in the country can be divided into two groups. Firstly, some L1 English speakers believe that if non-native English speakers adopt the language, the purity of the English language will be threatened and, as a result, they have resisted acknowledging non-native varieties as valid (de Klerk and Gough 2002). Kamwangamalu (2003) asserts that the second group is composed of L1 indigenous and Afrikaans language speakers who believe that a shift from the indigenous languages and Afrikaans towards English may lead to the erosion of cultural values and language loss. Consequently, a negative attitude towards such speakers who speak English and not their L1 might emerge. Despite such concerns, the increase in English speakers since 1994 has been extensive. This is a result of non-native speakers of English who believe that English offers access to power and success. Accordingly, many Afrikaans and Black South African parents choose to send their children to English medium schools. As a result, the majority of South Africans who speak English speak it as an AL variety. This study is premised on a need to consider these varieties and the attitudes that are held toward their speakers. This is necessary because, if speakers are judged according to their English, it could influence the attitudes that other South Africans hold toward them with regard to their intellect, character and personality traits.

While research into attitudes toward English in South Africa exists, studies focused on language attitudes toward varieties of these languages have been limited (Barkhuizen 2002; de Klerk 2006; McKinney 2007). Smit and Verhoef (2003), for example, investigated attitudes toward varieties of English found in South Africa. However, they focused chiefly on written varieties. This research is focused on attitudes toward spoken varieties of English within South Africa as there is an extensive knowledge gap in this area.

2.3.3 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA

Owing to the vast number of varieties of English and space constraints, it is not possible to explore all varieties of English that exist in South Africa. Consequently, four major varieties of English will be considered. These are Afrikaans South African English (ASAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Indian South African English (ISAE) and White South African English (WSAE). These four varieties will be discussed separately below.

2.3.3.1 AFRIKAANS SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (ASAE)

Under the NP, White Afrikaans speaking people spoke Afrikaans in their daily lives. As Louw (2004) comments, the Apartheid government promoted the widespread use of Afrikaans. When the ANC came into power, it was inevitable that Afrikaans would not receive as much attention from the new government as it previously had. As a result, the linguistic power that Afrikaners had held was reduced. This loss of power has led to some Afrikaners shifting toward English. de Klerk (2001) explains that together, these factors have resulted in a rise in the number of ASAE speakers. Research on ASAE is limited with Watermeyer (1996) amongst the few who have explored this variety thoroughly. Watermeyer (1996) states that ASAE is an AL variety of English. As a result, ASAE speakers are not a speech community within themselves and the variety exists chiefly as a variety of necessity. This study's identification of ASAE is in line with Watermeyer (1996) who refers to ASAE as the English spoken by White Afrikaners.

The growth in ASAE and in the attitude that knowledge of English is necessary is evident in the increasing number of parents who are enrolling their children in English medium schools. A study by de Klerk (2001) reported that parents reason that English is the language of the world and that it will better prepare their children for life after school. This was echoed in de Klerk and Barkhuizen's (2004) research where an Afrikaans-speaking father explained to Barkhuizen:

> "Ag, it [speaking English] is just easier for them [his children] and we are not attached to Afrikaans, for me it is not about the language.... It will be easier for the children if you English (*sic*) and just bring them up English."
>
> (de Klerk and Barkhuizen 2004: 9)

In contrast, other White Afrikaners have held onto their language. Kamwangamalu (2006) and MacCarron (2005) reason that this is as many Afrikaners view Afrikaans as a mark of their identity and as a means of holding on to their culture. Whereas English is a language spoken in many countries worldwide, Afrikaans is a language that is uniquely South African and thus Afrikaners are positioned in their own linguistic community. Consequently, many Afrikaners perceive the rise of English as a threat to the Afrikaans identity and culture. Potentially, this could lead to Afrikaners holding on to many of the characteristics of their language when communicating in English, as they may view it as a means of maintaining their identity.

2.3.3.2 BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (BSAE)

de Klerk and Gough (2002: 356) define BSAE as "the variety of English commonly used by mother-tongue speakers of South Africa's indigenous languages". However, defining BSAE is a complex process. As BSAE is an additional language variety of English, its speakers are exposed to and acquire the language for different periods of time and at various stages of their lives. Hence, there is a significant range in the competency of its speakers. As there is no clarity as to what level of competency constitutes BSAE, hearers' definitions of BSAE might vary. This needs to be acknowledged in a discussion of language attitudes so as to accommodate potential variations in the hearers' perceptions of the defining features of BSAE.

Owing to the inferior perception of Blacks held by the Apartheid regime, BSAE was virtually ignored as a variety of English until the 1980s when research into linguistic aspects of this variety was undertaken (Kasanga 2006; van der Walt and van Rooy 2002).

For this reason, the majority of research regarding this variety has occurred only in the last two decades.

During Apartheid, Black South Africans perceived English as the official language that offered greater advantages. As Silva (1997) describes, it was "the language of aspiration and empowerment". In contrast, Silva (1997) states that Afrikaans was considered "the language of the oppressor". Further, Wade (1996) explains that the ANC's decision to adopt English as its language of communication increased the position of English.

de Klerk and Gough (2002) attribute the origin of BSAE to English being taught in the classroom, particularly by missionaries. Under the NP, the Bantu Education System required Blacks to be taught in their L1 at primary school level and attempted to diminish the role of English and increase the position of Afrikaans. Consequently, Black learners had little contact with L1 English speakers. The state's attempts to increase the role of Afrikaans at a secondary school level fuelled resistance to Afrikaans and ultimately led to the Soweto Uprising of 1976 (Makalela 2004). This uprising resulted in learners, parents and schools being allowed to choose the medium of instruction from learners' fifth year of schooling. This resistance to Afrikaans, coupled with a belief that indigenous languages could not help advance one's position after school led to the growth of English as an additional language in the form of BSAE.

The increasing use of BSAE in the media, government and the financial sector illustrates its growth, as it is gaining acceptance and respect from speakers of other varieties. Once viewed as inferior and unacceptable in formal situations, de Klerk (1999) notes that there has been a move towards accepting BSAE as a legitimate variety that is growing in status and prestige. This acceptance of and pride in BSAE is evident in that Blacks who adopt WSAE are sometimes shunned and called coconuts[3] (Rudwick 2008).

[3] A coconut is a derogatory term referring to Blacks who have adopted mannerisms of White South Africans and English, particularly WSAE (Rudwick 2008).

Surrounded by teachers, peers and families who speak BSAE, the linguistic aspects and vocabulary of BSAE become permanent features of a speaker's English (de Klerk 2006; de Klerk and Gough 2002). BSAE has developed into a variety that follows specific language rules and has a lexis that is appropriate to the speakers' communication needs. As such, it is a variety that merits equal value to any other variety of English in South Africa.

2.3.3.3 INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (ISAE)

English is widely spoken within India. Kachru (1986) states that in India, English is a language of business, administration and education. It is spoken primarily as an AL variety of English when speakers require a common language. As a result of mother tongue interference there are similarities between Indian English and ISAE. However, a major difference exists in that Indian English is primarily an AL variety while ISAE is spoken as an L1.

Mesthrie's (2002a, b, c) comprehensive research offers insight into the arrival and history of Indians and their acquisition of English in KwaZulu-Natal (then Natal). A demand for labour in Natal resulted in the arrival of 150 000 Indian labourers in Natal between 1860 and 1911. Many of these Indians were employed on five to ten year contracts and they remained in Natal once these contracts had expired.

The political situation in South Africa was such that Indians had limited interaction with WSAE speakers. Mesthrie (2002b) states that the first contact that many Indians had with English was in the classroom. Mesthrie (2002c) comments that some learners were taught by L1 English speakers. However, many Indians had contact only with fellow AL English speakers. Mesthrie (2002c) explains that, due to interaction with both L1 and AL speakers, the variety of English that emerged contained attributes of WSAE, but there are enough distinguishing features in vocabulary, sentence and grammatical formation for ISAE to be considered a variety in itself.

2.3.3.4 WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (WSAE)

With the arrival of the British, English was introduced to South Africa. This British variety formed the foundation for WSAE, the first uniquely South African variety. As WSAE was the original variety of English in South Africa as well as the variety of the economically successful it has traditionally been viewed as Standard South African English. McKinney (2007) states that, as a result, this variety acts as a form of linguistic capital for those who use it.

There has been limited research on WSAE in recent years. This is perhaps due to WSAE's established position in South Africa that resulted in much research in previous decades. However, this research focused on the origins of English in South Africa rather than on its relation to other varieties of English or the attitudes held towards it. This study hopes to offer comparative insights into the attitudes toward the four varieties being explored rather than considering each variety separately.

2.3.4 STANDARD ENGLISH AND ITS POSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Traditionally, the standard variety of any language is widely accepted and seen to be the variety of the educated and the successful. This is evident from Crystal (1994) and Trudgill's (1999) descriptions of Standard English. Trudgill (1999) defines it as the variety of English that holds the most prestige and Crystal (1994) states that the standard variety of a language is considered a benefit to its speakers and is the variety commonly used in the industrial, economic and government sectors and in the media. Trudgill (1999) stresses that Standard English is not regionally defined and, as such, the basis of Standard English is not associated with pronunciation. Importantly, Lippi-Green (1997) argues that despite the prestige associated with Standard English, it is not linguistically superior to other varieties of English. Labov (1969a) echoes this in his claim that, like Standard English, nonstandard English is a set of rules and that a nonstandard variety is not an inferior form of communication.

Crystal (2006) maintains that, worldwide, AL varieties of English are assuming more control of the language. This is chiefly because the number of L1 English speakers is

falling in proportion to the rise in numbers of AL of foreign language speakers. Crystal (2004) estimates that there are between 1 400 and 1 500 million English speakers across the globe. This figure is composed of 400 million L1 speakers, 400 million AL speakers and between 600 and 700 million foreign language speakers. The growth in the number of AL speakers of English has modified English. Features that L1 speakers deem incorrect will probably come to be accepted. Further, because of the increasing number of AL speakers, these modifications are likely to be incorporated into L1 speakers' speech.

Unlike in many countries, no single variety of English is universally accepted as the standard variety in South Africa. For example, in England and Australia it is expected that a standard variety will emerge as the variety of prestige (Trudgill 1999). However, the existence of a standard variety of English within South Africa is contested. This debate centres on establishing what variety of English occupies the position of Standard English. In South Africa, government is dominated by BSAE, WSAE is commonly used in the financial sector and an array of varieties is present throughout the media. The lack of an accepted standard variety has led to a debate as to what the most prestigious variety of English in South Africa is. This adds a further dimension to this research as the participants' attitudes toward varieties of English could be influenced by their perception of Standard English.

2.3.5 ATTITUDES TOWARD VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

Language attitude studies frequently indicate that the variety that a speaker speaks is likely to influence a hearer's perception of the speaker with regard to status and solidarity (Edwards 1986; Carranza 1982; Young 2003). Branford (1996) claims that the English language has divisive properties in that certain varieties of English may be perceived as superior or inferior to others. Assumptions made of speakers are based on social aspects rather than on linguistic facts. Yet, studies on the nature of attitudes toward language and varieties thereof suggest that a hearer's attitude towards a speaker is affected by the speaker's variety (Callon and Galois 1987; Giles and Sassoon 1983; Haig and Oliver 2003; Rodriguez *et al* 2004; Şen 2004; Şen and Baykal 2004). Cargile *et al* (1994) provide examples of the potential for a speaker's language variety to strongly affect the

formulation of a hearer's attitude toward the speaker. The possibility that an American may think a British speaker cultured and refined offers an example of how easily speakers may be judged according to the variety of the language that they speak. Within a study of student teachers' language attitudes, such a potential needs to be investigated in the student teachers' daily lives and in their capacity as educators.

The possibility that teachers' assessment of learners is related to learners' varieties of English merits exploration. Ford (1984) conducted a study in this regard. Teachers were played recordings of Standard American English speakers and speakers whose English was influenced by Spanish. Thereafter, teachers had to assess each speaker based on his/her recording as well as his/her written work. Notably, all written work was of equal standard. Despite this equality, teachers were more positive in their response to the Standard American English speakers and rated their academic ability and social traits as superior to those of the speakers whose English was influenced by Spanish. As teachers in South Africa are so often surrounded by more than one variety of English, this study needs to be reflected on in a discussion of students who will soon qualify as teachers.

In a consideration of language attitudes, the work of Labov (1969a, 1969b, 1972) merits discussion. Labov is widely recognised for his research that illustrates the equality that exists between L1 varieties of English. Labov's (1969a, 1969b) seminal work on poor academic results achieved by African-Americans living in inner-city New York revealed that the variety of a language that a learner speaks can result in teachers judging him/her as academically incapable and suffering from learning disabilities. Through interviews with hundreds of African-American children and teenagers, Labov (1969a, 1969b, 1972) established that when these children were allowed to communicate in a variety of English already known to them, they expressed themselves clearly and it was evident that they possessed the same mental ability as learners who spoke and wrote the variety expected by the teacher.

As such, his studies concluded that African-American children were able to hold a coherent conversation and to convey their argument logically without speaking Standard

English. This study is therefore intellectually indebted to Labov's extensive research. Despite Labov's findings, prejudices still exist. In terms of this research, Labov's work is of interest in that it demonstrates that all varieties of English are worthy of equal status and should be considered in the same manner. In this investigation of attitudes toward English varieties, I remain aware of this factor in the analysis of the student teachers' responses, particularly if participants differ in their attitudes toward varieties of English.

Labov's (1969a, b, 1972) research is well-respected and remains pertinent several decades after the varieties of English were investigated. However, it refers only to L1 varieties of English. Thus, the participants in his research would be able to reason and communicate in at least one variety of English. As this research report is concerned with both L1 and AL varieties of English, it must be acknowledged that there are learners in South Africa who are taught through the medium of English without being fully competent in English. In such an instance, the theoretical equality that Labov promotes cannot exist and there are learners who will be unable to participate effectively in the teaching and learning process and this will affect their academic competency. However, the findings of his research remain relevant in instances where the speaker can communicate fluently in any variety of English.

The studies of language attitudes that follow indicate that, despite this equality, hearers continue to judge speakers according to their variety of spoken English.

In an effort to establish if student teachers hold positive or negative attitudes toward varieties of English, Cross *et al* (2001) investigated whether a group of student teachers' attitudes toward speakers were affected by the speakers' dialects[4]. 111 student teachers who were enrolled at a university in Alabama, USA participated in the study. The student teachers listened to four varieties of English that were divided along racial lines. Findings included that Black student teachers rated White speakers significantly lower than White student teachers did with regard to White speakers' consideration, trustworthiness, honesty and friendliness. Attitudes regarding intelligence also seemed to be linked to the

[4] The sense in which Cross *et al* (2001) use dialect can be equated to a spoken variety.

speakers' varieties, with racial lines playing a large part in the formation of attitudes. Their study (Cross *et al* 2001) concluded that race can play a significant role in the assessment of speakers' personalities and intellectual traits, and that when rating speakers of a race other than one's own, there is a tendency to adopt a more negative attitude towards these speakers. Hence, hearers are likely to judge speakers of their own race more positively as they often speak the same varieties of English. These judgements could lead to pre-conceived ideas regarding a speaker's character, intellect and ability. The varieties of South African English that are considered in this research are divided along racial lines. There exists the possibility for such attitudes to develop because of participants' backgrounds and there is a need to reflect on how this might influence the study. This gap in literature in South Africa is concerning as, if race is a factor, student teachers and teachers need to be educated in an attempt to overcome this prejudice.

It is evident that attitudes toward English are not always positive. Rudwick (2008) investigated language dynamics in Umlazi, a predominantly Zulu township outside of Durban. She established that the majority of the approximately 500 residents who participated in her research supported maintaining their Zulu identity and retaining Zulu as their L1. Residents acknowledged that English could be of benefit to their lives, but the majority did not view this as a reason to adopt a White variety of English. Notably, WSAE speaking community members were heavily criticised by others within the community. Many residents were scathing in their attacks on those who they considered to be too English and were quick to label them "coconut" or "Oreo".[5]

This disapproval of Blacks who speak WSAE is not universal and there are others who view WSAE as the preferable variety (Rudwick 2008). This is highlighted by McKinney's (2007:16) research where she quotes a Black high school learner who describes the English of Whites as "that smooth perfect English" and the English spoken by Blacks as "broken". de Klerk's research (2000) echoes this. As an example, she quotes a Xhosa parent boasting that his/her son's "English is just fine – wonderful, we can't tell

[5] An Oreo is a chocolate sandwich biscuit with a white, sugar filling. It is used as a comparison to Blacks who speak and act like a White person, i.e. they are black on the outside and white on the inside (Rudwick 2008).

him apart from an English speaker" (de Klerk 2000: 100). McKinney's (2007) study, conducted in urban Johannesburg, explored how learners in three high schools perceived the varieties of English that were used around them. In contrast to Rudwick's (2008) findings, learners from all three schools, described WSAE as "proper English" (McKinney 2007: 14). This lack of agreement in attitudes toward English is possibly a result of interviewees' backgrounds and it illustrates the disparities that can exist between hearers' attitudes. It is apparent that the belief that English can be equated with empowerment exists. What is necessary is to establish whether, in addition to this, attitudes toward speakers' different varieties of English further shape views on the power that speakers hold, their levels of competency and their abilities.

Evidence from Smit and Verhoef's (2003) research suggests that, generally, teachers are prejudiced against learners who they believe do not make use of what they deem acceptable English. Further, teachers play a significant role in learners' acquisition of language. As Cross *et al* (2001) and van der Walt and van Rooy (2002) have stated, teachers set boundaries as to what is acceptable behaviour and, consequently, as to what the appropriate variety(ies) of a specific language is (are). It is therefore important to understand the attitudes expressed by the student teachers. This is because they set limits as to what they consider the appropriate use of English to be and are responsible for the standard of education that learners receive. Their attitudes toward varieties of English are worthy of attention, as they will soon graduate and assume the position of teacher. The focus groups in this research are not centred specifically on student teachers' attitudes toward learners. However, because of the influential role that teachers play in learners' development, their attitudes toward learners' spoken varieties of English deserve consideration.

2.3.6 CONCLUSION

The studies mentioned above demonstrate that, worldwide, speakers are frequently judged according to the variety of a language that they use. This highlights the need for a consideration of language attitude studies. This is problematic in South Africa as limited research has been conducted in the field of language attitudes, very little of which has

investigated varieties of a language. The background to English in South Africa suggests that the study of language attitudes is a complex process because of the many linguistic factors contributing to the position of English in South Africa.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter established a theoretical framework for this research and reviewed literature pertaining to the research.

The theoretical framework in place is crucial to this study. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) offer a framework for understanding the position of English globally. The inability for South Africa to be positioned in a specific circle underscores the unique linguistic situation in South Africa, one that is worthy of exploration.

The literature examined here served two major purposes. Firstly, English within South Africa was placed in context and the relevant varieties of English were outlined. Secondly, language attitudes were considered, with a focus on attitudes toward varieties of English. Combined, this literature provides a foundation for a discussion of the data.

I now progress to Chapter 3, Methodology, where the process of data collection will be expanded upon.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When undertaking research, the choice of methodological approach is significant. This is as the approach that is adopted has a considerable bearing on the direction that the research follows. For this investigation, the possibility of adopting a qualitative or a quantitative approach to the data was considered.

Kitthananan (2006) states that qualitative research aims to understand and interpret the meaning that participants attribute to their surrounding environments. In attempting to achieve such understanding, qualitative research is concerned with investigating research questions. It follows that it is often subjective in nature, as the interpretation and analysis of data collected from qualitative research will differ from one researcher to the next. This is as personal bias and beliefs may affect the conclusions that are drawn (Leedy 2000; Opie 2004). Consequently, the analysis of qualitative data is often criticised for being the perception of the researcher. In contrast, quantitative data can be calculated statistically, allowing for greater reliability and credibility (Center for Programme Evaluation and Research 2007b). This does not imply that a quantitative analysis is without subjectivity. Huberty (2000) comments on the potential subjectivity of quantitative analysis. He raises two significant issues. Firstly, the researcher selects his/her methodological framework. Secondly, he/she selects the data to be analysed. In both instances, it is the researcher who decides the route of the investigation and subjectivity in the analysis is thus impeded.

Neill (2007) states that a quantitative approach is used primarily in the analysis of numerical data. The data are collected through means such as questionnaires and surveys. Results are classified methodically enabling researchers to calculate data objectively and efficiently. Although a degree of subjectivity is present in quantitative research, it provides a level of reliability and credibility that qualitative research cannot. However, McBride and Schostak (1995) comment that the process of quantitative research does not always allow for the contextualisation of the data or for an insight into the data.

For this investigation, focus groups were set up as a means of gathering data. Drawing on the Center for Programme Evaluation and Research (2007a), Gruman *et al* (2008) and Kitthananan (2006), I define a focus group as a group of participants who are brought together to discuss a specific concern or topic under the guidelines set out by a facilitator. Participants are encouraged to interact with each other and to contribute their own opinions. Through this, the researcher can gauge an idea of participants' attitudes toward the topic under discussion. As a focus group is concerned with a specific topic, rich data are likely to result, allowing the researcher to gain much insight into the analysis of the data. As this research aimed to gain insight into participants' attitudes toward varieties of spoken English, the qualitative approach was deemed appropriate in this context. Thus, focus groups were set up and participants were asked to voice their attitudes. These attitudes were then analysed. In this chapter, the steps required to conduct the focus groups and obtain relevant data will be presented.

3.2 SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

This research was conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand. This venue was chosen as it was convenient for the participants as they are all students on the campus so they did not need to travel to attend a focus group. Focus groups were held when students had free time between lectures.

The focus groups comprised third and fourth year students studying towards a Bachelor of Education (BEd). All student teachers had English, Mathematics or Science as a teaching subject. In some instances, students had both Mathematics and Science as teaching subjects. Due to this overlap in subjects, a division is drawn between student teachers of English, and student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science. Student teachers of these three subjects have been chosen because of the poor results that matriculants have achieved in these subjects in recent years. These results have led to the subjects under investigation being earmarked for added attention because of their function as gateway subjects i.e. subjects that can improve learners' future prospects (Motshekga 2010). As the Department of Education has called for a focus on these subjects, the role of the teachers of these subjects has assumed increased importance. It is

for this reason that I have chosen to concentrate on student teachers of English, Mathematics and Science and conduct the focus groups in line with the participants' teaching subjects. Third and fourth year students were preferred over first and second year students. This is as the extra time that third and fourth year students have spent in the classroom should have given them more exposure to different varieties of English and this would benefit the discussion.

I approached lecturers from the Departments of English, Mathematics and Science and requested permission to address their third and fourth year students. Lecturers from the Departments of Mathematics and Science offered me the opportunity to do so. When I met with the students, I explained the rationale behind my research and outlined the study to the students. Once potential participants were aware of their role in the study they were asked to indicate if they were willing to participate and, if so, to provide contact details. This was followed up with email and telephonic contact and appointment times were arranged. The final focus group was arranged with the assistance of a lecturer from the Department of Applied English Language Studies. She discussed my research with one of her third year students who agreed to assist me. He and I arranged a suitable time and he organised for four other students to partake in the focus group. Despite receiving assistance from lecturers, finding participants proved difficult. This is as the students were about to embark on their Teaching Experience and were concentrating on completing assignments and preparing for their Teaching Experience. Consequently, all third and fourth year participants who volunteered were asked to participate in the study.

I had hoped to organise the focus groups according to participants' teaching subjects. However, a few student teachers of English joined the first focus group so this was not possible. Nonetheless, similarities were evident within each group. The first and second groups comprised mainly Mathematics and/or Science teachers. All participants in the third group were student teachers of English with four White and one Indian student teacher making up the group. As participants' names could not be revealed, participants were identified in relation to their focus group. The three transcripts have been labelled Appendix 3A (Focus Group, 20 August 2009), 3B (Focus Group, 27 August 2009) and

3C (Focus Group, 15 October 2009). At the commencement of each focus group, the questionnaires were distributed to participants. In order to link Part A and Part B of the questionnaire to a specific participant, each participant was allocated a number from 1 to 7 (dependent on the number of participants in the group) and they were asked to indicate their numbers on both questionnaires. These numbers were subsequently used as a means of linking participants' questionnaires together and to identify each participant in transcription. Each participant (P) was identified by the number that they were given when the questionnaires were distributed.

3.3 MATERIALS

Participants were asked to respond to four radio recordings (Appendix 2). These particular radio recordings were chosen as it seemed unlikely that the content would influence listeners' attitudes. This was to ensure that participants' responses to the excerpts were not in reaction to the content but rather to the radio speakers' (RS) varieties of English. The four recordings were obtained from listeners calling into "A Word on Cars", a talk show on Talk Radio 702 (Munzhelele 2009). This is a popular Friday night talk show where listeners are invited to call in with car-related queries. All four recordings are of male speakers so as to ensure that participants are not influenced by the gender variable. A further requirement was that each radio speaker spoke a different variety of the four varieties of English being investigated in this research. The excerpts ranged between 10 and fifteen seconds. Although this might appear to be of limited length, it was sufficient in terms of allowing participants to formulate attitudes.

As it was necessary to meet all the above requirements, it proved difficult to obtain four recordings. Consequently, the quality was compromised, particularly with regard to Radio Speaker 2 (RS2). However, of the many hours of radio that were recorded, and despite the generally poor audio quality, these four recordings were most suitable for the particular needs of this research. I recorded the four speakers on Talk Radio 702 (Munzhelele 2009) and then played the recordings to each focus group. Unfortunately, because the excerpts lacked quality, they needed to be repeated several times. The recordings were played to participants in the order that they were recorded (Appendix 2).

The focus groups were recorded with an Olympus digital voice recorder WS-311M and a Panasonic RR-QR170 IC Recorder. These devices were then both used when the interviews were transcribed. Although the recording equipment allowed the researcher to deduce participants' attitudes, it fell short in that the participants' facial expressions and gestures could not be captured. As these expressions and gestures often offer further insight into attitudes, it must be acknowledged that participants' attitudes might not have been captured in entirety.

3.4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The exploration of student teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English needs to be considered within a qualitative framework. This is because research into attitudes cannot be quantified. Silverman (2006: 303) explains, "…attitudes cannot be numerically calculated because of their subjective nature". When analysing the data, the potential for a researcher's subjectivity to influence the analysis has to be acknowledged. Despite these drawbacks, a qualitative approach offered more benefits than a quantitative approach could have. Quantitative research is numerically and statistically centred. Accordingly, it is not relevant to this investigation, as it is unable to provide sufficient insight into attitudes. Hence, a qualitative approach in the form of focus groups has been adopted.

Radio recordings of four speakers were played as a starting point for each focus group. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire in response to these four recordings. Then, participants were led into a discussion of English and its varieties in South Africa. The focus group interview seemed to be the most appropriate method of interviewing to gain relevant data, as they offered several advantages that other interviewing methods could not. By interviewing a number of participants simultaneously, a greater amount of and more varied data were collected than would have been if students had been interviewed individually. As interaction in focus groups is generally more natural than in one-on-one interviews, it was hoped that participants would be more likely to share their attitudes and that, because of the group dynamics, they would respond to and build upon others' ideas and opinions (Kitthananan 2006). Further, focus groups offer the facilitator

the opportunity to probe participants further if he/she wants participants to elaborate on their comments or to answer specific questions.

In order to conduct a focus group, a facilitator is necessary. However, the presence of an unknown person could influence the participants' interactions and responses. As this cannot be avoided, allowance needs to be made for this possibility in the analysis of focus groups.

When interviewing, the common formatting of interview questions is to follow a structured, a semi-structured or an unstructured approach. In a structured approach, the interviewer prepares questions in advance and follows these questions and the order of the questions closely (Opie 2004). In contrast to the structured approach, Opie (2004) notes that, in an unstructured interview, the interviewer does not depend on pre-prepared questions but rather formulates questions as the interview progresses and according to what he/she views as related to the topic and to previous questions. The risk of unstructured focus groups is that discussion may veer from the topic and this may impede the collection of relevant data. Finally, semi-structured interviews are centred on several core questions that provide the basis for a discussion. Leedy (2000) states that core questions are prepared before the interview. During the focus group, additional questions are formulated according to responses to the core questions and the issues and debates that arise from participants' responses. A semi-structured interviewing technique was employed as it allows for wider discussion and for participants to speak more freely without being constricted by the closed questioning of a structured interview. This approach was chosen with the knowledge that participants might deviate from the core questions and explore other areas relevant to the topic.

In line with the semi-structured approach, core questions were prepared. These questions were constructed so as to guide participants toward discussion pertinent to the research question. The following questions were formulated:

1. What do you think is the level of education of each of the speakers? (Lead interviewees to elaborate on their choice.)

2. Suggest what the speaker's profession may be. (Lead interviewees to elaborate on their choice.)

3. Do you think that this speaker is successful in life? (Lead interviewees to elaborate on their choice.)

4. Are different varieties of English appropriate for different situations? If so, which varieties, and where? (Lead respondents to elaborate on their choice.)

5. Which of the varieties that you have heard on the tape do you think is most acceptable for teaching and learning? (Lead interviewees to elaborate on their choice.)

6. In your view, do the different varieties of English spoken by learners in the classroom benefit or inhibit teaching and learning? (Lead interviewees to explain their view.)

7. In your view, is there such a concept as Standard English? (Lead interviewees to explain their view.)

These questions aimed to establish student teachers' attitudes toward the varieties of English that they encounter, both in their daily domain and in the classroom.

Each focus group began with participants being thanked for attending the session. An introduction to the focus group and the associated rules and expectations then took place. In this introduction, I introduced myself and outlined my research topic stating that it was focused on varieties of English in South Africa. Participants were asked to complete forms that indicated a) their willingness to partake in the focus group and b) that they consented to being recorded.

Following this introduction, the focus groups started with the distribution of questionnaires to the participants. These questionnaires were composed of two parts. Part A (Appendix 1A) of the questionnaire required participants to provide background details such as stating their teaching subjects, the languages that they speak and the amount of teaching experience that they have had. This information was gathered in order to establish if any of the details completed in the questionnaire might have influenced participants' attitudes.

Part B (Appendix 1B) of the questionnaire was in response to the four radio excerpts. Its purpose was to gain an idea of the participants' attitudes toward the four speakers based on their variety of spoken English. Using a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least and 5 the highest), participants were asked to rate certain characteristics of the four speakers based on a consideration of only the speakers' varieties of English (see Appendix 1B). Participants were asked to respond to the following characteristics: ambition, friendliness, intelligence, kindness, popularity, self-confidence and sense of humour. These characteristics were chosen as they relate to the radio speakers' personal and professional lives. By introducing the participants to the four varieties of English, it was hoped that participants would start to consider their language attitudes toward the speakers' varieties of English before discussion commenced.

It must be noted that, despite containing close-ended questions, the questionnaire does not constitute quantitative research. Rather, it provided an efficient method for obtaining participants' personal details and aimed to serve as a guideline in the group discussion regarding participants' attitudes toward varieties of English. After the questionnaires were completed, participants were led into a discussion of English and its varieties in South Africa.

Focus Group 2 followed an unusual format. This was as two of the participants arrived late. As their time in the general discussion was limited, I continued the discussion with the two of them once the other participants had left. Although this was not strictly a focus group, I managed to collect much data through interaction with them. As was required,

they signed letters of consent to be interviewed and recorded. They also completed Part A of the questionnaire but because of time constraints they did not listen to the recordings or complete Part B of the questionnaire. Consequently, this focus group ranged from two to six participants.

As I had no previous experience in conducting focus group interviews, I sought the assistance of a more experienced researcher to assist me in the facilitation of the first focus group. Her presence instilled confidence in me and consequently, I felt able to conduct the following two focus groups alone. Despite my inexperience, I chose to facilitate the focus group. This is because I believed it would enable me to ask the questions relevant to my research and to guide the participants towards discussions that I believed were pertinent.

The focus groups were recorded and then transcribed verbatim (Appendix 3A, 3B, 3C). Although this is a time-consuming method, it can provide more accuracy in comparison to other methods such as note-taking and memory (Lankshear and Knobel 2004). The quantity of the data collected necessitated that only the data relevant to this study be included in the final research report.

3.5 ETHICS

On arrival at the focus groups, all participants signed forms that indicated their willingness to be interviewed and recorded. They also agreed that their responses could contribute to the data used for this research report. I stressed that ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected was of utmost importance and that their names would not appear in the writing up of the discussion. Instead, pseudonyms would be used that would not link the participants to the research and, no one, other than the researcher, would have access to their identities[6]. Further, they were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any stage.

[6] In addition, the co-facilitator in the first focus group was aware of the participants' names.

Permission was obtained from the Head of the School of Education to use the School of Education campus as the research site.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has served to illustrate the methodological framework and methods that were employed in the collection of relevant data. Two methodological approaches to research were defined. This was followed by an explanation as to why a qualitative approach was appropriate. Information regarding participants, choice of venue and the materials necessary for data collection were offered as these factors all affect the process of data collection in this study. Once the study was placed in context, the data collection procedure was presented. Lastly, the ethical considerations were laid out. The data that were collected using the above methods will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As laid out in the previous chapter, the data collection followed a two part process. Firstly, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. Part A of the questionnaire comprised questions designed to establish participants' biographical details. Part B of the questionnaire was centred on four radio recordings. Participants were asked to listen to four speakers each of whom spoke one of the four varieties being investigated. They were asked to complete a questionnaire in response to these speakers. For the second part of the focus group, participants were led into a discussion where their attitudes toward the four varieties of English were discussed. This chapter will follow this same order.

4.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In Part A of the questionnaire (Appendix 1A), participants were asked to provide biographical information that could contribute to the interpretation of the data. From the table below (Table 1) it is evident that more males took part in the study. Males were more likely to be Mathematics and/or Science student teachers. With the exception of an Indian participant all Mathematics and/or Science teachers were Black. There were only two fourth year participants and 16 third year students.

	Gender		Total	Race			Total	Subject		Total	Year		Total
	Male	Female		Black	Indian	White		Eng	M, S		3	4	
FG1	6	1	7	7	0	0	7	2	5	7	6	1	7
FG2	3	3	6	5	1		6	0	6	6	6	0	6
FG3	1	4	5		1	4	5	5	0	5	4	1	5
Total	10	8	18	12	2	4	18	7	11	18	16	2	18

Table 1 Focus Group Participants

Key

FG: Focus Group

Eng: English

M, S: Mathematics and/or Science

One biographical piece of information that I omitted in the questionnaire was that of the schools that the participants attended. From the interview, I gathered that the White and Indian participants were at former Model C[7] or private schools. The Black participants were educated at former DET schools[8].

Part B of the questionnaire (Appendix 1B) was a response to the four radio recordings. It was constructed to measure the participants' attitudes toward the four recorded speakers. Participants listened to the four radio recordings and were asked to complete the questionnaire in response to the recordings. Each of the speakers that was recorded spoke a different variety of South African English. Radio Speaker 1 (RS1) is a White South African English (WSAE) speaker, Radio Speaker 2 (RS2) an Indian South African English (ISAE) speaker, Radio Speaker 3 (RS3) an Afrikaans South African English (ASAE) speaker and Radio Speaker 4 (RS4) a Black South African English (BSAE) speaker.

Participants were instructed to rate each radio speaker on seven characteristics on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest rating. They were requested to base their responses on the radio speakers' English. The participants were asked to consider the radio speakers on the following characteristics: ambition, friendliness, intelligence, kindness, popularity, self confidence and sense of humour.

Of the 18 participants, two participants did not complete Part B of the questionnaire. This was due to their late arrival at the focus group. Two other participants' responses were omitted as their questionnaires were incomplete. Participant 2 of Focus Group 1 and Participants 2, 5 and 6 of Focus Group 2 are thus excluded and the analysis of the questionnaire is concerned with the attitudes of 14 participants.

[7] Established in 1991, Model C schools were formerly White-only schools that were required by the government to admit learners of other races (MacKenzie 1993).
[8] Department of Education and Training (DET) schools were the schools that were specified for Black learners under the Apartheid government.

The data collected from Part B of the questionnaire is presented in the two tables below. Table 2 offers an overview of the data while Table 3 allows for the analysis of individual participants' responses.

	Radio Speaker 1 (RS1) WSAE speaker						Radio Speaker 2 (RS2) ISAE speaker						Radio Speaker 3 (RS3) ASAE speaker						Radio Speaker 4 (RS4) BSAE speaker					
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T
Characteristics																								
Ambitious		3	6	4	1	14	1	3	3	6	1	14	2	6	3	2	1	14	3	1	6	3	1	14
Friendly		4	5	2	3	14		6	3	4	1	14	1	6	3	3	1	14	2	5	3	4		14
Intelligent			9	4	1	14		4	5	5		14	2	4	7	1		14	1	3	6	2	2	14
Kind	1	3	5	3	2	14		8		5	1	14	1	6	2	3	2	14	1	8	1	2	2	14
Popular		5	5	2	2	14	2	3	7	1	1	14	3	5	6			14	4	4	4	1	1	14
Self-confidence		8	1		5	14	2	4	3	4	1	14	2	3	4	4	1	14	5	2	2	2	3	14
Sense of humour	1	3	3	2	5	14	2	7	2	1	2	14	4	2	4	3	1	14	4	4	4		2	14

Table 2 Participants' responses to radio recordings

Key

T: total number of participants

Table 2 is divided into four sections with each of these sections representing a radio speaker. For each speaker a scale of 1 to 5 has been created. In the data, the number of participants who responded to each characteristic and their rating of each characteristic are included. For example, from the table, one can deduce that RS1 was rated "2" by three participants, "3" by six participants, "4" by four participants and "5" by one participant.

The data from Table 2 indicates that participants responded highly to RS1, evident from the many ratings of "4" and "5" that participants assigned to him. In contrast, the majority of ratings that RS3 received were "1" or "2". Responses to RS4 were mixed suggesting that respondents varied substantially in their attitudes toward this speaker. Participants' attitudes toward RS2 did not suggest that there was a strong negative or positive opinion towards him. Most of the responses to him were "2", "3" and "4".

In the table that follows (Table 3), the participants are identified by their position in their respective focus groups. Within each focus group participants were given a number from 1 to 7 that served to identify them within their focus group. This labelling within each group was not to draw a distinction between the three focus groups, but rather to enable identification of participants who have been identified by their focus groups elsewhere in this study. P2 from Focus Group 1 and P2, P5 and P6 from Focus Group 2 are omitted.

In Table 3 below, the totals at the end of each line are established through the addition of participants' ratings of a specific characteristic of a radio speaker. For example, when the 14 participants' ratings of RS1's ambition are combined, the total of 45 is reached. As this procedure is repeated for each speaker, a comparison of the four radio speakers can easily be drawn. There is also a grand total established for each radio speaker and this is listed after the seven individual totals. This total has been recorded as it benefits the comparison of participants' attitudes toward the four speakers.

		FG1						FG2			FG3					**Total**
	Participants	1	3	4	5	6	7	1	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	
	Characteristics															
RS1 WSAE speaker	Ambitious	2	4	4	3	2	3	5	4	3	3	3	2	4	3	**45**
	Friendly	3	3	2	4	4	5	5	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	**45**
	Intelligent	3	4	3	3	4	3	5	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	**48**
	Kind	3	4	2	5	3	5	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	**44**
	Popular	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	2	5	5	**43**
	Self-confident	5	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	**60**
	Sense of humour	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	2	3	2	2	5	1	**49**
	Grand total															**334**
RS2 ISAE speaker	Ambitious	4	3	2	4	4	5	4	2	4	3	2	1	3	4	**45**
	Friendly	3	2	3	4	3	5	4	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	**42**
	Intelligent	4	4	3	2	2	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	4	**43**
	Kind	2	2	3	3	3	5	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	**36**
	Popular	3	2	2	3	1	5	4	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	**34**
	Self-confident	3	4	2	2	1	4	5	1	4	4	3	3	2	2	**40**
	Sense of humour	2	4	2	2	2	5	5	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	**36**
	Grand total															**276**
RS3 ASAE speaker	Ambitious	3	2	1	4	2	5	3	3	4	2	2	2	2	1	**36**
	Friendly	3	4	2	3	1	5	2	2	3	2	2	2	4	4	**39**
	Intelligent	3	3	1	2	4	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	**35**
	Kind	4	4	3	2	2	5	2	2	3	2	1	2	5	4	**41**
	Popular	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	**31**
	Self-confident	3	2	1	3	4	5	4	3	4	2	2	3	4	1	**41**
	Sense of humour	3	3	2	3	3	5	1	4	4	2	1	1	4	1	**37**
	Grand total															**260**
RS4 BSAE speaker	Ambitious	3	4	1	3	4	5	1	2	3	3	3	3	4	1	**40**
	Friendly	2	4	4	2	3	1	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	4	**37**
	Intelligent	2	4	5	3	5	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	3	4	**43**
	Kind	2	4	4	2	2	5	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	5	**38**
	Popular	2	3	3	4	5	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	**33**
	Self-confident	1	4	5	3	5	5	1	1	2	2	1	3	4	1	**38**
	Sense of humour	2	3	5	2	3	5	1	3	2	2	1	1	3	1	**34**
	Grand total															**263**

Table 3 Participants' responses to radio recordings

Key

RS: Radio Speaker

FG: Focus Group

The data show that RS1, the WSAE speaker, was rated much higher than any other speaker. This was followed by RS2, RS4 and RS3. The difference in the ratings of RS4 and RS3 was insignificant.

There were several occasions where attitudes to a specific characteristic of a radio speaker stood out. The instance that merits a mention is the lack of intelligence that the

participants associated with RS3, the ASAE speaker. This attitude was also discussed by participants in two of the focus groups.

None of the 14 participants indicated the same attitude towards all four radio speakers. However, the degree of variation between each participant's responses to the four speakers differed. Here, two participants' responses will be commented on because of the notable distinction that they drew between the four speakers. P1 of Focus Group 1 held little esteem for RS4 when compared to his three other responses. P1 of Focus Group 2's responses revealed a strong preference for RS1 that contrasted significantly with her poor evaluation of RS4.

The participants' responses to RS4, the BSAE speaker, revealed a substantial disparity in attitudes. All WSAE speaking participants favoured RS1, the WSAE speaker, over RS4. The BSAE speaking participants were less uniform in their responses to the radio recordings. Three of the BSAE speaking participants preferred RS1 to the other speakers, two responded most positively to RS4 and one viewed RS1 and RS4 equally. One participant rated RS2, the ISAE speaker, highest and another responded best to RS3, the ASAE speaker. While the WSAE speaking participants were dismissive of RS4, most of the BSAE speaking participants still reacted well to RS4 even if he was not the speaker they rated most highly. These differences in attitudes will be explored in the following chapter.

This questionnaire provided insight into participants' attitudes. However, when discussing their attitudes toward the four radio speakers, there were participants from the first and second focus groups whose attitudes toward the varieties of English were compromised. This is because their attitudes toward the four radio speakers were influenced by the speakers' knowledge of cars and the questions that the speakers posed to the presenters. Potentially, the content could also have affected their responses to the questionnaire. There is nonetheless much value in analysing the questionnaire. This analysis will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3 FOCUS GROUPS

Each focus group was centred on participants' attitudes toward varieties of English. Much relevant data were collected from each focus group. Here, that which is most pertinent to this study will be analysed. Three focus groups were held in this investigation of students' attitudes. As indicated in Chapter 3, the intended combination of participants could not be achieved in each group. The first two focus groups consisted of predominantly Mathematics and/or Science students and the third focus group comprised of English students only. This allowed for a degree of similarity in teaching subjects within each group.

In the previous chapter, core questions for the focus group were listed. These questions formed the foundation of this analysis. As is the nature of semi-structured interviewing, the three focus groups concentrated on different aspects of language attitudes and varied in their time spent on each question. The three focus groups are analysed below.

4.3.1 FOCUS GROUP 1

As indicated in Chapter 3, this focus group constituted seven participants all of whom were BSAE speakers. Six of the participants were male and one was female. Their teaching subjects were a combination of Mathematics and/or Science and English. The group was conducted by myself and a co-facilitator.

The focus group commenced with participants listening to the four radio recordings. After completing the questionnaires, participants voiced their opinions of the four speakers. Participants shared similar attitudes toward the four radio speakers. They viewed RS1 as educated. They were positive in their reactions to RS4 and stated that he could be a student at the University of the Witwatersrand. In contrast, attitudes toward the second and third radio speakers were negative and RS3 was described as lacking in intelligence. This occurred despite participants' acknowledgement that RS3 did not sound as if he was an L1 English speaker. It was the criticism of RS3 that led to a discussion regarding the danger of making judgements according to a speaker's variety of English.

Much of the early discussion was on the English language rather than on varieties of English. Two participants expressed their belief in the instrumental value of English within South Africa. One participant described it as a "linguistic saviour" as it fulfils the role of *lingua franca.* (Appendix 3A, P5, l 90). Another (Appendix 3A, P3, ll 97-98; 101-102) stated that the use of English might disempower some speakers but it is a necessity, as it is a language that can "break the barriers of diversity and everything" and offers a "medium of speaking". Although this investigation was not centred on the position of English in South Africa, the discussion of English as the language of status and communication in South Africa developed into a consideration of how speakers are judged according to their variety of English.

Participants referred back to the radio recordings and the assumptions they had made considering RS3's intelligence. Commenting on this, P3 (Appendix 3A, P3, ll 102-103) noted that English is only a tool and therefore must not be used as a "measure of intelligence". He used RS3 as an example of the danger of such a judgement and stated that RS3 might be judged as "not really schooled… not really learned" because of the English he spoke (Appendix 3A, P3, ll 100-101).

The notion of measuring intelligence from a speaker's variety of English is relevant to this discussion. As student teachers are required to evaluate learners' capabilities, the potential for their evaluation to be influenced by learners' varieties of English constituted a focal point of the discussion. Four participants were quick to disassociate themselves from such influences. Instead, they argued that learners' comprehension of subject matter and their ability to convey their understanding of concepts was of primary importance. It emerged that, within the context of the classroom, these participants are centred on ensuring learners' understanding. They claimed that they do not stipulate what variety of English their learners should speak provided that the learners are able to convey their understanding of the subject matter. One participant elaborated on this attitude stating that he wants learners to "explain it in your [learners] own words, the way you understood it, in your own accent, your own English, but it should mean what I taught you" (Appendix 3A, P2, ll 129-130). This attitude was echoed by three other participants

who stressed the importance of learners conveying their understanding over conforming to a specific English.

This acceptance of varieties that are spoken in the classroom is not an indicator that all varieties of English are viewed equally. In their role as student teachers, participants consider their primary objective to be ensuring that the teaching and learning process is successful, regardless of their learners' varieties of English. Therefore, they are willing to accommodate speakers of any variety of English. However, two participants attached importance to assisting learners to speak a variety of English that they view as suitable. In this regard, they maintained that because of English's position in South Africa, learners' English cannot be ignored and that they would correct learners' English when they thought necessary. This is to aid learners in their communication and not to punish them. As one participant (Appendix 3A, P3, l 151) explained, he will assist learners with their errors but will not penalise them. This will enable learners to "get better eventually".

Despite claiming to accommodate a range of Englishes within their classrooms, it was agreed, that outside the classroom, a speaker's variety of English does contribute to one's first impressions of a speaker. A participant's example of reacting to Durban Indian (a sub-variety of ISAE) speakers in a different manner to other speakers illustrates this. He (Appendix 3A, P2, ll 242-243) explained, **"**if you like Durban people you will be like, 'Hey!' compared to the other" ("Hey!" in a friendly tone). Similarly, the influence of sub-varieties is clear in another participant's response to Venda English speakers. She explained that her first impression of Venda English speakers will be associated with her attitude towards Venda people, "cos I know how Vendas are, my mind, my perspective will change" (Appendix 3A, P6, ll 248-249).

In an attempt to elicit attitudes from participants regarding a specific variety of English, Standard English was raised. Standard English and the attitudes surrounding it evoked much interest. When first questioned on Standard English, participants were unable to provide a suitable definition. However, once it was defined by the facilitator and co-

facilitator, they had much to contribute to the idea of Standard English and associated it with the term "proper English" (Appendix 3A, P2, l 179).

One participant viewed Standard English as a prestigious variety that ensures that "educated people from this country can understand" and communicate with one another (Appendix 3A, P3, l 197). In offering examples of Standard English, another participant cited two talk shows, *3Talk* and *Asikhulume*. In these contexts, the participants view Standard English as necessary to "make a point, so that everyone understands" (Appendix 3A, P2, l 189). Participants concurred that Standard English is the variety of the educated. The facilitator asked if a student of the University of the Witwatersrand would aim to speak Standard English. The question was met with general agreement. Similarly, several participants responded positively to the next question which asked if speaking Standard English would benefit students when they entered the workplace.

For the most part, participants expressed acceptance of different varieties of spoken English, particularly within the classroom. They stressed that the ability to convey the understanding of a concept was of primary importance. As the discussion turned to participants' attitudes toward varieties of English in other domains, the attitude that spoken varieties of English might influence a hearer's perception of a speaker emerged.

4.3.2 FOCUS GROUP 2

Six participants comprised this focus group. All were Mathematics and/or Science teachers. There were three females, one of whom was Indian and the other two were Black. All three males were Black.

As in the first focus group, participants were asked to comment on the radio speakers after they had completed Part B of the questionnaire. RS4 was highly criticised by this focus group. For example, P3 commented, "The way like he talks, you can like predict that this English thing is poor" (Appendix 3B, P3. ll 28-29). This is in contrast to the remark that even if RS1 is not educated "at least he can apply the English thing" (Appendix 3B, P2, l 43). Only the Indian participant responded to queries about RS2 and

stated that he was likely to hold a position as a store or area manager (Appendix 3B, P1, ll 58; 60). The participants displayed little interest in RS3. Two participants suggested that he could be a plumber. As in the first focus group, discussion of this radio speaker led onto further debate when a participant commented that even if one is educated, "you also have a problem" if one struggles with English (Appendix 3B, P4, l 68).

There was general consensus among participants that English is the dominant language in South Africa and, therefore, the language that one needs to be successful. P5's assertion that "[if] you don't know English you are nothing" underscored the participants' attitudes (Appendix 3B, P5, l 289). As was the case in the first focus group, a consideration of English within South Africa contributed to the start of the discussion on different varieties of English.

Within this discussion, all participants held similar attitudes toward varieties of English within the classroom domain. However, attitudes toward varieties of English in daily life differed on occasion. An acceptance of varieties of English was indicated, but three participants acknowledged that, in contexts other than the classroom, a speaker's variety of English might influence a listener's attitude toward the speaker. One participant explained this phenomenon, when he stated, "Ja, some people, you know, I think they take it seriously. When you speaking in a different accent, they'll be like, you know, looking for the word to identify you, you know, maybe label you, those things" (Appendix 3B, P4, ll 116-118).

Three participants stressed that varieties of English cannot be equated with intelligence, but stated that such attitudes are not uncommon in society. One participant illustrated this, explaining, "if you speak English like… Zulu English, people aren't gonna listen to you" (Appendix 3B, P5, ll 312-313). Explanations of how one's variety of English can influence one's employment opportunities demonstrated the consequences of assumptions being made. The potential for such an assumption is highlighted by a participant's statement that, "when you have this, not that accent, they [the interviewers] thinking… more knowledgeable" (Appendix 3B, P6, ll 204). However, two participants

did not dismiss other influences in an interview situation and stated that although one's variety of English might be a deciding factor in gaining employment, the possibility that interviewers are concerned with one's qualifications also exists. Indeed, one participant challenged the power of varieties of English and stressed that success in an interview is dependent on how one presents oneself and not on one's language (Appendix 3B, P4, ll 197-199).

Although participants acknowledged that they might be judged according to their English, they did not view this as a reason to alter their English. There were two participants who indicated an acceptance of changes in speakers' varieties of English provided these changes "happen[s] naturally" (Appendix 3B, P3, l 188). However, participants were highly critical of those who speak a variety other than their own, particularly within the context of Black WSAE speakers. The disrespect for these speakers is apparent from one of the participant's and her peers' reaction to a fellow Black student who speaks WSAE. The participant stated that "when she speaks, we would laugh, like make fun, funny remarks about her" (Appendix 3B, P5, ll 357-358). One participant, an Indian WSAE speaker, was on the receiving end of similar attitudes. She recounted her experiences on campus and described how "the students stayed like I was some sort of taboo because I didn't speak the way they did {Ja.}. And they automatically assumed um, intelligence, they assumed, um, background, they assumed my behaviour, a whole range of things which I was quite shocked" (Appendix 3B, P1, ll 125-127). Both she and P4 paralleled this to be being judged a coconut.

In line with the term "proper English" (Appendix 3A, P2, l 179) being mentioned in the first focus group, the idea of such an English was raised to P5 and P6. P5 was adamant that "[we] don't know what's proper English, cos everybody's coming with their own definition of proper, what's proper English. So, you only acquire the English that you think will fit with the society." (Appendix 3B, P5, ll 305-307). P6 displayed the same attitude, i.e. because the notion of a "proper" English varies in different contexts, one needs to take cognisance of the variety of English being spoken and adapt accordingly.

By stating that people need to speak in a manner appropriate to the situation, there is a suggestion that a specific variety might be expected within the classroom. However, both P5 and P6 perceive the classroom as a space for learning and not for promoting a variety of English. Hence, learners need to convey an understanding of concepts and content regardless of the variety of English that they speak. In a sympathetic tone, P5 explains, "[t]hey are different. They are from different backgrounds, so we can't expect them to speak the same, do things the same. We can't do that to the learners, poor learners [with a tone of sympathy]" (Appendix 3B, P5, ll 268-270). This perception mirrors that of the other participants.

Similarly, all four participants[9] responded quickly and negatively to the question, "Do you think that, when you are teaching, the learners must all speak English in a similar way?" (Appendix 3B, R1, ll 73-74). They voiced "no" unanimously and much overlapping occurred as participants vied to offer their opinions. One participant, a WSAE speaker, was adamant that "you can't have that", a view that contrasted with the WSAE speakers in the third focus group (Appendix 3B, P5, l 76). Another participant encapsulated this focus group's attitude through his remark that, "[i]t's enough for me that he knows one plus one is two, doesn't matter whether he's using wrong English or whatever" (Appendix 3B, P4, ll 105-106).

ASAE and ISAE were largely neglected by this focus group. As establishing students' attitudes toward ASAE was impeded by some participants' inability to recognise this variety, discussion was centred on responses to only one speaker, RS3. A participant argued that as Afrikaners speak English only to accommodate others, they must not be judged. He stated, "it's just that you are trying to accommodate other people" (Appendix 3B, P4, l 246). Further attempts to discuss ASAE were curtailed by participants' responses that they "don't even know what it is" and "don't even see" (Appendix 3B, P3, l 240; P2, l 241). Similarly, P5 says of ISAE speakers, "I don't know how they sound, I can't say" (Appendix 3B, P5, l 363). The inability to distinguish between these two varieties of English restricted the discussion to BSAE and WSAE.

[9] P5and P6 had yet to join the focus group.

The overwhelming attitude that emerged from this focus group was that a speaker cannot be judged according to his/her variety of English. That said, participants acknowledged that such judgements do occur and that one needs to be constantly aware of the potential to be influenced by a speaker's variety of English.

4.3.3 FOCUS GROUP 3

Five student teachers of English constituted this focus group. Four were White, WSAE speaking females and one was an Indian, WSAE speaking male.

The participants were asked to listen to the radio recordings and to complete Part B of the questionnaire. I decided not to concentrate on the recordings in the discussion. This was for two reasons. Firstly, I was concerned that, as had happened in the first and second focus groups, participants would be influenced by the content of the recordings. Secondly, I felt that more relevant data could be obtained from a general discussion.

Participants from the third focus group expressed attitudes that differed significantly from those of the first and second focus groups. Within the third focus group, all participants promoted the use of a particular variety of English in the classroom. The English that they promoted was their own variety, WSAE. As was the case in the other two focus groups, English was perceived to be the language of status in South Africa and it was described as "superior" and "valuable" (Appendix 3C, ll 49, 51, 54, 57). Further, all participants voiced the attitude that L1 English speakers are more respected and progress further when speaking their variety of English than those who speak additional language varieties of English do.

Frequently, participants indicated awareness of stereotypes and judgements that result from how one speaks. P4 indicated this by saying, "people will make decisions about your character, whether you're trustworthy... I mean you don't necessarily do it purposefully but it does happen. You make judgements on people the way they're talking" (Appendix 3C, P4, ll 73-76).

These participants all have English as a common teaching subject and, within this context, stress the need for a specific variety of English to be spoken in the classroom. Within other learning areas, participants shared the attitude that teachers needed to be aware of learners' English. They reasoned that by improving learners' English, it would benefit the learners immensely. One participant (an English and Geography student teacher) explained this thought process through personal experience. She stated that, in the geography classroom, she is more concerned with learners' abilities to understand and apply concepts than she is with their language. Nevertheless, she will correct errors because "if they gonna make those kinds of mistakes in Geography, they gonna do the same in English" (Appendix 3C, P5, ll 237-238). This is to assist learners and they will not be marked down on their errors. This example led to another participant, P4, expressing her attitude that it is a teacher's duty to consider the context in which teaching and learning occurs. Consequently she is of the opinion that "you've got to be sensitive to what situations are appropriate and well what situations are not" (Appendix 3C, P4, ll 246-247). P3 continued and claimed that no judgement is made of a learner's variety of English but rather, "I just think we try and help" (Appendix 3C, P3, l 174). P4 reasoned that by correcting learners, their English will improve and this will be of benefit to the learners in their futures (Appendix 3C, P4, ll 98-99, 104, 108-110). Another participant explained, "we do want to model what type of English... want them to be exposed to a type of English that indicates intelligence or knowledge" (Appendix 3C, P1, ll 93-95).

Despite the positive attitude that participants hold toward WSAE, they recognized that speaking WSAE can be to a speaker's detriment. P4 believes that some might view her as "hoity toity" (Appendix 3C, P4, l 152) because of how she speaks. The Indian participant recounted his experiences as a WSAE speaking Indian. He explained that, "I, I, I feel uncomfortable going to pla, to very Indian areas like Durban, Fordsburg, Lenasia because um because I don, I don't have the same accent" (Appendix 3C, P1, l 183-184).

The discussion in this focus group centred on participants' attitudes within a classroom context more so than in the previous focus groups. There was little debate about varieties

of English except for in the context of WSAE. The participants communicated their belief that WSAE is the superior variety of English. However, no participant claimed that any variety of English, spoken or otherwise, was an indicator of intellect or knowledge. Instead, they expressed the attitude that, as future teachers, they would help learners speak the English that they believe is most fitting for and beneficial to learners.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a two-part questionnaire has been analysed. In Part A of the questionnaire, participants' biographical details have been presented. In the discussion in Chapter 5, these details will serve to contextualise participants' attitudes. Participants' responses to Part B of the questionnaire acted as a foundation for the exploration of their attitudes toward English in South Africa. The focus group discussion that followed the questionnaire offered an insight into participants' attitudes that the questionnaire could not. Interaction among participants allowed for varied data to be discussed to a greater depth than would have possible from only a questionnaire. A comparison between participants' responses to the questionnaire and in the focus groups revealed an inconsistency in some participants' attitudes. Participants' willingness to interact with others in their respective focus groups led to the expression of many attitudes. In the chapter that follows, these attitudes will be discussed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and interprets the data collected in the focus groups. Firstly, participants' attitudes toward the four varieties of English under investigation will be examined. These varieties are Afrikaans South African English (ASAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Indian South African English (ISAE) and White South African English (WSAE). Each variety will be discussed separately. Secondly, participants' attitudes toward Standard English will be considered as a means of indicating how one's perceptions and background can influence one's attitudes. These attitudes will then be considered within a theoretical framework and in line with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Next, potential influences that could account for participants' attitudes will be presented. Finally, the implications of the findings of this study will be laid out.

As stated in Chapter 3, I had initially planned to organise the focus groups according to the participants' teaching subjects, but was unable to do so. The influence of participants' teaching subjects on their attitudes will be discussed, but the participants' attitudes will also be interpreted according to their varieties of spoken English. This is because those who displayed similarities in attitudes generally spoke the same variety of English.

Before progressing to participants' attitudes toward the varieties of English, it is necessary to acknowledge that there were participants who expressed inconsistent attitudes. This inconsistencies served as a reminder of Baker's (1992) statement that one cannot be certain that the attitude expressed is a true reflection of the attitude; observation is required to ensure this.

5.2 ATTITUDES TOWARD VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

The two varieties of English that were concentrated on were BSAE and WSAE. This was to be expected since they are widely spoken in South Africa and because all the participants in this study are either BSAE or WSAE speakers. Data collected from the

focus groups indicate that participants' attitudes are affected by their variety of English. Thus, BSAE speaking participants were of similar attitudes. The same occurred with the WSAE speaking participants, with the exception of the female Indian WSAE speaking participant who manifested significantly different attitudes. As a WSAE speaker from a family of ISAE speakers, she would have constantly been exposed to a variety other than WSAE and this could account for her more accepting attitude towards varieties of English when compared to other WSAE speaking participants.

Participant 1 and Participant 7 of Focus Group 1 were limited in their contributions and this prohibited an adequate analysis of their attitudes. They added little to the focus group discussion. In their questionnaire responses, they viewed Radio Speaker 4 (RS4) (the BSAE speaker) negatively in comparison to their ratings of the other three radio speakers. Yet, because of the little interaction that they had in the focus group discussion, it cannot be established if they would have expressed similar attitudes in a group discussion. Discussion of their attitudes toward varieties of English in South Africa is therefore limited.

5.2.1 ATTITUDES TOWARD AFRIKAANS SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (ASAE)

Participants' responses to ASAE were largely negative. A number of participants commented that Radio Speaker 3 (RS3), the ASAE speaker, did not sound like an L1 English speaker. Notably, the syntax of RS3's excerpt was that of WSAE and he displayed a good choice of words, but participants did not comment on it. Although RS3 was speaking an additional language (AL) variety and had formulated his words in a manner consistent with WSAE, some participants still made assumptions regarding his character and intellect. This was despite several student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science warning against judging RS3's intelligence on his English. According to Yule (2008), a variety of a language is constituted of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. As RS3's grammar and vocabulary are reflective of WSAE, participants' disregard for him can be attributed to his accent.

These unfounded assumptions demonstrate the power of language attitudes. In their definition of language attitudes, Cargile and Giles (1997) refer to the power of language and to the unsubstantiated judgements that a hearer might make in reaction to a speaker's language. This power is evident throughout this study, but is emphasised in many of the participants' reactions to RS3, particularly in their judgement of RS3's level of intelligence. From a recording of less than 15 seconds, many participants characterised him as significantly less intelligent than the other three radio speakers. As Lippi-Green (1997) stated, all varieties of English are linguistically equal. Thus, one cannot make judgements of a speaker purely on his/her speech. It follows that the variety of English spoken by RS3 is equal to any variety of English. Therefore, RS3's accent should have no bearing on participants' attitudes toward him. However, neither participants' responses to the questionnaire nor participants' opinions of this speaker reflected this equality.

ASAE is an AL variety of English. As such, it is positioned in the Outer Circle of Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996). In accordance with this framework, it should be afforded equality with other varieties of English, including L1 varieties. Yet, the positive attitudes that many participants displayed toward WSAE and the preference that they indicated for ISAE, an L1 variety of English, over ASAE and BSAE in their responses to Part B of the questionnaire demonstrate that the equality between L1 varieties and AL varieties of English is lacking. As an AL variety, the participants were quick to criticise ASAE as well as RS3's character and ability despite having no knowledge of this speaker other than how he speaks English. A lack of awareness of this equality suggests that some participants have been socially conditioned into using language as a measure of a speaker's character.

The remaining discussion of ASAE offered an explanation as to why attitudes toward ASAE were seldom mentioned rather than participants describing their attitudes. This occurred as some participants claimed not to be able to differentiate between ASAE and other varieties of English. Although participants are likely to hold attitudes toward

ASAE, they might be unable to differentiate ASAE from other varieties of English thus prohibiting a discussion of these attitudes.

5.2.2 ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (BSAE)

When analysing the questionnaires, the most significant difference in responses was in participants' attitudes toward BSAE. The student teachers of Mathematics and Science who interacted in the discussion voiced an acceptance of any variety of English (including BSAE). In contrast, five of the student teachers of English were adamant that learners needed to develop their English and communicate in WSAE. These five student teachers of English were dismissive of all varieties of English other than their own but they specifically mentioned BSAE on several occasions. Through observation, it appeared that they were referring to BSAE speaking learners when expressing their attitudes toward non-WSAE speaking learners. Thus, the attitudes that they voiced are taken to be primarily toward BSAE speaking learners. The final student teacher of English, a BSAE speaker, was not concerned with her learners' varieties of spoken English, provided that they were able to write as she deemed appropriate.

A notable inconsistency in the exploration of attitudes toward BSAE was the contrast between BSAE speaking participants' questionnaire responses to the BSAE speaker, RS4, and the attitudes that they communicated in the focus groups. As indicated in Chapter 2, there are no clear criteria for the definition of BSAE. Thus, participants' individual perceptions of BSAE might have varied from the BSAE spoken by RS4.

The WSAE speaking student teachers of English were dismissive of varieties of English other than their own and this was most evident in their responses to BSAE. Their belief in their ability to improve BSAE learners' English implies that they hold little faith in BSAE's role in the classroom or in its ability to help learners succeed beyond the classroom. They perceived BSAE to be a variety of English that impedes the teaching and learning process. Here, the WSAE speaking participants' dismissal of all varieties of English other than what they consider to be the appropriate variety (WSAE) points to

WSAE speaking participants' confidence in their ability to assist and correct learners who speak BSAE.

The influence of a learner's variety of English on a teacher's assessment points to the danger of focusing on a learner's variety of English and, consequently, neglecting his/her academic ability. A learner's variety of English might not reflect his/her academic competence. However, his/her variety combined with the teacher's attitude toward him/her might offset his/her ability to express his/her academic ability.

Labov (1969 a, b) determined that one's variety of English is not an indicator of one's ability. These participants' inattention to learners' academic ability and the participants' attitude that by assisting learners with their English, they will promote learners' success is at the core of Labov's (1969a) research. Despite this, many continue to use language as a signifier of a speaker's capability. This positions BSAE as an inferior variety of English, in need of constant improvement.

The WSAE speaking student teachers of English's attitude that WSAE was the variety most appropriate for the teaching and learning process contrasted heavily with that of the BSAE speaking participants. While the WSAE speaking student teachers of English were of the opinion that WSAE is the acceptable variety of teaching and learning and that BSAE could be of detriment in the classroom, those who speak BSAE indicated support for the variety, both in and outside the classroom. Much of their focus was centred on the importance of English as a tool for communication, rather than on a specific variety. This was mentioned in the context of speaking L1 or AL varieties of English. This reflects Kachru's (1996) explanation that all varieties of English are equal. Additional language varieties are placed in the Outer Circle. Kachru and Nelson (1996) state that these varieties are used frequently in education, administration and politics. BSAE's position as a variety that has established its own norms and standards confirms its place in the Outer Circle. The established position of BSAE, the credibility that BSAE speakers assign to it and the equal status that it occupies in accordance with Kachru's (1996) framework suggests that it is a variety that can be associated with strength and value. This is evident

in BSAE speaking participants' positive attitudes toward their variety. As teachers hold influence over learners, if learners are aware of this positive attitude, they are likely to adopt such an attitude. A possible result of this is the continued growth of BSAE in South Africa.

This positive attitude is confirmed by five of the BSAE speaking participants' comments on Black WSAE speakers. Despite acknowledging that WSAE can assist in job interviews and in a listener's judgements of a hearer, participants did not display a willingness to conform to WSAE. Instead, they ridiculed such speakers. Their attitude towards Black WSAE speakers is a significant indicator of their pride in BSAE. Rudwick (2008) elicited a similar response in her study of Umlazi[10] residents' attitudes toward English. The majority of residents that Rudwick interviewed expressed a preference for speaking BSAE or Zulu English over WSAE. These residents were critical of Black WSAE speaking residents and accused them of forgoing their own language and identity.

Cross *et al* (2001) investigated the effect of race on attitudes toward varieties of English and established that one is likely to prefer varieties of English spoken by speakers of one's own race. All five participants who disapproved of Black WSAE speakers are Black themselves and expect Blacks to communicate in BSAE. These findings indicate that one's preference for a variety depends on more than instrumental reasons. If participants carry this attitude into the classroom, this could disadvantage Black WSAE speaking learners as the student teachers in question might hold a negative attitude towards these learners, based on the learners' variety of English.

Kachru (1996) and Sridhar (1996) both claimed that characteristics of one's L1 will affect one's variety of an additional language. It was in the discussion of BSAE that the difficulty of considering a variety in itself and not taking sub-varieties into account emerged. Although this impeded the discussion of BSAE as a variety within itself, the participants who commented on sub-varieties of BSAE were honest in their attitudes

[10] Umlazi is a large township in outside Durban.

toward these sub-varieties. This honesty revealed a strong awareness of language and of the effect that different varieties of English can have in shaping attitudes.

The BSAE speaking participants who engaged in discussion, showed pride in their variety and did not voice an intention to modify their English. These participants acknowledged that WSAE is beneficial in certain situations, particularly in gaining employment. Yet, they expressed an unwillingness to modify their speech and their attitudes toward Black WSAE speakers were significant indicators of a positive attitude towards BSAE. As Rudwick's research (2008) demonstrates, this attitude is not unique and similar attitudes have emerged elsewhere. This indicates the growth in the position of BSAE.

5.2.3 ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (ISAE)

The majority of data collected on ISAE was drawn from the participants' questionnaire responses to Radio Speaker 2 (RS2, the ISAE speaker). Little attention was paid to ISAE within the group discussion.

The insufficient data on ISAE was a result of two factors. Firstly, participants' interest in their own varieties, i.e. BSAE and WSAE, left limited time for other varieties of English to be discussed. Secondly, when ISAE was mentioned some participants expressed an inability to differentiate between ISAE and other varieties of English. Hence, the interpretation of this variety relies heavily on participants' questionnaire responses.

In response to the questionnaire, RS2 (the ISAE speaker) was rated higher than RS3 (the ASAE speaker) and RS4 (the BSAE speaker) by a small margin. Yet there is a notable difference in the composition of the responses that the radio speakers received (Table 2 in Chapter 4). Participants' responses to RS2 were mostly "2", "3" and "4". In contrast, RS3 and RS4 received substantially more "1"s or "5"s than RS2. This points to participants who strongly favour or are anti RS3 and/or RS4's variety(ies) of English. RS2 received few "1"s or "5"s implying that few participants strongly approved or disapproved of this

variety, but rather held moderate attitudes toward him. If the student teachers are not significantly affected by ISAE, they are likely to be more impartial toward ISAE speaking learners than toward learners of other varieties. Although these learners might not be preferred by the student teachers, it is also unlikely that their ability will be dismissed because of negative attitudes toward ISAE.

Within the focus groups, ISAE was not frequently raised. A potential reason for this is that participants were allowed to focus too closely on BSAE and WSAE resulting in limited attention being focused on ISAE. Secondly, when questioned about ISAE, some participants were not able to identify the variety. Both these reasons account for the limited data on attitudes toward ISAE. Within such a context, and due to the insufficient data, an effective interpretation of this variety is not possible.

5.2.4 ATTITUDES TOWARD WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH (WSAE)

The majority of participants rated Radio Speaker 1 (RS1), the WSAE speaker, highly. This response does not imply that all participants favour this variety but rather suggests acknowledgement that, when speaking English in South Africa, WSAE is a variety that advantages its speakers.

All WSAE speaking student teachers of English expressed a positive attitude towards their variety of English. Thus, their attitude that they are speakers of the superior and most appropriate variety of English in South Africa is unsurprising. As previously mentioned, WSAE speaking student teachers of English pride themselves on empowering learners by improving their English. This attitude indicates the power that they attach to their own variety, evident in that they do not doubt the importance of WSAE.

The student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science expressed various attitudes toward WSAE. One participant argued that WSAE is equal to other varieties while the other participants described the positive effects that WSAE can have on listeners' attitudes. Through these examples the attitude that WSAE is a valuable variety associated with

success emerged. This acknowledgement of the power of WSAE was not an indication that BSAE should be ignored. Rather, it suggested that certain varieties might be more appropriate than others dependent on the context.

A significant negative attitude that emerged was a dislike for Blacks who speak WSAE. This could be viewed more as a criticism of Blacks who were seen to imitate WSAE than an attack on the variety itself. Participants' responses to Black WSAE speakers echo Rudwick's (2008) findings. A preference for a variety other than WSAE was indicated and served to illustrate that WSAE can no longer be viewed as the dominant variety in all spheres of society.

The above attitudes illustrate that although there has been growth in varieties of English in South Africa, WSAE remains a variety that is perceived to advantage its speakers. It is not the most common variety of English in South Africa, yet, in all three focus groups, there were participants who expressed the attitude that WSAE still holds much linguistic capital.

5.3 CONSIDERING STANDARD ENGLISH

When discussing English outside the classroom, Standard English featured significantly in two of the focus groups. Subsequently, attitudes toward other varieties of English were neglected. However, an in-depth consideration of Standard English was valuable in that it revealed participants' awareness of varieties of English as well as an acknowledgement that one's attitudes are affected by a speaker's English.

Participants were asked to offer their opinions on the existence of a Standard English in South Africa. Their responses were well explained, they expressed their understanding of Standard English and offered examples of the use of Standard English in South Africa. Crystal (1994) defines Standard English as a prestigious variety that benefits its speakers. It is used in the economic, industrial and government sectors as well as in the media. His definition encapsulates participants' responses to Standard English. However, the participants' examples of what constitutes Standard English in South Africa varied. The

BSAE speaking participants were non-specific as to the speaker's variety of English but rather associated Standard English with education and success. The WSAE speakers were more definitive and, as one participant voiced, considered Standard South African English to be influenced by British Standard English. The importance of establishing these definitions and of participants voicing their attitudes is that it demonstrates how listeners' attitudes can vary substantially because of pre-conceived ideas as to what is acceptable. In addition, participants' abilities to define Standard English in two diverse ways highlight the difficulty of agreeing on a Standard English in South Africa.

WSAE has traditionally been considered Standard South African English. From this discussion, it is evident that the possibility of another variety of English emerging as Standard English cannot be ignored. By exploring the differences in attitudes toward Standard English, the position of WSAE as Standard English is brought into question. This indicates the growth of varieties other than WSAE. Importantly, by doubting WSAE's role as Standard English, the growth in the status of varieties other than WSAE is clear.

BSAE speaking participants' attitudes toward Standard English illustrate the increase in the power and status of varieties of English other than WSAE. The BSAE participants do not expect Standard English to be spoken by only L1 speakers but also by AL English speakers. By stating that Standard English is spoken by both L1 and AL varieties of English, they are affording equality to L1 and AL English speakers. Within the framework of Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996), Standard English can thus be spoken by speakers in the Inner and Outer Circles. In this study, it has become evident that the equality that Kachru emphasises is often overshadowed by a belief in the superiority of a specific variety. In light of this discussion of Standard English, the BSAE speaking participants' attitudes suggest that the power that some assign to varieties of English in the Inner Circle is not guaranteed. Again, this points to the growth of BSAE and to the increasingly respected role that it is likely to maintain.

5.4 ACCOUNTING FOR LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) offer a comprehensible explanation of varieties of English that distinguishes between varieties that are spoken as an L1 and as an AL variety. Significant to the Three Concentric Circles is Kachru's (1996) assertion that varieties of English should all be viewed as equal. Positioned in the Outer Circle, BSAE is a variety that has developed its own norms and standards in recent years. The equality that Kachru (1996) promotes is increasingly evident in attitudes toward BSAE. Although some participants do not view BSAE as equal to other varieties of English, respect for the variety is growing. It is not yet considered equal to all varieties, but its status is improving and it is now widely regarded as an appropriate variety in South Africa. This growth in equality and status accounts for the positive attitudes that are being displayed towards BSAE.

As stated earlier Labov (1969a, b) established that all varieties of English are linguistically equal. He believed that if a speaker is allowed to communicate in his/her own variety, his/her intellect will emerge. If the opposite is assumed i.e. that a speaker's ability can be derived from his/her variety, judgements that are unfounded will be made. There were participants whose attitudes paralleled Labov's approach and they stated that that their only concern was ensuring a learner's understanding of and his/her ability to convey a concept. If a learner could succeed in this, these participants were not concerned with the learner's variety of English. Other participants, notably the WSAE speaking student teachers of English, stated that their assessment of a learner might be influenced by the learner's variety of English. Their assessment would be affected whether they were teaching English or another subject indicating that, regardless of the subject, they hold expectations as to what is appropriate for the teaching and learning process. This is in line with Ford's (1984) study that showed that a teacher's assessment of a learner can be influenced by the learner's variety of spoken English.

Although the belief that one cannot measure intelligence through a speaker's variety of English was voiced, some student teachers' assumptions that there are varieties that are more suitable than others were evident.

With the exception of one WSAE speaking participant, the WSAE speaking participants indicated the belief that WSAE is preferable to other South African varieties of English. This was reflected in these participants' opinion that learners benefit from speaking WSAE. Such an attitude is comprehensible because, as English is the language of learning and teaching in most South African schools, those who speak English as an L1 are able to communicate and absorb content more effectively. BSAE may be growing in status, but those who speak English as an L1 will continue to better equipped to learn productively.

Cross *et al* (2001) conducted research in Alabama, USA into the effect of varieties of English on student teachers' attitudes toward speakers. The study established that when considering varieties of a language, student teachers favoured speakers of one's own race. As the varieties being investigated in this research have traditionally been divided along racial lines, this possibility was investigated. A variable that needs to be accounted for in this study but not in Cross *et al's* (2001) is the distinction between L1 and AL varieties of English. Results from Cross *et al* (2001) and this study reveal a variation, but not an opposition, in findings between the two studies. In the focus group discussions, the majority of participants expressed a preference for their own variety of English which was often the variety associated with their race. As most Black participants were positive in their attitudes toward BSAE, the correlation with Cross *et al's* (2001) study is evident. The Indian participants favoured WSAE over ISAE indicating that even if their preferences were not determined by race, they were affected by their variety. It was with the White participants that a significant difference emerged. They all expressed positive attitudes toward their WSAE, but responded negatively to ASAE, an AL variety spoken by Whites. Evidently, they were influenced by their variety and not their race. The findings of this study might not echo those of Cross *et al's* (2001) but they do reveal that the participants' attitudes are affected by their race and/or their variety of English.

5.5 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

5.5.1 TEACHING SUBJECTS

Of the student teachers of English, six discussed their attitudes toward English in the classroom. It was the five WSAE student teachers of English who were most concerned with the variety of English spoken in the classroom. In their opinion, ensuring that a learner conforms to WSAE is a primary concern. These student teachers believe that if a learner communicates and speaks appropriately (i.e. speaks WSAE), he/she will be more successful in all spheres of his/her lives. They view it as part of their role as educators to assist a learner with his/her English. They were honest in their admission that they might be affected by a learner's variety of English but did not suggest that by assisting learners they would improve a learner's academic ability. Rather, they would be providing the learner with better opportunities. By stressing the need for learners to speak WSAE, they again indicated their preference for their own variety of English and demonstrated the power that they believe it holds. Their focus on WSAE suggests a belief that if one speaks WSAE, one has no need for another variety of English. Some learners might struggle in these student teachers' classrooms, particularly if they have been raised surrounded by varieties of English other than WSAE. If a learner is constantly corrected, he/she might doubt his/her ability and this could affect his/her learning.

While the other student teachers of English expect learners to conform to WSAE, the BSAE student teacher of English is angered by learners whom she considers to be imitating varieties of English other than their own. Instead, her concern is that learners communicate fluently in English, in their own variety. She does not expect a certain variety of English to be spoken, but will focus on learners' English in their written work. Throughout the discussion she indicated no preference for a specific spoken variety and this is reflected in her attitudes toward varieties of English in the classroom.

The student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science are accepting of different varieties of English. Although a few participants mentioned that they are aware if learners err in their English, they do not demand a specific variety of English from their learners. The

majority of student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science will correct errors but they place responsibility for a learner's English with the English teacher. For the student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science, the primary role of English is facilitating communication between teacher and learner. Provided that the teaching and learning process occurs successfully, a learner's variety of English is unimportant.

5.5.2 LANGUAGE AND RACE

In this research, language and race are closely linked. The BSAE speaking participants are Black and have an indigenous language as their L1 while the WSAE speakers are either Indian or White and speak English as their L1. Thus, language and race cannot be discussed separately, as one would be unable to attribute an attitude to only one of these variables.

Within the context of the questionnaire responses, the effect of language and race was visible but it was in the interpretation of the focus group discussions that the influence that language and race could have on the focus groups was most pronounced.

All WSAE participants rated RS1, the WSAE radio speaker, most highly[11] suggesting that their attitudes were influenced by their own variety of English. The WSAE speaking participants were either White or Indian. Thus, from the questionnaire, White WSAE speakers could be said to be influenced by their race. However, as the Indian participants indicated a preference for WSAE over ISAE, race was not a defining factor in the formation of their attitudes.

There was no definitive evidence that BSAE speaking participants' responses to the questionnaire were influenced by their race or their L1. Apart from two participants, one of whom responded best to RS3 (the ASAE radio speaker) and the other to RS2 (the ISAE radio speaker), the BSAE speaking participants were most positive in their responses to either the WSAE radio speaker (RS1) or the BSAE radio speaker (RS4). Thus, BSAE speaking participants' attitudes could not be assumed on the basis of their

[11] One participant rated WSAE and ASAE equally.

language or race. That said, their overall attitude towards RS4 showed more acceptance of his variety of English than the White and Indian WSAE speaking participants indicated. This suggests that, although the BSAE speaking participants were not in agreement in their attitudes, they are more willing to accommodate varieties of English than the Indian and White WSAE speaking participants were.

The attitudes that the majority of the White WSAE speaking participants expressed in the questionnaire were mirrored in their discussion of varieties of English. One of the Indian WSAE speaking participants maintained the same attitudes while the other Indian WSAE speaker was less judgemental of varieties of English than she had been in her questionnaire. There is no evident explanation for the differences in attitudes expressed by the two Indian WSAE speaking participants. This acts as a reminder that there are a multitude of variables that account for participants' attitudes and that their attitudes cannot be ascribed to only one or two of these variables.

When discussing varieties of English, BSAE speaking participants credited WSAE with power and status. However, in their personal lives and in communication with other Black English speakers, BSAE emerged as the preferred variety. Their attitudes toward BSAE illustrate that, although they did not demonstrate only positive attitudes toward BSAE, they were more favourable in their responses to this variety than were the Indian and White WSAE speaking participants.

It is evident that the participants' races and varieties can influence their perceptions of the radio speakers. If these attitudes were paralleled outside the focus group, a speaker's variety and/or race could lead to participants forming unsubstantiated attitudes. These attitudes could advantage a speaker who might be attributed with positive characteristics based only on his/her race and variety of English. The converse would occur if participants' assumptions of a speaker were negatively affected by the speaker's language and/or race.

This influence can be seen in the classroom where the implications of these attitudes for the learners are apparent. As participants might favour learners of their own race or language, these learners could be perceived as more capable within an academic setting. A potential result of this is that if a student teacher is impressed by a learner's variety of English, any difficulties that the learner might be experiencing could go unnoticed. The opposite applies in that if a student teacher is negatively influenced by a learner's language and race, they might reveal this in their attitude to a learner if they view a learner's variety of English as inferior. Subsequently, a learner might be dismissed as unintelligent and lacking in academic ability.

5.5.3 EDUCATION

Participants' attitudes toward varieties of English showed parallels with their own educational background. Participants who were at private or former Model C schools would have been required to speak WSAE. In contrast, those at former DET schools would have been exposed to a number of varieties of English. These differences are echoed in the participants' attitudes toward English in the classroom. Participants who attended former DET schools do not demand a specific variety of English. However, those (with the exception of one participant) who attended former Model C or private schools were of the attitude that all learners need to speak WSAE.

This difference in the student teachers' expectations of learners' varieties of English can result in a learner being unsure as to what is required from him/her in terms of using English in the classroom. Without guidance, a learner might use the same variety of English in all of his/her subjects rather than adapting to each teacher's personal preference. Thus, he/she could be assessed differently dependent on the teacher's experiences in their own schooling.

5.6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Participants' language attitudes inform their behaviour. Thus, in the classroom, the student teachers' expectations will vary according to their attitudes toward a learner's variety of English. This could disadvantage the learner who might be penalised by one

student teacher and praised by another. As they have received little, if any, guidance concerning varieties of English in the classroom, the student teachers cannot be criticised if their attitudes toward a learner are influenced by the learner's variety of English. Without being educated in this regard, student teachers will maintain their same attitudes and approaches to learners.

An inability to communicate in the expected variety of English could lead to a learner's progress being impeded. This is no fault of the learner as his/her variety of English would have been determined through his/her previous experiences with English. If a learner is affected by negative attitudes that are based on of his/her variety of English, the implications are worrying. A learner's academic ability might be misjudged because of his/her variety of English. His/her confidence could decrease if he/she was subjected to criticism without explanation. The potential for a teacher to be influenced by the learner's variety of English could lead to unfair assessment.

In South Africa, the poor matriculant pass rate of the previous few years highlights the desperate need for improvements in education (Motshekga 2010; WCED 2007). As is evident above, a teacher's approach to a learner might vary according to the learner's variety of spoken English. There is a desperate need to improve the results achieved by learners, particularly in English, Mathematics and Science. It is imperative that any factor that might be limiting learners' progress be acknowledged and addressed. If teachers' attitudes toward learners' spoken English are impeding the teaching and learning process, these attitudes will continue to affect learners' progress and potentially their final results in Grade 12.

These effects indicate the potential danger of language attitudes in the classroom. The disagreement as to the value and use of different varieties of English could have a significantly negative impact on the teaching and learning process.

These implications are paralleled outside the classroom. A speaker faces judgement if he/she speaks a variety of English other than that which is expected in a particular

context. Evidently, this judgement is ill-founded and could result in unfair assumptions. This judgement could affect the establishment of relationships, one's chances of employment and the success of one's career.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate that the participants' attitudes are affected by a speaker's variety of English. Participants voiced different attitudes toward the speakers of each variety. The majority of participants were positive in their response to RS1 (the WSAE speaker). Interpreting RS2 and RS3 (the ISAE and ASAE speakers) proved problematic as there was insufficient data to establish participants' attitudes suitably. It was with RS4 (the BSAE speaker) that a major division in attitudes emerged. BSAE speaking participants reacted positively to BSAE while WSAE speaking participants attached little value to the variety, stating that BSAE speakers would be advantaged if they spoke WSAE.

The attitudes expressed are evident in the classroom and in everyday situations. There is no single factor that can be associated with the formation of participants' attitudes. Here, the possible variables in attitude formation have been presented and suggest that participants' attitudes could be affected by their race, language, teaching subjects and own experiences of English. In light of these variables, it is unsurprising that learners of similar backgrounds agreed with each other's attitudes. Lastly, the implications of these findings were addressed.

I now progress to the final chapter, the conclusion to this study.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this brief final chapter, the findings of this study are presented. Limitations of the study are mentioned, after which suggestions for further research are offered.

6.2 FINDINGS

From this investigation, it is evident that the student teachers are influenced by a speaker's variety of English. Of the four varieties of English that were investigated, participants focused chiefly on White South African English (WSAE) and Black South African English (BSAE). Hence, the major findings of this research are centred on these two varieties of English.

In most instances, participants who shared teaching subjects held similar attitudes toward learners' varieties of English. Student teachers of Mathematics and/or Science expressed the attitude that a learner's ability to understand and communicate with a teacher is the primary requirement. Although some of these student teachers said that they would correct a learner's English, there was no indication that their treatment or assessment of a learner would be affected by the learner's variety of English. Student teachers of English were more specific in their attitudes toward the varieties of English. Five of the six student teachers of English who voiced their attitudes toward varieties of English, expect learners to communicate in a particular variety of English, WSAE. Several of the student teachers of English admitted that their assessment of a learner is influenced by the learner's variety of English. They expressed the attitude that those who speak WSAE are more likely to succeed when they leave school. The student teachers' attitudes also appear to be influenced by the variety of English that they speak. The WSAE speaking participants all demonstrated a strong preference for their own variety. The BSAE speaking participants' attitudes were not as particular as those of the WSAE speaking participants. A notable difference is that the BSAE speaking participants held BSAE in higher esteem than the WSAE speaking participants did.

The majority of all participants commented that speaking WSAE advantages speakers, particularly outside of the classroom. The participants' attitudes toward BSAE were mixed but there were numerous examples of a preference for BSAE and this indicates a growth in positive attitudes toward BSAE.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

During this research, there were certain limiting factors that could have affected the progress and results of the research. These limitations are listed below:

- The number of participants interviewed in the study is not sufficient to make generalisations of student teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English.

- My analysis and findings were dependent on participants' honesty in expressing their attitudes and could also have been influenced by the subjective nature of a qualitative approach.

- Participants might have avoided criticism of my variety of English to avoid causing offence.

- The presence of the recording devices might have distracted participants. This could lead to participants withholding attitudes or to participants considering their contributions more closely.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Teachers need to be set guidelines as to how to approach English in the classroom. Drawing up guidelines would necessitate extensive research so as to establish teachers' attitudes toward English and their ability and/or willingness to adapt to changes in policy and, consequently, to changes in the learning and teaching process.

The English, Mathematics and Science Matriculation results were again poor in 2009 (Motshekga 2010). Research into these results is imperative. It is necessary to explore if teachers' attitudes toward learners are a contributing factor to the poor results. This calls for an exploration into learners' varieties of English so as to establish if teachers' assessment of learners is linked to their attitudes toward varieties of English.

The use of a standardised English in the classroom merits investigation. Research would need to investigate the demand for and the viability of one variety of English being spoken in education nationwide.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The research process, and the analysis and interpretation of the findings were presented in six chapters.

In Chapter 1, the research report was introduced. A brief background to the study was offered and this was followed by the rationale behind the investigation. Lastly, the order that the research report followed was laid out.

Chapter 2 comprised the theoretical framework and the literature review. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) offered an appropriate framework as they draw a distinction between AL and L1 varieties of English, and stress equality between all varieties of English. Both these factors are pertinent to an investigation concerned with participants' attitudes toward AL and L1 varieties of English. The literature that informed this study was discussed. The difficulty of defining language attitudes was illustrated and Cargile and Giles (1997)'s definition of language attitudes was presented. The four varieties of English and their roles within South Africa were set out. Pertinent literature detailing the effects of attitudes toward varieties of English was offered. In particular, Labov's contribution (1969a, 1969b, 1972) to this field was summarized. The literature on attitudes toward varieties of English positioned the investigation in context and introduced readers to the potential effect of language attitudes

The methodological approach to this study and the methods employed in the collection of the data were laid out in Chapter 3. The motivation for adopting a qualitative approach to the data, and for the use of questionnaires and focus groups was explained. The process of data collection was then set out and the steps taken in the acquisition of data were stated. Lastly, the ethical considerations were given.

The data were analysed in Chapter Four. This was a two-part analysis consisting of a questionnaire and a group discussion. Participants' responses to the questionnaire were considered first. Each focus group discussion was then analysed individually.

In Chapter 5, the data from Chapter 4 were discussed and interpreted. This discussion and interpretation was informed by the literature in Chapter 2. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles (1996) were referred to and the value of this framework was apparent.

This final chapter, Chapter 6, provides a conclusion to the study. A summary of the findings have been offered. Factors that could have limited research were mentioned and suggestions for further research were stated. Lastly, there was a brief overview of the research report.

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