'The English language and South Africa'

A Qualitative Analysis of Contemporary Attitudes towards

South African English (SAE)

Master Thesis

Modern Languages: English Language and Culture

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Abstract

The current research project has employed qualitative methods to conduct a language attitude study that gauges the inter-generational perspectives of South Africans about the variety of English spoken in the country and its accents. The objective of this research project is to evaluate how South Africans feel about English, 26 years since the inception of democracy in the country, its role in education, governance and business, and the value they assign to language status. Ten South Africans between the ages of 17 and 65 from the main ethnicities in the country (Black, White, Coloured, Indian, Muslim) have been interviewed according to a semi-structured Interview Protocol. The attitudes of the younger speakers were compared to those that were born in previous generations, before democracy. The phonological properties of the participants' speech were recorded within the BATH, KIT and GOOSE vowel spaces which have been identified as important social markers in South Africa and the South African English (SAE) sound. The participants pronunciations across the ethnic and social class spectrum were evaluated. The interviews and phonological recordings were conducted according to an elicited communications methodology (computer-mediated) using WhatsApp, Skype and Facebook. The participant attitudes were coded into six categories, i.e. *positive, negative, perceptiveness, awareness, overcompensation, political correctness.* Their vowel recordings were analysed according to its place of articulation and the presence of fronting. The participants displayed an innate positive attitude toward SAE and its role in stimulating future progress in the country.

Keywords

Language attitudes, macrolinguistics, sociolinguistics, social identity, phonology, vowel articulation, pronunciation, socio-phonetics, accent, dialect, South African English (SAE), World Englishes, qualitative data, open-coding, grounded theory

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1. Introduction

Often times English is more than a means of communication but a symbol of power (Smit, 1996, p.4), which has increasingly become the case in South Africa since the inception of a democratic government in 1994. South African English carries the added responsibility of having been adopted as the 'language of liberation' (Kamwangamalu, 2003, p.226), thus overthrowing the stronghold of Afrikaans as a dominant language. Language attitude studies are known to be helpful in finding solutions in settings where languages are in competition (Garret, 2010, p.11). Previous research including Smit (1996, p.37) shows that language attitudes can serve as a barometer of the state of social structures. The current research documents the language attitudes of ten South Africans to assess how they reflect inter-generational changes in attitude and developments surrounding language-related social class biases. The participants articulation of the three main socially marked vowels of SAE, i.e. the BATH, GOOSE and KIT vowels, are analysed for significant deviations from pronunciation norms across ethnic divides. The articulation of these vowels are compared across different age groups and ethnicities to observe inter-generational variations. The thesis statement of this study is to evaluate the extent to which inter-generational differences in language attitudes towards South African English (SAE) can be observed in the responses of the research participants.

The current dynamic of South African English came into being due to the competition between English and Dutch/Afrikaans for 200 years (Smit, 1996, p.4), where both languages had equal status in education, business and governance. These languages were employed as signs of power and competition for supremacy (p.4). The liberation movement, and subsequent installation of a democratic state, saw English elevated to a new status when it was chosen as the national language of communication and education. "In contrast to Afrikaans, it was seen as the only neutral language, the language of liberation and even unification," (p.4). According to Smit (1996, p.5) various scholars such as Eyamba Bokamba (1976), Emmanuel Ngara (1982) and Josef Schmied (1991), have called attention to the importance of language attitude research, and particularly with regard to language planning and policies within the South African context. These academics drew attention to the need for such studies because conflicts arose in the field of education about the official language policy and the politicisation of the principle of mother-tongue education, particularly for Black South Africans who speak indigenous African languages, of which the main ones are isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho (see Table 1 for more information about the official languages of South Africa). Other factors that have led to a contentious language situation in South Africa are the linguistic and cultural diversity in the country and the choice of languages selected for instruction (Ridge, Makoni & Stanley, 2001, p.31).

Table 1. Percentage of native speakers of the main languages represented.

Official languages of South Africa	Percentage of speakers
isiZulu	22.7%
isiXhosa	16%
Afrikaans	13.5%
English	9.6%
Sepedi	9.1%
Setswana	8%
Sesotho	7.6%
Xitsonga	4.5%
siSwati	2.5%
Tshivenda	2.4%
isiNdebele	2.1%

(Statistics SA, Census, 2011)

With the substantial change to the political regime in the country from 1994 onward it was agreed that "the language issue, just as all the other areas of inequality" (Smit, 1996, p.5) required redressing. As a result, numerous new policy proposals were drafted to reflect the prevailing political and ideological diversity. At the top of the list of priorities was the implementation of language planning decisions.

The central focus of the present study is to analyse the inter-generational variations in language use and perception between the participants, aged 17 to 65 years. This study, therefore, implements qualitative methods to categorise these language attitudes. Ten South Africans have taken part in the current study by being interview according to a 10-question, semi-structured Interview Protocol (see Appendix A) and providing recordings of their pronunciation of 30 words related to the BATH, GOOSE and KIT vowels. The participants provided their opinions about SAE in relation to other international English varieties; indigenous African languages, and English as a language of business, globalisation and education. The attitudes of the participants are categorised according to six attitudinal codes and their vowel pronunciations are classified according to whether they are fronted, rounded, split (KIT) or devoid of these characteristics. According to Goatley-Soan & Baldwin (2018, p.693), "attitudes toward language i.e., language attitudes, consist of three components: learned cognition (beliefs), affect evaluation (feelings), and behavioural predisposition."

The objective of the research questions presented in this study is to identify the attitudes of the participants towards the role of English in education and business as well as assess whether standard English is regarded as a valuable tool of progress at present or

whether indigenisation of English is preferred. The inter-generational variations between participant attitudes is a vital component under analysis as well. The questions are as follows:

      (i) How do the participants view SAE in the context of education governance and business?

      (ii) To what extent do the participants see accented varieties of SAE, related to social class and ethnicity, as a hindrance to the broader functioning of society?

      (iii) How do they view English in comparison with indigenous languages?

      (iv) What kinds of attitudes do young and old South Africans have about English, 26 years into democracy?

2. Background

South Africa has nine indigenous African languages, that are officially recognised, and yet English is the dominant language of influence, business and education alongside Afrikaans. Many ideological conflicts have arisen because of the language situation which stem from greater socio-economic issues prevalent in the country including access to education (Kamwangamalu, 2003, p.237). With the installation of democracy in South Africa between 1990 and 1994 the language issue was one of the first to be identified as requiring redressing leading to the drafting of numerous new policy proposals (Smit, 1996, p.5). Dissension has arisen several times in education about the official language policy, mother-tongue education and the linguistic diversity in the country (p.5). Ridge, Makoni & Stanley (2001, p.5) point out that there is considerable pressure to use English because it is the official language of all the countries in southern African but that the indigenous languages of the region require much needed attention due to the practical demands of education, administration and democracy. Language remains a contentious issue in South Africa today where an ideological struggle persists between native speakers of English and non-native users (Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín Gutiérrez, 2018, p.241). Wright (1993) observed early on that the indigenisation of English was inevitable in a country with so many different cultures but that standard English was necessary as a means of communication and to allow South Africa's formal economic and education sectors to operate effectively.

     Language attitude research has been cited by several scholars in the last three decades, including De Klerk (1996), Smit (1996, 2000), Kamwangumalu (2003) and Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín Gutiérrez (2018) as a useful tool in discerning what issues need addressing, particularly in language planning and education. The concept of 'attitudes' in

research garnered attention as early as the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the field of social psychology, because it was seen as central to humanity, as it dealt with a person's "way of feeling, thinking and being" (Smit, 1996, p.24). Attitudes are formed within a specific framework and triggered through complex social stimuli. According to Garret (2010, p.23) an *attitude* can be described as "an inner component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through more obvious processes, i.e. stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger or satisfaction." Attitudes are learned through experience which means they can change when the experience changes. These properties associated with attitude demonstrates why this line of research is necessary in assisting with complex situations like that of South Africa. It can help make sense of differences in mindset in a specific region, and the polarising aspects between various social classes, ethnicities or creeds. South African English falls into all of the aforementioned categories and warrants the need for language attitude research to help navigate a future for language education that is not plagued by controversy and adversity. Language attitudes are connected to specific socio-cultural norms (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.693) and, therefore, forms an integral part of the communicative competence of human beings. This gives language attitudes the power to influence people's reactions to other language users and allows them to anticipate external responses.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Social context warranting language attitude study

Despite the rising global importance of English, as a mechanism of trade and communication, there is much talk of an imminent 'language shift' in South Africa, a growing need to Africanise SAE, by way of removing its foreign character (Smit, 1996, p.112). The most important question being asked by South Africans since 1994 is 'What kind of English will be used for educational purposes?' When asked about the value of English in the society most people agree that English serves an important role in education, as the medium of instruction. The issue remains a tentative one today because there are different kinds of English being used, and for different purposes.

Language research in South Africa was mainly pedagogic from the 1970s to the early 1990s (Van Rooy & Kruger, 2015) focusing on problems of intelligibility. It was not strongly informed by applied linguistics. It was commonplace at the time to structure the research in the context of an exonormative (relying on foreign forms)(*OED*, 2011) variety of SAE, as the standard in education. There was a strong focus on ensuring that there was no presumed negative transfer of the indigenous languages to English, during the stages of

acquisition. According to Van Rooy & Kruger (2015, p.2) a second phase of research began to take shape in the 1980s that was sociolinguistic in nature, and which gained momentum in the 1990s. Language attitude study falls into this branch of research and aims to determine the attitudes held by specific groups towards specific language varieties in a distinct communicative situation. The challenge of such research is 'situation specificity', where there might be no research basis to work from or to make comparisons with. Situation specificity as referenced by Van Rooy & Kruger also embodies the great potential of language attitude studies as it applies to specific language situations and related problems. This calls for a greater degree of qualitative research to be conducted to generate the required information. This kind of research is situationally applicable to South Africa because of the question of which variety of SAE to standardise. According to Garret (2010, p.2), people hold attitudes about language at all levels including spelling and punctuation, words, grammar, accent, pronunciation and dialects. The speed at which one speaks can also evoke emotions.

Positive or negative attitudes towards language are often influenced by the process of standardisation as people's attitudes are driven by deep-rooted ideological positions based on the standard form of that language. Garret refers to this as the "standard language ideology" or the "ideology of the standard language" (p.2). Goatley-Soan & Baldwin (2018, p.693) propose that there are three components to language attitudes; the beliefs of the listener also known as their learned cognition, their feelings (affect evaluation) and their behavioural predisposition. Attitudes towards language can prompt individuals to adapt language norms that will elicit a desired social response such as wanting to be perceived as friendly, intelligent, a member of a particular social group or the ideal candidate for a job (Garret, 2010, p.39). A concise definition of attitudes is that they "are complex, object-directed and situation-specific, affective and cognitive, partly subconscious products and/or processes" (Smit, 2000, p.146).

Language attitude research is designed to test the cognitive component of language attitudes, "the consciously constructed and articulated evaluations of participants toward varieties of different accents and dialects" (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.693). Research has often illustrated that accents can trigger the formation of social categories. For example, listeners can identify and categorise accented speakers as native or non-native, and even the region they are from, depending on the heaviness of their English accents (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.694). The cognitive process that the listener experiences when exposed to an accent is one that allows him or her to assign traits about social status and ethnicity as well. When a listener is faced with an accent that cannot be identified immediately or one which does not allow the listener to place it geographically he will draw upon group categorisation of native-nonnative as mutually exclusive categories. Research

shows that people associate native speakers as in-group members with socially desirable qualities whereas they denigrate foreign speakers, the out-group members (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.694 and Mai & Hoffman, 2014, p.143). Tendencies toward social categorisation can also be seen in the behaviour of young children and even infants which can in turn activate stereotype effects (Mai & Hoffman, 2014, p.143). People promote positive self and group concepts cognitively by creating distinctive group comparisons (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.694). On the other hand, however, there are many more speaker-listener combinations possible in the global economy today. Foreign accents have more positive connotations at present (Mai & Hoffman, 2014, p.146). Business is often conducted in broken English or there are instances where people from the same home country speak English as an L2 (e.g. Spanish accented English) in their place of work. The interactions between such employees or customers in an international place of business lead to associations of solidarity or even positive consumer judgments (Mai & Hoffmann, 2014, p.146).

Language has the power to mirror political tensions and loyalties that reflects the groups who use it and their heterogenous viewpoints (De Klerk, 1996, p.16), as has been the case in South Africa since the inception of democracy. The political transition phase of the nation to a democratic state evoked increased sensitivity and awareness of language and language rights in 1995 when the interim constitution declared its language policy (p.8). The *ujamaa* era or "language war" of Tanzania (summarised in section 3.5.), from roughly 1967 to 1991, is a case in point that illustrates the intense influence of language attitudes on a society because English became associated with neo-colonialism, capitalism and elitism (Mohr, 2018, p.107), dividing people on those ideological lines. In the South African context, De Klerk (1996) urged that ongoing descriptive work be carried out in the form of monitoring the effect of the media and of government policy on English, and to assist in making generalisations regarding regional and social varieties of English. These need close monitoring with respect to the differences between native-speaker communities and non-native users (p.16). According to De Klerk, there is a romanticism surrounding the notion of the indigenisation of English spoken in southern Africa whereas she feels this appreciation of the individuality of these language varieties should be balanced as these reduced forms or nativised forms of English will struggle to compete with standard varieties. "As with all processes of language planning, it is not the selection or codification of the norm that is the problem, but its subsequent acceptance and implementation," De Klerk (1996, p.16) substantiates the point. Important areas to monitor in attitudinal studies are instances of discrimination against people based on their language and the effects of promoting marginalised languages over English. The economic value of languages is another important criterion to consider in a context such as South Africa, mainly the

integrative value of the languages or their ability to serve as a neutral lingua franca. English and its varieties in South Africa have an identificatory role where speakers display "acts of identity" related to the language they speak, many of which are involuntary. It also serves as a language of wider communication (Branford in De Klerk, 1996, p.36) for people of different mother tongues. Wright (1993, p.4) also foresaw the acculturation of the different languages in South Africa, also known as the indigenisation process of SAE, due to continuous language contact situations taking place. He stated that it would take the forms of deviation at the phonological, grammatical and lexical levels.

There are positive arguments in favour of English in South Africa as well, such as that it allows communication between different speech communities and it allows the country's formal and education sectors to operate effectively (Wright, 1993, p.3). Standard English is the foundation of grammar and vocabulary from which native English pronunciation derives. Accent is not tied to this, according to Wright. Through language attitude studies, such as the current research project, more can be discovered about the kinds of viewpoints people have about the languages spoken in South Africa, and their perspectives about the dominant language, English or SAE.

One description for an attitude is that it is a construct for "an inner component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly through more obvious processes including stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger or satisfaction, emotions and in various other aspects of behaviour," (Garret, 2010, p.19). Language attitudes are related to socio-cultural norms and these form the basis of our communicative competence. This means that in every day language use people's attitudes can influence reactions to other language users. It can also influence the choices people make about language; by fashioning their language according to a specific style in order to gain a desired response. According to Garret (2010, p.22) attitudes are innate and not learned and two important sources for these attitudes are personal experiences and a person's social environment. The three components of human behaviour connected to attitudes are cognition, affect and behaviour and serve as indicators for the triggers of attitudes, and subsequently of people's actions. Cognitive processes are often developed by stereotypes (p.32) related to certain social groups. It is based on social categorisation whereby the external environment is divided into social groups. Social categorisation highlights the similarities and differences between members of a perceived group or outsiders to it, thus, providing a basis for stereotyping. In the South African context, there is much social categorisation taking place which stems from the segregated way in which different ethnic groups lived and worked, prior to democracy in 1994. Social categorisations are developed based on the environments that individuals come from, and based on what is familiar or unfamiliar to them. Language attitude studies is, therefore, a

useful tool in mitigating these problems especially in a context as that of South Africa. This type of research also allows South Africans from different language groups or even language classes to voice their concerns, and articulate their opinions. Once these are documented and analysed it can assist in the improvement of educational structures that is acceptable for the broader population.

Recently there has been more and more talk about a language shift happening in South Africa. On the one hand, researchers such as Kamwangamalu (2003, p.226) have witnessed a pattern where Black African bilingual families are sending their children to be schooled in English more frequently. However, on the other hand ordinary citizens indicate more frequently that indigenous African words, phrases and sentential contexts are influencing SAE, as is the case in this research project where several participants spoke about related trends without being directly prompted to talk about it. The foreseen language shift addressed by Kamwangamalu (2003) refers to a move, mainly in urban Black communities, from indigenous African languages to English, which has also been attributed to the change from apartheid to democracy (p.225). Language shifts are evident when there is a spike in bilingual speakers which often happens to a community when it is in contact with an economically or socially powerful language group. This has certainly been the case in South Africa where large numbers of indigenous language speakers have defaulted to their second language (L2), English. The situation poses significant threats to the original language spoken in the community, potentially that it will be wiped out entirely. Other signals that language shift is underway include an increase in the use of second languages (L2) domestically between parents and children or in sibling interactions, changes to social networks, increased contact situations with the L2 group and reinforcement of the L2 to facilitate acquisition (Ridge, Makoni & Stanley, 2001, p.116). Researchers estimate that English could become 'the language of the crib' within Black communities in as little as three generations. According to Kamwangamalu (2003, p.237), language activists in Black communities are concerned that the indigenous African languages are moving in the same direction as the Khoisan languages which are now extinct. In South Africa, the status of English has been bolstered by three pivotal factors: the lack of language modernisation, the failure of the language policy installed with the onset of democracy and the determination by Black Africans to acquire English at high personal costs.

3.2. Developing language policies

The language-in-education policy (LiEP) was the first policy drawn up by the Department of Education under the initial democratic government of South Africa in 1997. One of its defining features was to promote multilingualism in education (Ridge, Makoni & Stanley,

2001, p.31). Leading up to the establishment of the policy, a task group had been appointed in 1995 by Dr. B. Ngubane, the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, to serve as a policy advisory group to the ministry. The task force, called LANGTAG, served as the executive arm of government on language matters, and separate from the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB). The language policy in South Africa is based on the national Constitution which acknowledges eleven languages as official, and defends the special requirements of the indigenous languages. The Pan South African Language Board is responsible for the development of policies (p.24), and the realisation of the Constitutional ideals enshrined therein, which include language rights on communication, courts and education. Essentially PANSALB's role was mainly to monitor Constitutional principles relating to language matters. The language policies established in the 1990s in South Africa were inspired largely by Canadian researcher Jim Cummins (Ridge, Makoni & Stanley, 2001, p.34) because it addressed the issue of interdependence between L1 and L2, cognition and bilingualism and multilingualism. His research informed South Africa's language-in-education policy considerably at the time.

An important question about the evolution of SAE and language policies in relation to this variety of English is whether the standardisation process will be completed. South African English is one of several standardising native varieties of English, such as Australian English or Canadian English, because dictionaries, grammars, language bureaux, syllabi and curricula are being developed which may eventually establish it as an institutionalised, standard form of language (Wright, 1993, p.6). An institutionalised variety is one that can be described comprehensively and which has standards that are recognised by institutions of state. According to Wright, it is unclear whether there is sufficient impetus behind the standardisation process to bring it to fruition.

The main reason why the standardisation of SAE is not being carried out to completion stems from the controversies about English that persisted from around 1986 into the 1990s, in which the English Academy was challenged for its approach to the language. Debates were rife about the Academy's lack of consideration of multilingualism as well as the prescriptive nature with which it treated standard English. This eventually created a rift within the Academy causing it to review its approach to SAE. Historically, the English Academy (South Africa) took a position that SAE was an extension of British heritage (Meshtrie, 1995, p.227). According to Garret (2010, p.2) standardisation is generally concerned with uniformity and invariance. Standard language ideology puts much emphasis on correctness as well. In South Africa, the prescriptive nature of English in the region was challenged by Professor Njabulo Ndebele in his 1986 keynote address to the Academy conference in which he urged the constituency to allow SAE to adapt South African semantic and phonological norms, by way of interacting with indigenous African

languages. The basic premise was that the Academy reconsider preserving standard English as a prescriptive variety. Many members of the Academy challenged the submission via the new national Constitution to uphold English as the sole official language, and that Standard British English be the written variety. These debates caused ideological tensions to flare up, with one argument in favour of English being incorporated with multilingualism, and the other that English remain the dominant lingua franca of South Africa. Since that time, the English Academy has become less Anglo-centric by making allowances for multilingualism as well. It has been stressed by researchers, including Garret (2010) that language attitude research be carried out in settings where languages are in competition with one another, and different speakers feel threatened. In the South African context it can be useful to label language behaviours which provides insights to people's attitudes. This is in turn useful in understanding the direction that language policy making needs to take or how it can better serve the different language users.

Researchers like Ridge, Makoni & Stanley (2001, p.31) have expressed a dire need for bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa, and that research should be conducted on teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. The only investigations that exist in the literature (p.39) date back to the 1930s and 1940s, and were centred on dual medium schooling of English and Afrikaans. Between 1985 and 1990 the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Threshold Project was conducted for the same purpose, and to research English and Afrikaans only. Another area of language that requires acute attention is Black South African English (BSAE) which is under-researched despite its increasing role in the Southern African communicative economy (p.85).

3.3. Pertinent socio-historical factors affecting SA English

English may well be the prominent lingua franca in South Africa but two accents in particular evoke powerful attitudes from the ethnic groups of South Africa, namely *Standard South African English* and *Afrikaans English*. The standard variety of English is currently dominant in parliament, the media, government institutions and communication between people of different language backgrounds (Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín Gutiérrez, 2018, p.240). The high status of English is further reinforced by the fact that it is the global language of business, making it preferred for the purposes of economics and education. This situation has inadvertently led to the alienation of African language speakers even further. English receives support by many as a medium of achievement and independence but it also incites others to protest because to them it represents colonialism, power and elitism (De Klerk, 1996, p.8). There are many who see the spread of English as a threat to indigenous languages, and the reinforcement of the class hierarchy.

The negative attitude towards *Afrikaans English* is more obvious and stems directly from socio-political situations. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 secured its status as "the language of the oppressor" so when the democratic era was ushered in, in the early 1990s, Afrikaans, and its ethnolects such as *Afrikaans English* went from being powerful in economic and political terms, to being downgraded in socio-politics and education (Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín Gutiérrez, 2018, p.240). Afrikaans was subsequently removed from several higher education institutions. The status of English had already been boosted to the language of advancement, when the Bantu Education Act was enforced, and had only grown in popularity, in the political climate of the years that followed.

The evolution of contemporary language attitudes towards African and non-African languages in the country is due to two factors, colonialism and post-apartheid politics, which has had the greatest impacts on language development. Researchers have therefore identified a crucial need for research that investigates language attitudes among the major ethnic groups. Social psychology around language has also been identified as lacking. According to Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín Gutiérrez (2018), the study of accent evaluation can be key to such investigations to inform speaker categorisation.

Social class has its own unique role to play in the landscape of SAE as well as language preference in South Africa. The legacy of colonialism and apartheid has created a society that is class-conscious. National stereotypes surrounding ethnolects (speech varieties associated with specific ethnic groups), and dialects are based on various conceptions of class-consciousness. These effects are further exacerbated by high levels of poverty and subsequent inequality in different areas of social life including school, work and recreation. People are capable of assigning social class membership and other personal characteristics to different members of social groups (Ladegaard, 1998, p.189). Stereotypes can be defined as mental concepts which govern the process of perception. According to Ladegaard, "the mental picture inserted between the individual and his or her environment is known as a pseudo-environment whose culturally determined content is constituted by stereotypes." People have a tendency to "define first and then see" (p.190) indicating that stereotypes may not be an accurate depiction of social reality. Therefore, it is possible to assess stereotypes according to their objectivity and subjectivity to determine whether they conform to facts. Equalisation in education, is an important element to be considered in educational and language planning in South Africa to help eradicate its orientation on social-class differences (see Table 2 for a summary of the number of speakers per ethnic population). Programmes and policies related to equalisation aim to eradicate behavioural or attitudinal patterns which reflect differences in people's social class, sex, nationality, race or socio-economic status (Ladegaard, 1998, p.193). This kind of approach is desperately needed in South Africa to help language learners socialise to a more uniform situation.

Table 2. Speaking competence of South Africans by ethnic population size.

Language population by ethnicity	Percentage of speakers
Whites = 3 934 511	87.19% (of Whites)
Blacks = 6 149 230	26.34% (of Blacks)
Coloureds = 1 459 695	54.31% (of Coloureds)
Indians = 779 873	97.07% (of Indians)
Total = 12 323 309	40.42% (of total population)

(Smit, 1996, p.80)

The existence of various *ethnolects* of SAE is also related to the socio-political background of the country. An ethnolect is a marker that indicates the ethnic group from which a speaker originates. SAE has several ethnolects of English pertaining to specific ethnic groups. Between 1948 and 1994 the different ethnic groups were required by government policy to live segregated from one another. Interaction between the different ethnic groups was limited to the workplace where another hierarchy was enforced between who occupied managerial positions, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs. This in turn was based on the education system which already streamed the groups into the desired positions. The process was further supplemented by legislature (Van Rooy & Kruger, 2015, p.2), where certain occupations were designated for specific racial groups. These educational and socio-economic inequalities, brought about by the political dispensation, have not yet been phased out. The political restrictions of that era in the country's history has resulted in limited linguistic communications, and led to the creation of distinct ethnolects. A new linguistic situation has been developing since the early 1990s which can give rise to new linguistic developments. Language attitude studies on the evolving evaluations of different indigenous varieties of SAE has revealed that there is a growing acceptance of other varieties of SAE (Van Rooy & Kruger, 2015, p.7). South Africans are becoming more open to bilingual repertoires and are overlapping languages. Recent research has begun to pay more attention to these emerging linguistic features in SAE, whether it be in academic or professional contexts, including the role of indigenous African languages in social integration between families and communities. Smit (2000, p.133) cautions that while English is accepted as the most important language in South Africa for international and national communication, it is still a second language (L2) for the majority of speakers. The implication of this is that English now has a vital function in education, and the question that has to be answered is which variety of SAE is needed for the greater population of speakers.

South African English is at a juncture where language planners need to determine which factors should be incorporated into language education, and which should be eradicated. Objective facts, as Smit (2000, p.134) calls them, should be collected which include the number of speakers and learners of SAE; the varieties of English; when they are used, and by whom they are spoken. Subjective reactions to various varieties of English are equally important to obtain (p.134). These are indicative of people's evaluations and perceptions of SAE, and can only be gathered through language attitude research (p.134). The focus, however, of these language attitude studies should be on the immediate challenges which decision-makers and language users will be facing. The difficulty lies in the variety of English used by the majority of South Africans, "the sketchy research of the past and the socio-political developments of the last decade," (Smit, 2000, p.136). The growth of English in South Africa was partly due to the perception that it is a neutral language and of a high status. The English of South Africa also has the potential to sow seeds of elitism and social injustice (De Klerk, 1996, p.7). The omnipotence of South African English can induce a sense of disempowerment and exclusion as it does not always operate in harmony with local traditions and beliefs. There are many who view the spread of English as a "subtle linguistic imperialism" (p.8) which occurs at the expense of local languages and which reinforces existing hierarchies and status structures. Sociolinguistic research in South Africa will need to tackle these factors in order to provide language practitioners with the knowledge they need for the future.

3.4.1. Accent and phonological features that play an important role
While language attitudes is the main focus of this study, a phonological component has been included for the socially marked vowels, BATH, GOOSE and KIT to establish whether there are any inter-generational variations between the participants of different generations. Phonological details of language can be very telling of the changes taking place in a specific language or language variety, like SAE. In South Africa there are many nuanced attitudes towards accents, dialects and ethnolects which go largely unspoken and unaddressed. In the case of SAE, hypercorrection, generational changes and fronting are relevant but often under-researched. For instance, evidence of fronting has been detected in the GOOSE vowel space, especially in the speech of middle class speakers of Black SAE (BSAE)(Meshtrie, 2010, p.27). However, no in-depth research has been conducted about this trend and the social groups where it is prevalent. The observed trend, therefore, has been superficially represented in the available research at present.

The accent of a speaker has been identified in previous research as having considerable sway in how the speaker is perceived and judged in contact situations (Giles &

Rakíc, 2014, p.2). An *accent* describes the manner of pronunciation associated with particular group memberships (p.2), which includes the social, regional and ethnic groups they are associated with. In SAE, a fronted GOOSE vowel is associated with higher social status groups and a younger, more modern demographic. The presence of an accent is often cause for concern "in everyday parlance, popular culture, and in many professional contexts for a very long time," (p.2). In this regard, standard accents are considered to be *accent-free* or *accent-neutral*. The attribution of having an accent or not has immediate and sometimes far-reaching consequences for the evaluations of the speaker. However, Giles and Rakíc (2014) postulate that everyone has their own way of pronouncing words and, therefore, has an individualised accent, also known as an *idiolect*. Studies show that children attribute greater trust to native language speakers and prefer friends from the same accent group regardless of race (p.4).

Research shows that the accent of an individual bears a direct influence on people's attitudes about that person (Giles & Rakíc, 2014, p.18). Language attitudes can, therefore, be highly predictive in forming judgements and applying decisions based on those views, more so than other social cues such as appearance or personality, for example. Preferences such as these have implications for language varieties leading to the formation of a divide according to those that sound cultured and those that are not sophisticated. A sophisticated accent is associated with intellectual competence (p.18). Stigmatised language varieties, on the other hand, serve a role in enhancing social identity, and are used as a show of solidarity in a social group, but are nevertheless seen as lower in status and intellectual competence. These lower regarded accents are considered to be attractive to some and demonstrative of trustworthiness and kindness, according to Giles & Rakíc (2014, p.18). Language attitudes can also be associated with strong feelings such as irritation or admiration. They are evaluative reactions and fundamental in how individuals make sense of, and manage information. Language attitudes also assist in the creation of narratives, arguments and explanations about the character and behaviour of members of social groups.

Language change occurs because people perceive that judgements are being made about them based on their accents or dialects, and other related language attributes. They adjust their language use and accent to avoid negative implications to their social standing. Many of these perceptive accepts of language are passed down through generations. The concept of the lower-middle-class *crossover*, as discussed by Meyerhoff (2006, p.190) is one of those sociolinguistic tenets that can apply to SAE where specific groups of speakers lead language change by targeting a favoured variant, and uses it more often than the target group. In the case of upcoming middle class speakers of SAE, particularly Black speakers, the GOOSE vowel [u:] as in *book, cook, put, look* has become a favoured variant because it has

been perceived as having a fronted quality among the higher-status social groups in South Africa. In some empirical research (Meyerhoff, 2006) this kind of development is also known as *hypercorrection*. However, empirical research will need to be conducted to establish whether hypercorrection is indeed occurring in the GOOSE vowel space of SAE. The frequency of a particular variant in the speech of a lower-middle class speaker, and that of an upper-middle class speaker will need to be compared to determine whether this is in fact occurring in SAE.

Generational change is also an important area of research with regard to SAE, firstly to identify the direction the language variety is being taken in but also from an attitudinal perspective to evaluate how South Africans of different generations feel about English in relation to norms, style and conservatism. This research project set out to find out the differences in attitude of younger South Africans versus older South Africans. The sample range was between 17 and 65 years. There were several differences in the mindset of the younger participants versus that of the older participants. One in particular was a preference for Americanisms among the younger speakers, including American spelling norms, slang and pronunciation. Researchers Jurgen, Martin & Esther (2013, p.24) claim that change-related variation should be classified according to whether the changes affect the language of the individual or that of a speech community. Within the framework of variationist sociolinguistics the patterns of change have been classified as being: generational change, communal change, age grading and lifespan change (p.23). *Generational change* has occurred when the patterns of language use of individual speakers remain stable but those of different generations diverge from each other. However, a distinction must be made between individual speakers who modify their patterns of language according to the age group they belong to, which is known as *age grading,* or whether speakers are following a generational change initiated by younger speakers from the same speech community. This is known as *lifespan change.* Age grading happens in every generation and does not account for a change. Lifespan changes do account for a change because the speakers are adapting their language use to innovative patterns indicating that the speech community and individual speakers have changed their linguistic habits. The objective of the current research is not to trace such a change in language use but rather assess the generational differences about language via the attitudes expressed by younger and older speakers of SAE.

According to the South African National Census of 2011 there are 4.89 million first language English speakers in the country. From that number, White, Coloured and Indian English are distinct ethnolects of SAE. English was brought to the country from England and was an instrument of White English hegemony. According to Meshtrie (1995, p.89), English must be seen as a language that diffused from White European, specifically British,

mother-tongue speakers to other communities, and should not be construed as prejudice because it is simply a historical fact. "All mother-tongue varieties like Afrikaans English are not only autonomous dialects of English, but specifically dialects of Southern British English (SBE), with a distinctly eastern rather than western cast," (p.89). The 'southern' aspect of SAE, and its ethnolects, consists of specific features linked to language developments in England from the 14th to the 19th centuries. While Australian (AusE) and New Zealand (NZE) English have [æ] or [ɛ] in TRAP and low front [a:] in BATH; SAE has the same qualities in TRAP, but usually centralised back [ä:] or back [a:] in BATH. This quality dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The majority of the United States has more or less the same quality in both, but short TRAP and long BATH (Meshtrie, 1995, p.90). SAE, like the Englishes of America, Australasia and Ireland, is an extraterritorial (ET) variety; a transported language spoken outside its metropolitan or mainland home; in the same way Afrikaans is ET Dutch and Yiddish is ET German (p.91).

3.4.2. Social significance of BATH, GOOSE and KIT vowels

SAE, like all varieties of non-Scottish English has a centralised phonemic vocalic nucleus with short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs, with the exception that it has a complex allophonic distribution in the KIT vowel. The centralised [Ï] in KIT originates in Afrikaans (Lanham & MacDonald, 1979 in Meshtrie, 1995). The claim was made after the researchers conducted a qualitative study and found that *sit* in Respectable SAE and Extreme SAE is the same as that in Afrikaans *sit*. The finding begs the question whether a single vowel, of the same etymology, can be borrowed into a language. However, evidence has also been found for the claim in samples linking the raised TRAP and DRESS vowels of SAE and centralised KIT. A notebook belonging to an 1820 settler called Jeremiah Goldswain provided evidence of vowel usage (see example 1) of the time that validates a vowel shift in the KIT domain, along with the raised TRAP and DRESS vowels. Goldswain, who was a Sawyer (person who sawed wood by occupation) from Buckinghamshire and one of the original immigrants documented the following related words:

(1)

    (a) raised TRAP: contrector *'contractor'*, atrected *'attracted'*, lementation *'lamentation'*

    (b) lowered DRESS: amadick *'emetic'*, hadge *'hedge'*, sant *'sent'*

    (c) raised DRESS: git *'get'*, kittle *'kettle'*, liter *'letter'*

    (d) lowered KIT: presner *'prisoner'*, deferent *'different'*, sleped *'slipped'*

    (e) retracted KIT: buld *'build'*, busket *'biscuit'*, contunerd *'continued'*

<div align="right">(Meshtrie, 1995, p.97)</div>

Researchers believe that over the course of time the four categories spaced themselves out by raising, and KIT became more centralised. Retracted KIT moved into a free zone because there were no other short vowels in immediate proximity, the closest is STRUT, which is at the bottom of the vowel space. A unique aspect of SAE in the English-speaking world, is that Respectable and Extreme (known as proper varieties) can be defined by the behaviour of KIT. Words like *it* and *sit* do not rhyme. In word initial position as well as after /h/ (*it, hit*), in velar environments (*kit, sick*), and frequently before /ʃ/ (*fish*), KIT is closer and fronter. Elsewhere it is more centralised [Ï]. The KIT-split, as coined by Wells (1982 in Bekker, 2014, p.114), is one of the more noticeable social variables of Conservative SAE because the contrast is lacking in Respectable which has a fronter value [ɪ], characteristic of all domains of RP. In Extreme SAE the front allophones are raised and further fronted to [i], with a similar quality to the FLEECE vowel.

An important social variable of SAE is the GOOSE vowel. Speakers of Conservative SAE articulate the [u:] vowel more to the back. In other varieties of SAE it is back and central. The GOOSE vowel is fully fronted [y:] in young speakers of Respectable SAE, similar to a rounded FLEECE vowel. Essentially the younger the speaker of the Respectable variety of SAE, the fronter the vowel. The fronted GOOSE vowel, with a central-to-front quality is an indicator of ethnicity and can be defined as a social marker, attributed to middle-to-upper class White South Africans. It is for this reason that the norm is often adopted by upcoming middle-class speakers (often Black) of SAE. Vernacular varieties such as Coloured or Indian SAE produce a back vowel, that is further back than Conservative SAE. Fronting of the GOOSE was previously not present in varieties of SAE spoken by Blacks, Coloureds and Indians (Meshtrie, 2010, p.5). In older forms of BSAE it is a back vowel that merges with FOOT. In recent years the GOOSE vowel has been adopted to varying extents by middle-class speakers from non-white groups, thus turning it into a marker of young and middle-class status. Black females show more acculturation to the White norms for GOOSE (Meshtrie, 2010, p.27). Coloureds show a moderate degree of fronting with more resistance from females than males. Two sub-groups exist among Indians where one side resists the cross-over and the other embraces it.

The BATH vowel has also been classified as a social indicator by researchers, including Meshtrie (1995). In Conservative SAE it tends to be centralised back [ä]. In more upper-class varieties it is central [a:]. In Respectable and Extreme it is backer, even fully back [a:]. The BATH vowel is articulated even further back in male and younger speakers of Respectable SAE. The true social significance comes into effect in varieties such as Extreme SAE where it is often rounded to [ɒ:], and even raised towards [ɔ:]. There is some evidence that weak rounding of the BATH vowel is becoming less stigmatised (Meshtrie, 1995, p.98).

The BATH, KIT and GOOSE vowels have been identified over the years as indicators of social status or as prestige pronunciation factors. Smit (1996, p.41) describes language elements such as these vowels as speech markers and purports that they provide biological, social and psychological information about the people who use them. According to research, there is a direct link between the social status conveyed by the speech marker and subjective reactions to it. Researchers such as Smit have found that there are two types of prestige connected to these kinds of speech markers that influences peoples language use, i.e. *overt prestige* and *covert prestige*. Prestige associated with a high status group is known as *overt prestige* and is concerned with the phenomenon where individuals in a given society aspire to the norms and behaviours of the upper-classes of society. These norms can be associated with language, fashion, art, governance and education, among others. *Covert prestige* is understood to involve a trend whereby members of a social group adopt non-prestige language norms or customs to appear tougher, and to align with a specific branch of the community, e.g. hunters, sportmen and so forth. The back and rounded qualities of the BATH vowel of SAE is likely a feature borrowed from Afrikaans (Meshtrie, Chevalier & Dunne, 2015). These features occur when a word or phrase is stressed. It is also frequently associated with younger, urban speakers of English. More importantly, these linguistic features indicate that further research should be conducted to test the influences of South Africa's two Germanic languages, English and Afrikaans, on one another. Meshtrie, Chevalier & Dunne (2015) are interested to know whether Afrikaans has influenced English from below or whether English has influenced Afrikaans from above (p.25).

Factors such as these have to be studied closely to understand the effects of language on a society. This can be best achieved through attitude studies as these monitor many different sociolinguistic and social psychological phenomena (Garret, 2010, p.15) such as how individuals position themselves socially and how they relate to other individuals and groups. Language attitudes can also affect behaviours and experiences. An attitude can be defined as an 'affect for or against a psychological object' (p.19). This demonstrates the positive and negative emotional responses that are connected to people's attitudes. An attitude (towards language in this case) can also be seen "as a learned disposition to think, feel and behave toward a person, or object, in a particular way" (p.19) indicating that it is concerned with more than affects, but also with thought and behaviour. In language research, accents are by far one of the more dominant factors that influence people's behaviours and guides their attitudes.

3.4.3 International outlook on the social effects of accent variation

Extensive linguistic and language attitude research has found that listeners form impressions about speakers by accessing a whole spectrum of vocal attributes (e.g. pitch, intonation, speech rate) to form opinions about a speaker's background (Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles, 2012, p.120). Every listener decodes the language of the speakers they interact with to find out more about them. Language use can evoke many different responses from a listener. The effects of a person's accent on another's reaction can range from them making judgements about the personality of the speaker, or their decision-making processes, levels of cooperativeness or their behaviour toward the speaker. These social evaluations, as they are called by Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles (2012) are activated by the speaker's own language use and related back to the prime accent variety of the region the speaker is from. Their research also found evidence that verbal cues can shape people's perceptions of one another.

The process of evaluating someone socially through their accent can be extended to which accent variety they speak, specifically whether it is a standard or a non-standard variety of English. A non-standard accent is considered to be a foreign accent often used by a minority or lower socioeconomic group. In South Africa, a standard accent refers to one used by a news anchor, also known as a BBC accent. Non-standard varieties would mostly refer to ethnic varieties of SAE that are highly pidginised or foreign accented English (Portuguese SAE, Chinese SAE etc). Accents have been shown through research to affect listeners' perceptions of speakers along three dimensions; status (evaluations about speakers intelligence, competence, ambition, education and social class), solidarity (evaluations about speakers attractiveness, benevolence and trustworthiness) and dynamism (evaluations about liveliness of a speaker)(Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles, 2012, p.121). Standard accents have been shown to have a positive effect on listeners' evaluations of the speaker's education, social status, personality and similarity with the listener. Non-standard language varieties are assessed less favourably on competence and dynamism. The broader the perceived non-standard variety the more negative the social evaluations, (p.122). The one redeeming aspect of non-standard language varieties are the solidarity traits which they are recognised for, such as social attractiveness and benevolence.

With the exponential growth of English in the world there are more non-native speakers than ever before. This trend has seen many more varieties of English being created in recent decades. Native speakers of English are even being outnumbered by non-native speakers of English (Kaur, 2014, p.215), when measured on a global scale. However, stereotypes about the varieties of English persist. Where there are stereotypes for the different varieties of South African English and its ethnolects, there are a multitude of stereotypes based on various nationalities around the world including whether the speaker

is native (NS) or non-native (NNS). Kaur (2014) conducted research into the perceptions towards native speakers and non-native speakers in English language teaching, also referred to as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In this particular study, the trainee teachers judgements on the English language learners were assessed to detect what biases were prevalent towards the learners' various accents. The study found that the native English accents were preferred and were considered to be of a better quality. Pejorative words were used to describe Asian English accents (Kaur, 2014, p.221) including robot-like, flat and confusing. A pattern of favouritism towards native English speakers was detected. In addition to this, Spanish, German, Brazilian and Swedish English accents were all received more positively than the Asian English accents. It was also deduced through the study that attitudes towards native English accents were more favourable, and ranked as better accents than the non-native English accents. The British English accent and the American English accent are regarded as standard and of a higher standing than the other accents. According to Kaur (2014), it is possible that the bias originates from the native English norm being promoted in learning materials such as textbooks.

3.5. Tanzania and English, a demonstrative African case study

The need for attitudinal studies involving language is demonstrated by the conflicts that certain language attitudes can cause. Tanzania is a case in point where attitudes towards English and the indigenous languages spoken there, of which there are 125, varied from era to era. While the situation should not be generalised for every African country, including South Africa, it highlights the value of this kind of research in helping to mitigate language related conflict. The Tanzanian case study also bears testament to the deep-seated emotions evoked by language preferences, and the importance of resolving language issues.

After decades of animosity about the role of English versus the role of Kiswahili in education, government and economics, and phases where one language was pitted against the other, a study conducted by Mohr (2018) revealed that positive attitudes towards English were present currently among the Tanzanian people, and it "is no longer perceived as a language of the elites only," (p.105). A triglossic language situation exists there now. This is a situation in which three dialects or languages are used by a single language community. As a result, English, an exoglossic language (a non-indigenous language that serves as an official language) was used in government administration, diplomacy, education and international commerce (Mohr, 2018, p.105). Kiswahili, is used for administration and functions as the national language, while other indigenous languages serve as communication mechanisms between different ethnic groups. Kiswahili is an endoglossic language, namely, an indigenous language that serves as the official language.

However, after liberation from colonialism in 1967 there was a period of time, known as the *ujamaa era* where negative attitudes were held towards English as it was associated with neo-colonialism, capitalism and elitism (Mohr, 2018, p.107), and Kiswahili was regarded as the 'language of emancipation'. Attitudes towards English began to improve again in the 1990s, for socio-economic reasons. The new, more positive attitude has been observed in the middle generation with a knock-on effect in even younger speakers, according to Mohr (2018). The Mohr study demonstrates the need to reassess language use and attitudes as well as policy changes in multilingual African countries. There is a correlation between evaluating language attitudes in African countries, implementing language planning and the role of education as an instrument of social development.

4. Literature Review

4.1. Language attitude studies

The central premise of this study is to gauge the attitudes of South Africans, between the ages of 17 and 65, towards the dominant language in the country, SAE. The topic of research has been informed by previous research where appeals were made for further language attitude studies in South Africa. These include Kamwangamalu (2003), Smit (1996 and 2000) and Alvarez-Mosquera & Marín-Gutiérrez (2018). According to Smit (1996) it is crucial to address the language issue, particularly language inequality in South Africa, during a period in its history where drastic political changes are occurring. Language policy and planning requires vital redressing to achieve consensus among the citizens. The aim of this study is to assess peoples attitudes about SAE, 26 years into democracy. To this effect, it is important to assess language attitudes as these and other forms of sociolinguistic survey are vital for language planning (Smit, 1996, p.5). Because attitudes are complex cognitive entities they cannot be observed in isolation, they are specific to every individual. Attitudes, together with learning situations, also play an important role in language learning as it reflects the learner's motivation towards acquiring a particular language. Qualitative research can offer useful tools to identify the nuances related to attitudes, and has, therefore, been employed in this research as well.

SAE is being analysed in this study to determine what attitudes the participants of the research may have in relation to status aspects of the language variety which include dialect variation and accent. These and related factors play a role in various areas of everyday life including school, work and other institutional settings. By looking at the effects it has on people's attitudes the researcher can gain insight into the deeper levels of how participants view a specific language. Research by Garret (2010), Meyerhoff (2006), Giles & Rakíc

(2014), and Ladegaard (1998) have been pivotal in informing the direction of the current study on language attitudes and the significant role of accent and social class in many of these social evaluations. Their research identified accents as one of the more embedded factors of attitudes towards language. The close study of accents has revealed that they prove to be very socially significant, even to this day. According to Giles and Rakíc (2014) accents have received the most empirical attention in language attitude studies, from a selection of vocal cues that include pitch or lexical diversity. Language sound connections during the native language learning process, of which accent is a part, continues to play a key role in communications between people.

In the 1990s a language shift began to take shape in South Africa where speakers of the indigenous African languages, as well as persons from lower social classes began acquiring English (Kamwangamalu, 2003, p.225). Similar trends were witnessed in other African countries such as Botswana. Kamwangamalu (2003) points out that there is a faction that believes that English will usurp the indigenous languages unless systems and policies are put in place to raise the status of these languages to be on par with English and Afrikaans. This is another important reason cited in the literature for the need to conduct language attitude studies. To help shape the perspective of this study in relation to socio-political factors relevant to South Africa, the research by De Klerk (1996), Smit (1996), Kamwangamalu (2003), Bekker (2004), Meshtrie (1995) and Ridge, Makoni & Stanley (2001) provide useful insights. The research shows that there will possibly be two varieties of English used in South Africa (Smit, 1996, p.95); an international standard version possibly for higher education, and another internal variety characterised by the sound and lexicon of the indigenous languages of the country. Educators and other scholars have adopted this pragmatic approach, for the most part, as a way of resolving the problems of teaching English. It serves as a useful approach in resolving ideological conflicts as well, resulting from having to choose English, as a subject. Language attitude studies can be used to discover the indirect perceptions that people hold about various aspects of language such as learning, accent status and its role in business acumen, as is the endeavour of the present study. Ladegaard (1998), for example set out to prove that Danish language users do make social class judgements about various dialects while it is a globally held belief that the society does not tolerate social differentiations. The study revealed that Danish people did in fact hold stereotypical ideas about certain accents. Ladegaard (1998, p.184) explains that language attitude studies helps the researcher gain "access to people's private, uncensored attitudes, and therefore assessing national stereotypes indirectly through language use appears to be a useful approach."

4.2. Phonological properties of BATH, KIT *and* GOOSE *vowels*

Ten participants recorded themselves on WhatsApp saying ten words each related to the BATH, KIT and GOOSE vowels. The articulation properties for each vowel was analysed according to ethnicity and its resonance in the vowel space. The BATH and GOOSE vowels were specifically analysed for its articulation in the open, mid or closed vowel spaces and whether the vowel is fronted or rounded. The KIT vowel was analysed according to its articulation in the low, mid or closed vowel space and whether the pronounced vowel is fronted or split. The findings were recorded into separate tables for each vowel. The three vowels under analysis have been seen in the past as indicators of social class or even English language proficiency. They have been assessed against White South African English (WSAE) varieties which are considered historically to be the heritage version of SAE, upon which other dialects are based. These features have been analysed in this study to establish whether observed trends in upcoming middle class groups, including fronting, rounding or American pronunciation can be detected in the speech of the participants. Studies conducted by Bekker (2014), Carr (2013), Meshtrie (2010), Meshtrie, Chevalier & Dunne (2013, 2015) and Van Rooy & Kruger (2015) have guided the conversation on vowel spaces, the evolution of these SAE phonological units across time and the foundational principles of why they are uniquely South African. Meshtrie, Chevalier & Dunne (2015), for example, established that region and ethnicity could not conclusively account for BATH variation, among other factors researched, after completing an extensive study on the BATH vowel across five major South African cities. This was useful to the current study in assessing which properties of language were representative of the sample population.

The current research project assesses the three main vowels of SAE to find trends of fronting in the GOOSE vowel space among younger speakers of SAE, and to detect similarities in pronunciation across ethnicities. The KIT vowel serves as a prime example of a phonological feature specific to South Africa, because it contains a phonemic split which is not present in any other variety of English. This results in a situation where minimal pairs such as *kit* and *pin* do not rhyme (Bekker, 2014, p.113). The split has only been researched in relation to WSAE but has been detected in Coloured SAE (CSAE) through the brief qualitative analysis of the present study. This feature is indicative of the process of transference where upcoming middle class adopts the speaking and pronunciation norms of the upper class. A similar trend has been detected by Meshtrie (2010) in Black middle class speakers, with the fronting of the GOOSE vowel. These pronunciation features have been defined and evaluated in relation to existing literature, and includes the findings of the research experiment of the present study involving ten participants.

4.3. Coding interviews

Coding the transcripts of interviews requires an individual approach for each research objective. The research conducted in this study is qualitative, and involves the analysis of ten interviews of South African people from different ethnic backgrounds and age demographics. Open-coding as proposed under Grounded Theory (GT) was conducted on the transcripts of the participants interviewed. The methods proposed by Urquhart (2013), Blair (2015), Glaser (2016) and Huberman & Matthew (2002) allowed me to create my own inductive codes, and invivo codes, and carry out thematic and selective coding. The thematic coding was based on the initial in vivo codes which were developed into more prominent themes gleaned from the data. The final codes are *positive attitude, negative attitude, perceptiveness, awareness, overcompensation* and *political correctness.* The transcripts of the participants interviews were analysed using these six attitudinal codes. Each code was identified in the text with a different colour. The instances where each code occurred was tallied. Depending on the number of instances recorded for each code it was determined which attitudes were most heartfelt by the participants in general.

Research concepts by Rivas (2012), Bryant (2007), Holton (2007) and Khandkar (2009) also guided the results and coding process. According to Rivas (2012, p.376) category development is very important to the coding process. Dominant categories should be used as a theme during the thematic coding process. This results in categories that are more literal. The selective coding conducted in this research involved the categorisation of the interview transcripts according to specific thought patterns and attitudes held by the participants. This was mainly focused on their perceptions about their native SAE variety, their pronunciation of the BATH, KIT and GOOSE vowels of SAE and their international awareness of English, as a language of trade and educational instruction. The participants gave their consent to use their details and information and were briefed about the purpose of the data. Urquhart (2015, p.70) stresses the importance of protecting the data of research participants due to the fact that qualitative research can uncover sensitive information. This is achieved by informing participants properly about the purpose of the research and receiving their consent.

5. Methodology

5.1. Computer-mediated communications

Participants were selected and approached via the social media platform, Facebook. The criteria used in selecting the participants was *native language*, *age* and *ethnicity*. The participants were selected based on SAE being their first language (L1) or the dominant language used on Facebook. They were screened within the 17 to 65 year range with at least two participants selected for every decade in that timeframe. The participants were all approached via Facebook Messenger initially, and informed about the research being conducted and the interview method to be employed. All the participants reside in the Western Cape province of South Africa, two of whom were born in other provinces (YG3 in Gauteng, YG5, Eastern Cape). The location variable has not been included in the research analysis and does not affect the findings. Once an appointment date and time was established the participants could decide on whether to do the interview on WhatsApp, Skype or FaceTime. Three interviews were conducted on Skype and eight were carried out with WhatsApp. Roughly an hour was allocated for each interview. Thereafter the participants were briefed about the phonological component of the study and instructed to record three lists of ten words each, related to the BATH, GOOSE and KIT vowels, at their own convenience. Each person submitted a full recording of their articulation and pronunciation of these vowels via WhatsApp. The codes YG (young generation) and OG (older generation) have been used to categorise the participants in the findings of the current research. There are seven YG codes which represents the participants, aged between 17 and 43 and there are three OG codes to represent the participants aged between 53 and 65. These codes have been used to protect the privacy and identity of the participant group.

Table 3. The participants group

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Code
17	Female	Coloured	YG1
26	Male	Coloured	YG2
37	Female	Indian	YG3
37	Male	Coloured	YG4
38	Male	Black	YG5
41	Female	Coloured	YG6
43	Male	Muslim	YG7
53	Male	White	OG1
57	Male	Coloured	OG2
65	Male	Coloured	OG3

5.2. Relevant research variables

The participants were selected primarily based on their proficiency of *SAE*, their *age* and *ethnicity* to ensure that a sample group could be assembled that is representative of the South African population, and appropriate for the purpose of the study, in at least one or two of the main variables. The age variable was successfully sampled, with participants representing every decade within a timeframe of 50 years. Although all the participants reside in the Western Cape, the *location* variable does not feature significantly in the objective of the study and its research questions, and is therefore only moderately useful to the findings. The *age* variable is most representative of the objective of the research which aims to compare generational attitudes about SAE. The *ethnicity* variable has also been incorporated successfully, with the five dominant groups represented. It is also vital to the research objective which strives to harness the language attitudes of different ethnic groups and compare these, and to test the hypothesis of a fronting trend among upcoming middle class SAE speakers (Meshtrie, 2010), and a trend toward American pronunciation (Lass, 2002, p.107) and spelling.

5.3. The interview process

The interviews and vowel articulation recordings were conducted over the course of approximately one month. Each candidate was interviewed for approximately an hour, in a virtual forum using Skype and WhatsApp. Each person answered ten questions, gleaned from a predetermined, semi-structured *Interview Protocol* (see Appendix A). The interviews were transcribed to include their filled pauses and repetitions. The repetitions were later removed from the transcriptions. The interviews were transcribed and analysed according to a coded structure to assess their *attitudes* about SAE (the thematic codes are presented in Appendix B).

   The vowel articulation exercise was sent to each participant via WhatsApp, succeeding their interviews. They were instructed to record themselves, on their mobile devices, articulating three lists of 10 words (30 words in total) in the BATH, KIT and GOOSE vowel spaces. These recordings were forwarded back via WhatsApp. The vowel articulation findings were documented as follows: the BATH and GOOSE vowels are analysed in the open, mid, back vowel spaces and for the presence of fronting or rounding. The KIT vowel is analysed in the low, mid and high vowel spaces and for the presence of the KIT-split (see Appendix C). The GOOSE vowel was chosen to test an hypothesis purported in recent research about the fronting of the vowel among young non-White middle-class speakers of SAE, (Meshtrie, 2010). The BATH vowel was selected to assess the strength of an hypothesis by Lass (2002) that speakers of SAE are gradually adopting American phonetic

norms due to the influence of television programmes and social media. The KIT vowel was evaluated to see whether it is pronounced the same or differently by various ethnicities.

5.4. Open coding

The participants responses were coded according to six thematic codes, i.e. *positive attitude, negative attitude, perceptiveness, awareness, overcompensation* and *political correctness.* These codes were gleaned from initial in vivo codes which analysed their positivity or negativity about SAE; their awareness about language hierarchy and status; their core perception of SAE; their attitude about the importance of South African English internationally; and their overall awareness of the status of English as a world language.

The method of open coding was used, as prescribed under Grounded Theory (GT), to identify the language attitudes in the data. GT states that researchers should conduct their own coding and create as many categories as needed for the incidents observed (Blair, 2015, p.275). Concisely defined, GT looks at the interconnectedness between meaning in the perception of subject, and deals with the discovery of patterns in data as well as the generation of theories from the data (Glaser, 2016, p.109). Invivo codes were used to construct concepts specific to this research project (Khandkar, 2009), including inter-generational variation in perception and pronunciation and the view of English as a dominant language. The codes were later recategorised according to themes more reminiscent of the attitudes that the participants actually hold. Two of the themes are based on existing academic coding, for example, *positive attitudes* and *negative attitudes.* The *perceptiveness* and *awareness* codes gauge the participants knowledge of SAE in relation to international varieties of English. The *overcompensation* and *political correctness* codes are related to political overtones specific to South Africa in relation to English. The coding was carried out manually, i.e. no computer software was used to code the transcripts. The codes were mainly linked to words and sentences that were indicative of a particular attitude towards SAE and awareness about the role of SAE in a global context.

Language learning and education, language status, and economic value were the main categories induced by a selective coding process, which became more relevant during the analysis phase of the data. Each interpretation found in the data has been compared to previous findings by means of constant comparison (Urquhart, 2013, p.70), however, the list of codes have been applied conservatively to allow the relevant concepts to emerge. Glaser (2016) advises researchers not to force too many concepts onto the data through preconceived codes as they can end up describing what is not relevant. In the final stage of coding six predetermined criteria were set out in relation to the research questions, and the epistemological framework of the research. The transcripts were evaluated according to

these criteria. Some criteria were binary while others were more descriptive, providing summaries and categories for each participant's opinion. The vowel articulations (BATH, KIT, GOOSE) were evaluated according to the place of articulation in the vowel space and for detection of anomalies such as American English pronunciation of the BATH vowel.

The overall aim of the experiment was to identify the *attitudes* of young and old South Africans towards SAE. Previous research pointed out the value of qualitative research into language attitudes as vital in assessing the language situation in South Africa as a means of allaying rifts that could occur between different language communities (Smit, 1996, De Klerk, 1996, Wright, 1993, Kamwangamalu, 2003). The potential for conflict between different language groups exists in South Africa because English is dominant in all economic and status related areas of the society while it is a native language to less than ten percent of the population (Smit, 1996, Smit 2000), which is sub-divided into a further 10 languages.

6. Results

6.1. *Participant responses*

Despite there being a complicated partnership between many South Africans and the English language, it is clear from the research that the language is accepted as a vital part of learning, governance, business and international relations. In order to gauge the attitudes of the participants on these matters they were asked a series of questions in relation to these topics. In this section, the participants responses are described according to the research questions they pertain to. The specific questions from the semi-structured *Interview Protocol* that relate to each research question are presented with the participant responses.

First, the participants were asked how they thought SAE was perceived by heritage speakers of English and how they believe SAE is received internationally. These questions were designed to evoke emotional responses from the participants about their pride in commanding the English language, their perceptiveness about the role that English has in international business relations, and to measure their level of awareness about the status that certain varieties of English garner. The questions and subsequent responses pertain to the research question: "How do the participants view SAE in the context of education, governance and business?" The interview questions that were used to gather participant attitudes about SAE in comparison to heritage varieties of English are displayed in (2), in the order they were asked to each person:

(2)

     Q.1. How do you think South African English is perceived

         internationally, in comparison with British, American or

         Australian Englishes?

     Q.2. How would you like SAE to be perceived internationally?

     Q.3. Do you think all forms of SAE can be understood by foreigners?

     Q.9. How would you describe SAE to someone who has never

         been to the country?

Six participants regarded SAE has being on par with World English varieties such as British, Australian or American Englishes while four participants were of the opinion that SAE is perceived as being lesser in prestige, or having a pronunciation variation that sets it apart from other Englishes. One participant, YG4, a 37-year-old Coloured male reacted strongly to the question about SAE in comparison with heritage Englishes, indicating that the SAE language variety was not looked down upon by British English speakers. All the participants were unanimous in their responses that SAE was a valuable tool in education and business. Nine of the participants were unanimous that SAE was a vital language in leadership roles, however YG4 felt it would be better if the indigenous South African languages were used in the broadcasting of political addresses with subtitles in English.

The next important set of attitudes to evaluate within the scope of this study is the role of *accents, dialects (or ethnolects)* in the South African society. The data retrieved from this section of the research is the crux of the experiment because the society has been structured around social class differences which permeates to all other dimensions of everyday life. In the domain of language these attitudes should reveal the deeper level of people's thinking. Previous language attitude research identified *accents* as a key factor that informs people's attitudes about language. One telling feature of this research project was that the majority of the participants provided mostly *politically correct* responses about accent and dialect. Seven participants directly acknowledges that there are social class biases around various accents and dialects of SAE but only two participants, i.e. YG6, a 41-year-old Coloured female, and YG2, a 26-year-old Coloured male, admitted that they prefer a particular accent (standard English or Cultivated SAE), and they adopt these higher status accents in certain areas of life, particularly a professional setting. The other participants claimed to be neutral in their accents and accepting of all forms of *accents* and *dialects*, regardless of the setting. It was repeated often by various participants that the most important thing (use of language) was that people can express themselves, and that the way they expressed themselves was not important or relevant. Research shows, however, that people hold attitudes at every level of language use including "spelling and punctuation,

words, grammar, accent and pronunciation, dialects and languages," (Garret, 2010, p.2). Even the speed at which people talk can evoke emotions, which has been demonstrated in this research project as well.

The interview questions that pertain to accent (see example 3) were designed to answer the research question: "To what extent do the participants see dialectal varieties of SAE, related to social class and ethnicity, as a hindrance in the broader functioning of society?" Another objective of this line of questioning was to answer the research question, "What kinds of attitudes do young and old South Africans have about English, 26 years into democracy?"

(3)

       Q.4. Are there certain types of South African English that
           you think of as lower than others and why?

       Q.5. Are there certain types of South African English that
           you think is higher than others?

       Q.6. Do you think you sound more British or American,
           according to the way you pronounce your words?

       Q.8. Should one speak differently at home than at school,
           or at the office?

These particular questions were also used to evaluate whether there were differences in perceptions between the older and younger participants, as one of the objectives of the research was to explore the generational changes and differences of SAE and its speakers. There were in fact differences in attitudes between people of different generations interviewed. The older speakers had a heightened awareness of social class differences within the domain of English and its varieties, but also between English and other languages, including Afrikaans and the Black indigenous languages (mainly Xhosa spoken in the Western Cape). OG3, a 65-year-old Coloured male; OG2, a 57-year-old Coloured male, and OG1, a 53-year-old White male spoke openly about the social class divides among English speaking South Africans and described how these factors played itself out in everyday situations. Younger participants such as 17-year-old YG1 and 26-year-old YG2 did not speak about class biases in SAE but about American pronunciation being seen as hip and modern.

The responses were unanimous regarding the use of street language in everyday speech of South Africans. This topic is an offshoot of the discussion around dialects of SAE. Depending on the manner in which the language is used it can be seen as a dialect or as street language. Since the inception of democracy, the use of street language has been

revitalised in the everyday speech of many young South Africans. Each participant mentioned this aspect of SAE at least once, a few participants spoke about it in detail. YG4 spoke about the disparity surrounding the use of Afrikaans in English, and how more young people were using this form of English in music and art. He waxed lyrical about the energy, atmosphere and influence of street language on the Capetonian lifestyle. YG7, a 43-year-old Muslim male elaborated on the popularity of the use of indigenous African words used in conjunction with English, among Black people who use public transport or work in the sector. These responses show an awareness of the pidgin and even creole like qualities present in many varieties of SAE. Two participants claimed that South Africans speak fast in comparison with other varieties of English and round out their words. A few of the words used by the participants to describe SAE include: *creative, artistic, clear, friendly, warm, old-school* and *cute.* These descriptive words are similar to what was detected in other language attitude studies such as (Garret, 2010, Giles & Rakíc, 2014, Clarke & Erskine, 2010).

Participants were not asked directly about their feelings towards specific ethnolects of SAE as not to evoke yes/no responses. Instead they were asked broad open-ended questions that have the potential to reveal their attitudes about ethnolects, dialects or street language. None of the participants were keen on making any distinctions between one ethnolect and the other. If they passed any criticism on a dialect it was mainly about their own, or they would be brief and describe an external bias towards a certain dialect including *Afrikaans English* and *Black SAE.* Several participants spoke enthusiastically about the use of indigenous words being introduced into SAE, and the process of borrowing such words into the language. At least three participants stated that the accents of SAE varied from province-to-province and town-to-town or was influenced by whether the speaker spoke English as a first language (L1) or second language (L2).

The overarching premise for conducting this qualitative research project into language attitudes towards contemporary SAE is to do a small scale evaluation of how South Africans feel about English at present, especially in relation to the indigenous African languages. These attitudes have the potential to reveal information that can assist in language learning, policy planning and education. According to the researcher Smit (1996, p.38), an important reason to carry out language attitude research is to access the role they play in language learning. Attitudes towards a language and factors such as the learning situation or a person's motivation are important factors in learning that language. In the South African context, education, and particularly language learning, has been identified as an important area to be stimulated. Four participants interviewed in this study (YG5, YG6, OG2, OG3) have children and their perspectives about the role of English in education are relevant to the current investigation. This part of the current research pertains to the

research question, "How do they view English in comparison with indigenous languages?" The interview questions that relate to this topic are shown in (4):

(4)

       Q.7. Can South African English be marketed well through

             social media?

       Q.10. Can English, as the medium of instruction and language

             used in business benefit the country more than the use

             of the other 10 official languages?

These questions were posed to allow the participants to discuss English in a broader context, both internationally and outside of a strictly language context. The questions do not directly steer the conversation towards language learning but are intended to elicit responses related to it. By gauging people's responses to these questions much can be uncovered about the areas in the education system that need to be addressed or changed. Question 10 in particular is positioned last so that the participants can process the prior questions, and respond with the full context of the interview. The attitudes of the participants also reveal how important bilingual and multilingual teaching is to the South African education system, as highlighted by Smit (1996), Kamwangumalu (2003), Ridge, Sinfree & Stanley (2001) and Mohr (2018). Nine of the participants were in favour of English being the medium of instruction, and the language of business. However, YG4 did not see the importance of maintaining English, or more specifically SAE, for these purposes. OG1 felt the need for the indigenous languages to be used more frequently for instruction. YG5, a 38-year-old Black male, was not forthcoming about his opinion about SAE in relation to the indigenous African languages and its role in education. He responded briefly about the relevance of English in conducting international business. These responses reveal non-Black South Africans are in favour of learning indigenous languages and having it introduced more saliently into the education system. It also reveals that a dialogue needs to be opened with Black South Africans about language matters, and that continued research is needed in the area of language attitudes.

6.2.1. Language attitude codes

An initial process of open-coding was conducted on the ten transcripts. These ultimately resulted in the formation of six attitude codes. These codes collectively summarise the feelings, views and intuitions of the participants about SAE. Initially there were only three codes: *positive, negative* and *international awareness*. These were further categorised into six

themes (thematic coding): *positive attitude, negative attitude, perceptiveness, awareness, overcompensation* and *political correctness*. These codes were much more specific and assigned to smaller phrases and shorter sentences that fit the exact description of the participants' attitudes. Succinct descriptions of the codes are given in (5) to explain how the transcripts were analysed:

(5)

    - *positive attitude:* Hopefulness about the development and role of SAE.
      Can also be a complimentary description of SAE.
    - *negative attitude:* Assigns no value to SAE as an individual language variety.
    - *perceptiveness:* Gives details about linguistic features. Introduces a language trend,
      trait or language movement without being prompted.
    - *awareness:* Shows an understanding of stereotypes about SAE or changes to it.
    - *overcompensation:* Talks about indigenisation of SAE in a strictly positive way.
    - *political correctness:* Avoids talking about class bias towards ethnolects and dialects
      of SAE, or discusses the current treatment of SAE only in a positive manner.

There were 30 instances of *positive attitude* detected, 9 instances of *negative attitude,* 38 of *perceptiveness,* 33 instances of *awareness* detected, 6 of *overcompensation,* and 12 of *political correctness.* A vital observation of the interviews is that the interviewees would not directly affirm any adherence to class bias of higher or lower dialects of SAE when prompted but did, however*,* speak about it freely in non-related parts of the interview. The strongest codes, in order of strength, were *perceptiveness*, *political correctness* and *awareness.* The *perceptiveness* of the participants demonstrates a depth about the English language associated with native speaker characteristics and pride in their language variety (SAE), because they understand its orientation in different contexts whether it be internationally, in business, media or education.

    The *political correctness* code is a crucial result for this study because it reveals a lot about the mindset of South Africans. All the participants were sensitive towards the current leadership of the country and respectful in their response about it. Their responses often demonstrated the idea of inclusiveness, in language, governance and business. At the same time, the strength of the *political correctness* code reveals a reservedness to speak freely about the standards of learning specifically language learning and its impact on other areas of governance. Together the strength of these codes (*perceptiveness, awareness and political correctness*) indicates that research is necessary to identify areas in education that need addressing. Participants were inclined to provide a politically correct response when directly prompted about the existence of a hierarchy in SAE language use, or when they were asked

about prejudices towards certain accent. In line with the notion of political correctness is a prevailing attitude of *overcompensation* towards people with a low proficiency of the English language. This attitude is also political in nature as fluent, native speakers of English are exhibiting guilt towards the high status garnered by the language in education and business. They are indicating, through their attitudes, that the status of SAE has given them a presumed unfair advantage over other marginalised South Africans. During various interviews there was a considerable amount of discussion about being non-judgmental of persons with a lower proficiency in English, along with there being a need to help, assist or rectify inequalities, either by making more allowances for indigenous languages or by being accepting of borrowings into SAE from the indigenous languages. There is a correlation between *overcompensation* and *political correctness*. The difference in context, however, is in saying the perceived correct thing and speaking in manner indicative of correcting wrong behaviours of the past.

The majority of participants exhibited a *positive attitude* about the future of SAE. They did not elaborate on any negative aspects of the language variety, and in places where negative contexts were raised, the person would explain it in the terms of language use, learning or planning regulations of the country's apartheid past. There was a high level of *perceptiveness* demonstrated by the participants. A pertinent observation in this regard is that the younger interviewees (ages 17 and 26) spoke about there being inter-generational differences in the way they communicate in English versus the way their parents do. Both younger candidates, YG1 and YG2 show a preference for American norms in spoken language and text communications, particularly via social media.

The South Africans who participated in this research project showed a keen *awareness* on how SAE is received by foreigners. There was only one participant, YG1 (17) who indicated that SAE is seen internationally as a lower variety of English. She attributed this to the stereotypes surrounding Africa, of being a continent marred by poverty and inequality. The majority of the participants painted a hopeful image of SAE, referring often to the growing number of South African, English language teachers who provide the service abroad. The thinking behind these comments, according to the participants, is that a greater demand for English language teachers from South Africa demonstrates a healthy development of the language variety. The assumption being made by these participants is that SAE is rising in status, and is good enough to impart in other parts of the world as is the case with other high status varieties of English, including Canadian or British English, for example.

6.2.2. Stigma around accents

While the research shows that *accent* is the defining characteristic influencing and informing people's attitudes about language (Garret, 2010), the South African, English speakers interviewed for this research project avoided the topic, and would not acknowledge the hierarchy aspects of SAE when questioned about it. Seven participants did provide information about accent variants but not when prompted to do so. Participants were inclined to explain instances of inequality in education rather than discuss status differences. Most participants were comfortable to talk about their own ethnolect (a variety of SAE that originates in a specific ethnic group)(Van Rooy & Kruger, 2015, p.2).

It is widely understood that the South African English accent is different from province-to-province. YG4 singled the *Coloured accent* as being perceived as being of a lower calibre. OG1 claimed that there were many similarities between SAE and Australian English, specifically that there was a twang present in the speech of those language users. Twang is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, 2011), as a distinctive nasal pronunciation characteristic of the speech of an individual or region. An editor by trade, he confirmed that there are class biases of SAE, and that there is a growing trend of pronouncing words in an American way or spelling words in an American way.

During the research process, YG6 pointed out that *Afrikaans English* is regarded as one of the less desirable accents of Cape Town, and contextualised it as being a result of the speakers being English second language learners (L2). In general the participants acknowledged that there was a myriad of English accents in South Africa which they unanimously attributed to the vast variety of ethnicities and cultures in the country. The participants all indicated that they preferred the diversity of sound and pronunciation. They were reluctant to describe aspects of SAE *accents* as they would be seen in relation to status or hierarchy. YG5 stated categorically that "English is English. There is no upper or lower standard". This does not correspond to the research that has been done about native and non-native languages (Van Rooy & Kruger, 2015, Giles and Rakíc, 2014, Mai & Hoffman, 2014, Kaur, 2014). YG7 raised an interesting aspect about South Africa; that they are used to different accents. He used an example from government to illustrate the point. South African national ministers who appear on television regularly, speak SAE with many different accents or pronounce words in a way that would not be regarded as proficient. He went on to say that a higher English accent is one in which the words are pronounced more accurately allowing it to be more widely understood, thus creating less confusion among speakers and listeners. In his own home he uses words, in conjunction with English, that are often related to the Muslim culture, e.g. salaah (meaning to pray) while he regards formal English more respectful for an office or school environment. What he is possibly perceiving in the context of SAE is an indigenisation process being

promoted on a national platform. Wright (1993) and De Klerk (1996) cautioned against an aggressive acceptance of the indigenisation process as it would damage the standing of SAE in business and international relations. The indigenisation of SAE, is exactly the kind of issue that should be addressed through language learning and language policy structures and evaluated according to what will benefit the country and what will not.

6.3. Attitudes about SAE and indigenous languages

The issue of the dominance of English in South Africa, in comparison with other indigenous languages, has been contentious for many years. English is perceived as the language of power, used in commerce, education, governance and even tourism. When asked for their opinions about the role of English in South Africa today, the participants in this research project mainly contextualised the reasons why English had such a high status in the country. They all agreed that English should remain in this position for the sake of commerce, education and international relations. YG4 was the only participant who felt that it would be better for South Africa if the indigenous languages were used in parliamentary speeches and in economics. His reasoning was that it would bring about harmony in the country and that it was time that English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans made a concerted effort to learn the indigenous languages.

The remaining nine participants all agreed that English still had a vital role to play in the country. They cited various reasons for its importance. OG1 said: "The pragmatic answer, and not politically correct one is, we live in a world where English is dominant and that has an effect on where you can speak in English, that is why I think its important for people to speak in the vernacular." The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2011) defines vernacular as the language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people of a country or region. "Everything is English, it's spoken internationally. We live in a globalised world and you have to find a way to communicate and probably will be in English, the more it is the more it will be," says OG1. The majority of the participants feel that English is important to the security and stability of South Africa. The overall perception is that English places South Africa in a good position and connects South Africans globally to the rest of the world. Through his work, YG2 has observed that English is a very useful tool in attracting foreign business. According to him, it is seen as a benefit to the country that English is spoken in the workforce due to the ease of communication it brings in foreign interactions, and in the execution of business ventures. YG3 believes that changing the dominant language in South Africa will set the country back economically. YG1 feels that having a common language to speak in South Africa i.e. English (SAE) helps mitigate misunderstandings between different factions of the population. YG5 sums it up neatly when he says: "In

theory and as an ideal, one would want to promote the use of Mother tongue languages for business. This helps people to command and be in control of the decision-making process. However, in a highly globalised world, I find it impractical for people to use isiXhosa for instance if you are doing business in Sandton's JSE, Wall Street, London Stock Exchange or Shanghai Stock Exchange."

6.4. Attitudes about contemporary SAE

Based on in-depth interviews with ten research participants, it is clear that there is still a positive perception in the country about English (SAE), and its applications. The participants consider English to be a language that they can command well. They have not indicated in any way that they believe the position of English could change in South Africa. According to them, SAE should maintain its prominence, for the foreseeable future. The research participants all indicated that the English language played a pertinent role in guiding South Africa's trade, economic and communicatory affairs in a globalised world, and should continue to do so. They demonstrated a strong international awareness about English, which can be contributed to their positive attitudes about SAE. Seven out of 10 participants displayed *positive attitudes* about the importance of English. Four of these seven participants spoke in-depth about the status of English in the country. A noteworthy observation in the attitudes of the participants is their unwillingness or lack of interest in assigning social class attributes to different accents and dialects of SAE. This appears to be an idiosyncratic attitude which stems directly from the country's political history. This is corroborated by Van Rooy & Kruger's research, that shows that a more descriptive and sociolinguistic approach to language is preferred at present, while in the 20th century it was more commonplace to categorise accents (2015, p.16). The research participants of the current study, showed a willingness to mix SAE with other dialects, and expressed an openness about the indigenisation of English. They steered away from questions that forced them to define a higher or lower status of English.

The features of SAE that set it apart from British English or American English, among others, are regarded in a positive light by the participants, and have been described as *creative, cultural, local flavour*. The pervading attitude among the participants is that English is becoming more influential in South Africa, partly because more foreigners are learning English in South Africa, according to the views of YG7, YG5, YG2 and YG3. SAE, and its dialects, is also becoming more widely known in the rest of the world which has helped to boost its global acceptance (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018, p.693).

6.5. Pronunciation tests involving BATH, KIT *and* GOOSE

South African English is classified into three primary accents; *Cultivated SAE, General SAE* and *Broad SAE*, which are based on the heritage version of White SAE (Bekker, 2014). SAE is further segmented according to its ethnic variants which mainly include Black, Coloured and Indian Englishes (Meshtrie, 2010). The biggest second language speaking community mostly articulates as *Afrikaans English*. This research project set out to test whether the ethnic classifications were still wholly applicable in the new South Africa by testing the significant vowel sounds of the language; the BATH [aː], KIT [I] and GOOSE [uː] vowels. Previous research (Meshtrie, 2010, p.27) indicated that more research was necessary in the area of pronunciation of these vowels as there are trends in articulation underway among the upcoming middle class of South Africa. Another objective of the present research was to establish whether SAE speakers were moving towards a more American pronunciation because of the impact of American television and social media on the English use in the region.

The BATH [aː], KIT [I] and GOOSE [uː] vowels were tested on six Coloured people, one Black person, one Indian person, one White person and one Muslim person. Their ages range from 17 to 65. The observation is mainly in the age variable to determine whether older speakers pronounce their vowels differently than younger speakers. The ethnic classification is only considered briefly as there are many more ethnicities in South Africa that are not accounted for in the current study. The ethnic categorisation would be to broad given the array of ethnolects present in the region, including various Asian, European and African English varieties.

Two female participants, namely, YG3 (38) and YG6 (41) displayed fronting in the GOOSE vowel space. A close-back articulation was present for all speakers except for OG1 (53) who demonstrated a more back-central place of articulation. In the BATH vowel space no fronting was detected in the younger speakers, aged 17 and 26, nor among those aged between 35 and 45 years of age. The KIT vowel space displayed the most variety of the three selected vowels. Six of the participants, five of Coloured ethnicity (YG2, YG3, YG4, OG2, OG3) and one Muslim participant (YG7), demonstrated the KIT-split (Bekker, 2014). Four of the participants (YG1, YG4, YG6, OG2) have a close-mid articulation as opposed to a close articulation. The youngest participant, YG1 (17) displayed fronting in the KIT vowel space. The [I] sound of SAE has historically undergone a phonemic split resulting in two separate sounds which can be heard when comparing words like *sing* and *limb* (Bekker, 2014, p.114). The influence of Afrikaans on SAE has resulted in an expanding of the phonetic space between /I/ and /ə/. This means that certain allophones approach cardinal vowel [i] in *kiss* and *wig,* and others are realised as low schwa, as in *pin* [pən]. Cape Town speakers of SAE "pronounce '*pin, window, winter, finish'* with a short high vowel [I] , in

stressed position," (Bekker, 2014, p.121). This attribute has been traced by researchers to Afrikaans-English bilingualism and hypercorrection attempts to emulate RP norms.

Whether SAE speakers are becoming more American in their pronunciation was not demonstrated in the pronunciation tests during the articulation of the BATH vowel. The two youngest participants (YG1, YG2) did, however, express their preference for American spelling and pronunciation norms during their interviews. Based on the research conducted here, there is a change in perception occurring among South Africans, particularly the younger generation about the English they speak. They want to sound modern, and associate this with the American sound while older speakers are more aware that their accents are based on British English. The older speakers want to move away from the class bias of SAE, and are open to the idea of more freedom in the language through the inclusion of words from other dialects.

7. Discussion

What stands out most from this experiment is the high level of *political correctness* (also coded as an attitude) shown by the participants about how SAE is perceived and even received by second language (L2) speakers of SAE. The participants were also reluctant to discuss the varying degrees of status assigned to different accents of SAE or acknowledge the stereotypes surrounding ethnolects of SAE. Perhaps this study should have taken a hard line in prompting the participants to reveal those attitudes. Prior research on the matter makes it abundantly clear that these stereotypes and prejudices towards different language varieties do exist, that they are common, and that these stereotypes are cognitive in nature, and involuntary in many instances. Yet the participants mainly welcomed such differences in accent, and they denounced class biases in the broader spectrum of SAE. The participants who were willing to broach the topic, generalised the responses and did not admit to having personal preferences. This one aspect of the study shows that future studies into language attitudes about SAE should focus on cognitive processes and their role in language use. Future attitudinal research into SAE should employ robust scientific methods that help open a dialogue about the sociolinguistic issues that these language users face.

8. Conclusion

The current research project set out to investigate the language attitudes of ten South Africans, representing the region's five main ethnicities, about their variety of English, South African English (SAE). Participants of different ages and generations were selected to identify any inter-generational variations in attitudes toward language use and perception. Their attitudes were evaluated against four research questions.

The participants all demonstrated a positive mindset about English as the medium of instruction in South Africa, and its role as the dominant language of trade. The majority of the participants acknowledged that SAE is valuable to the functioning of the country, often describing it as a benefit to the progress of the nation. While research unambiguously indicated that accents are tools of social categorisation with consequences in the real world, the participants of this study demonstrated a stubbornness in avoiding an open discussion about such differences. They were intentionally not asked directly about their attitudes towards each ethnolect or accent of SAE, as not to frame the discussion on their behalf. While they were reluctant to talk about class differences between accents many of them did, however, make claims about not having prejudice towards accents of a lower status. Many of the participants gave these responses when they were being asked a question about another aspect of SAE, and avoided the topic when prompted to talk about it. Many of the participants seemed to be of the conviction that accent variation was a positive development, and that indigenisation of SAE will not have a negative impact on the functioning of the country. The participants displayed empathy towards the selective use of indigenous languages in everyday operations and higher education.

Based on the participant responses of this study, there is no indication of an impending language shift in South Africa away from SAE as the dominant language. At least three participants spoke of a rise in demand for SAE to be taught abroad, including China and the Far East, and the growing familiarity with the SAE variety of English globally. The participants demonstrated confidence in the role of English in South Africa, as the medium of instruction and as the language of choice to conduct business, nationally and internationally.

(18 413 words)

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Discerning attitudes about South African English

I will ask you a few questions about your perceptions about South African English (SAE). [Questions are set up to be open-ended to gauge participants individual awareness of spoken English]

1. How do you think South African English is perceived internationally, in comparison with British, American or Australian Englishes?
   (Encourage interviewee to think broadly about English for the first three questions)
2. How would you like SAE to be perceived internationally?
3. Do you think all forms of SAE can be understood by foreigners? Please elaborate.
4. Are there certain types of South African English that you think of as lower than others and why?
5. Are there certain types of South African English that you think is higher than others? Elaborate.
   (Infer information about aspects of SAE unique to the language variety including the influence of Afrikaans, street language versus corporate or medium of instruction.)
6. Do you think you sound more British or American, according to the way you pronounce your words?
   (Although the question is related to the phonology of SAE it can invoke discussion about person's attitude towards language variety, depending on the participant.)
7. Can South African English be marketed well through social media? Please elaborate?
   (Infer conversation about whether foreigners can adopt the South African way of speaking through contact with it through media?)
8. Should one speak differently at home than at school, or at the office?
9. How would you describe SAE to someone who has never been to the country?
10. Can English, as the medium of instruction and language used in business benefit the country more than the use of the other 10 official languages? Why do you think that?

Recorded words and SAE pronunciation

(Self-recorded words due to distance interviewing. Pronunciation and method at speaker's discretion.)

BATH: path, art, craft, wash, staff, heart, laugh, class, yard, garden

GOOSE: juice, spruce, cook, fuse, illusion, book, school, proof, misunderstood, bamboozle

KIT: did, fin, ship, split, trip, glint, little, frizzle, imminent, mirror

APPENDIX B

Thematic codes for attitudes gleaned from transcripts

Positive attitude: *[Coded green in transcript]*

- it is very creative, very artistic, very traditional, very cultural. When they speak to us they must know they are speaking to people of African wisdom
- I love English, I read it in, I write literature in it
- we all speak a kind of clearer English
- I don't see it as a bad thing
- I've never had to experience having to read books and literature in another language other than my own
- ours is more uhm understandable
- You see with teaching mostly that there are South Africans that go and teach English in other countries. It's rated very high in other countries in the world
- I don't know if you know this but a lot of South Africans are going over to the Middle East to teach English
- very friendly, warm, friendly, nice
- we attract them
- that also attracts companies from other big countries
- I think people have respect for it
- I think it could definitely be marketed
- the same thing when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup, they learnt some South African English
- We've moved on, we've come a long way in that regard
- I think that people are more comfortable now
- South African English is on par with the rest of the world
- a lot of countries in the Far East look up to South Africa on English
- but it is up to standard
- overseas people know what we're saying
- The way we speak can be understood
- Yes I think it can, through social media, it can be marketed
- Our English is very understandable
- I will say it's good, our language, our type of English is good
- People in non-English speaking countries hear it and find it easier to understand than American and British accents
- Many foreigners study English in Cape Town English

- means we are connected globally. We can communicate globally. South Africans are placed in a good position due to English being one of our official languages as it means young people are prepared with this language to be part of a global conversation and have access to more opportunities
- With the Australians you have to ask every second
- Our English is more superior
- I think the way we speak English we can actually fit in with American, New Zealand and British

Negative attitude: *[Coded in red in the transcript]*
- I keep in mind English came here by a bunch of *** thieves
- Every single problem we are dealing with, every problem we are dealing with, is from the West
- What English does, and has always done, is it steals from everywhere, adopts and bastardises many words. English can also be complicated by academia
- English can be complicated by academia
- In other words you are a beggar for business
- not so good as the rest of the English speaking countries
- globally South Africa is seen as a country with a lower quality of English

Perceptiveness: *[Coded in orange in the transcript]*
- The SA English in London was not looked down upon
- in our own country
- seen as of a more lower class calibre
- That's why all this is changing because social media is playing a very huge role
- neighbourly-like
- sometimes I heard its hoity-toity English
- People want to talk American
- I don't know if I change my accent
- The Capetonians English is the easiest to understand because we are all homegrown whereas your Durbanites have your Indian foreigners who come in to the ports on a daily basis
- Most of the TV shows we grow up watching is American, that's where a lot of my English came from
- I think it could be difficult to understand what is being said especially if English is not your first language
- Generation to generation is different, the English we're speaking

- old-school
- as South Africans we have adopted an American norm
- These children who end up going to model C schools then there becomes your whole accent
- Language is power
- many people who are conversant in English would understand South Africans or at least make out what they are saying
- English is English. There is no upper or lower standard
- I would not support attempts to curate South African as if it's unique
- It's more important to understand one another
- Maybe the upper class won't understand
- but I think (various forms of English) it's a better quality
- he quality is a little higher in some areas
- What is the use of speaking three sorts of Englishes
- I must agree it will benefit the country more
- it should be given as the medium of instruction
- not many people are educated
- Yes, people with money can afford education where they can learn the best English
- if one is working in an environment where one has to communicate with people on a daily basis, I believe it is important to speak fluently and clearly and have a good vocabulary because first impressions last especially in the world of business
- they say it's "cute"
- South Africa is not known on the same level as these two countries
- I think generally that as long as people are understood in English then that is the right English
- Formal English is more respectful for the office
- those that speak that high class English, they think like they're superior
- We just speak one brand of English
- we've got a good couple of types of English
- You don't hear that top brass being spoken

Awareness: [Coded in purple in the transcript]
- intelligent and hardworking
- coloured SAE there is probably more discrimination against it
- accents change
- becoming more dominant in more spaces
- broad thick SAE accent

- SAE accent in general is very fast
- Americans find it better to understand than what is spoken by many English
- the twang
- Many Coloured people that speak a plat (flat) accent at home, change it at work to what you can describe as a more BBC way of speaking
- I'm lucky I grew up English
- way we pronounce things
- other countries you can't understand their English
- English is an international language it's spoken all over the world
- English you must do, Maths you must do. You have a choice for Afrikaans
- When I watch films I see people perceive us as not as intelligent as the English and Americans
- tend to speak with a higher accent
- When you learn while you're growing up it improves your ability
- they go to a coloured school and after school they sound like a Coloured
- What I speak (English) at work, there all the people use technical jargon
- I know there's definitely perceptions
- I hear the Americanisms are creeping in fast and furious
- I think there was a time where you would fear speaking differently
- whereas previously you might have been able to describe the language in racial terms, you now describe it in economic groups
- did you grow up in a English home or did you grow up in an Afrikaans home
- South Africans are often sharing things about South African English
- there are 10 other official languages and for some it may not be their first language
- I believe that if we all speak one common language there would definitely be less misunderstandings and miscommunications
- I have noticed this sometimes as people believe Americans and British are native speakers only
- It depends on accents
- Sometimes we do use words that are influenced by local culture, dialects and history
- There are a lot of and growing number of localisms that find their way into the English language in South Africa
- It is an evolving language and with each new pop culture trend new words are added
- Everyone was really amused with my type of English
- It comes from those places, especially where there is mass housing

Overcompensation *[Coded in blue in the transcript]*

- think of myself as the lower person
- I don't see any accent as higher
- I think the way you speak is the way you speak
- why doesn't the president actually speak in his native tongue
- I don't care how it's perceived
- I'm not going to criticise
- I don't see any of them as better than the other

Political correctness *[Coded in yellow in the transcript]*

- I'm definitely not of the opinion that someone's intelligence level can be based on their accent
- no I do not see any English accents lower than the next
- we all should speak the way we speak
- I think one of the ways we are going to bring about peace is if the black languages, if they start becoming more predominant
- Not sure if I care
- Anglos are the worst about learning other languages in the world
- as long as you can express yourself, I don't care how you say it
- That is each to his own basically
- English is not their first language then English doesn't come out the same way as it would for someone whose first language it is
- I am a firm supporter of people being themselves wherever they find themselves
- This is viewed as lower - when someone is unable to pronounce words as widely recognised as the 'proper' way of speaking English

APPENDIX C

<u>**Selective codes for vowel pronunciation**</u>

Participants BATH	Ethnicity, Gender, Age	Place of Articulation	Open, Mid, Close	Fronting, Rounding
YG1	Coloured, Female 17	Back	Open	None
YG2	Coloured, Male, 26	Back	Open	Rounding
YG3	Indian, Female, 37	Back & Central	Open & Mid	None
YG4	Coloured, Male, 37	Back	Open	None
YG5	Black, Male, 38	Back	Open	None
YG6	Coloured, Female, 41	Back	Open	Rounding
YG7	Muslim, Male, 43	Back	Open	None
OG1	White, Male, 53	Back	Open & Mid	None
OG2	Coloured, Male, 57	Back	Open	Rounding
OG3	Coloured, Male, 65	Back	Open	None

Participants GOOSE	Ethnicity, Gender, Age	Place of Articulation	Open, Mid, Close	Fronting, Rounding
YG1	Coloured, Female 17	Back	Close	None
YG2	Coloured, Male, 26	Back	Close	Rounding
YG3	Indian, Female, 37	Back	Close	Fronting
YG4	Coloured, Male, 37	Back	Close	None
YG5	Black, Male, 38	Back	Close	Rounding
YG6	Coloured, Female, 41	Back	Close	Fronting
YG7	Muslim, Male, 43	Back	Close	None
OG1	White, Male, 53	Back & Central	Close	Rounding
OG2	Coloured, Male, 57	Back	Close	Rounding
OG3	Coloured, Male, 65	Back	Close	None

Participants KIT	Ethnicity, Gender, Age	Place of Articulation	Low, Mid High	Fronting, Split
YG1	Coloured, Female 17	Front	Close & Mid	Fronting
YG2	Coloured, Male, 26	Front	Close	Split
YG3	Indian, Female, 37	Front	Close	Split
YG4	Coloured, Male, 37	Front	Close & Mid	Split
YG5	Black, Male, 38	Front	Close	None
YG6	Coloured, Female, 41	Front	Close & Mid	None
YG7	Muslim, Male, 43	Front	Close	Split
OG1	White, Male, 53	Front	Close	None
OG2	Coloured, Male, 57	Front	Close & Mid	Split
OG3	Coloured, Male, 65	Front	Close	Split