CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

"Following on the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the new Central State Department, which took over control of (black) education from the provinces and mission churches, laid down strict national language policy. What was clear from the beginning was that the concern was as much for Afrikaans as for the development of mother tongue instruction, and that the intention was to reduce the influence of English" (Hartshorne, 1987:69).

This study has been prompted by the state of English teaching and learning, especially in black education. "There is a deep concern among academics, parents, education authorities and employers about the deteriorating standard of English in black education" (Nwaila, 1993:3), especially when compared with the past. At the moment, there are no indications that the downward slide can be halted. This is evidenced according to Brown (1987:4) in the "plethora of courses and programmes aimed at improving the quality of English teaching" in these schools. Nwaila maintains that "major international corporations also have a vested interest in this situation: they pour money into the black education sector" in order to deal with this situation.

Regardless of all these efforts, the situation doesn't seem to improve. One wonders, though, whether black teachers and students at the grass-roots level are aware of this concern. The central players in this debate seem to be academics and teachers are mostly kept on the periphery.

Indeed, it is difficult to isolate the exact factors responsible for this decline in the standard of English in black schools and probably in the rest of the country. Some concerned academics (Mawasha, 1984; Mphahlele, 1984; Ndebele, 1987; Van Zyl,

1987) have surmised that this situation could be attributed to the tide of nationalism which might be giving impetus to emerging South African black identity and multilingualism. Questions of language and identity are extremely complex. Issues pertaining to ethnic identity, nationalism and language maintenance possess strong emotional associations, but they need to be presented, discussed and evaluated objectively. These issues will be explored further in Section 1.2.1.

Lanham (in Mawasha, 1984:13) on the other hand, argues that "in the 1920's and the early 1930's, classes were smaller and the black school-going population was approximately one third of what it is now and possibly black teachers had a better training in the teaching of English. Black children proceeding to high school stood at least a fair chance of receiving instruction from a skilled mother-tongue speaker of English. Since that time, following social and political trends in this country and because of the vast increase in school-going population, the chances of such contact have been reduced to virtually nil." Mesthrie (1995) makes the same point about South African Indian English (SAIE) that "it is a relatively fossilised form on account of rigid segregatory tendencies in South Africa." "Black English" proponents might actually be perpetuating the results of Verwoerdian education.

Hartshorne (in Mawasha, 1984:13) takes this argument further stating that English is mostly taught by "Bantu teachers", whose qualifications are limited to a standard 8 education plus a professional training of two years. He also ascribes the decline to the fact that one out of six primary school teachers is still unqualified. The question whether ESL is taught by black teachers or not is beside the point. What is needed is the proper training of teachers, especially in ESL theories and methods. Most important of all, ESL teachers need basic competence in the language itself. This applies especially to black teachers who have received inadequate training whereas their white counterparts have had the opportunities to acquire better qualifications. All the factors mentioned by both Lanham and Hartshorne are also pertinent and worth examining.

We have seen above that the vast majority of black teachers in the past had a standard eight and two year teacher training qualification, but the situation has slightly improved

over the last decade. Quite a number of these teachers have acquired a standard ten certificate. This development does not seem to have improved the ESL teaching and learning. This implies that standard ten is still not sufficient.

It is also unwise to ignore the rise of black nationalism as highlighted earlier in this chapter and its links to the politics of language. As a result of the rise of nationalism, there is a strong feeling that the black languages in South Africa should undergo an extreme elaboration of function in the new dispensation. "On 12 December 1995, the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology announced the establishment of the Language Plan Task Group, also known as LANGTAG, for the purpose of advising him on devising a coherent national language plan for South Africa. The work of this task group was informed by the values and goals relating to the language question which are spelled out in the constitution. Among these, the most important are the political thrust in terms of which the languages of South Africa are to be promoted and used in order to maximise national unity and cohesion, the economic thrust which views language as a resource for maximising efficiency, productivity as well as intra- and international communication, and finally, the cultural thrust in terms of which it is hoped that genuine respect for language and cultural diversity will become a defining characteristic of the people of South Africa" (Draft Report of the Language-in-Education Sub-Committee of Langtag, June 1996: 1).

There is also a perception that there are varieties of English in South Africa ranging from "white" South African English, "Indian" English, "Coloured" English and various "black Englishes". Roberge (1996: 90) argues that "white, coloured and Indian Englishes in South Africa are distinct ethnolects". These varieties of English seem to have racial labels in keeping with the legacy of racial segregation in South Africa. Comments such as "you speak English like an Indian, Coloured, black, Afrikaner etc" are quite common in South Africa. However, it is doubtful whether these English varieties do exist, especially in the South African context, beyond the domain of accent. All these varieties are characterised by accent and a few grammatical features. Quirk (1988: 234) expresses his concern regarding labels which are often used loosely such as "Nigerian English" and "West African English", that they are "a misleading if not entirely false, analogy from designations like American English or Iraqi Arabic,

Mexican Spanish, Canadian French ..." This point will be discussed fully later in this study.

Education authorities and examiners concur with the views expressed earlier in this section, that is that many black teachers have been systematically deprived of the privilege of decent education and as a result, have limited and poor academic and professional qualifications. It is further argued in Section 9.2.1 of this thesis that the majority of these teachers are inadequately trained and incompetent to teach English. Subsequently, they are sent to in-service training centres or institutions of higher learning and even abroad in order to "upgrade" their English teaching skills. Do they come out of these institutions using a different and more competent English? Does the situation in black school English teaching and learning improve? The answers to these questions in many ways would most certainly be negative because there seem to be many factors which contribute towards the decline of the standard of English in black education.

This study therefore, seeks to find a path through this language debate as well as to contribute towards language research and surveys which have been and are being conducted in South Africa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

In his address to the English Academy in 1986, Professor Ndebele argues that "South African English must be open to the possibility of its becoming a new language." This, he maintains, "may happen not only at the level of vocabulary but also with regard to grammatical adjustments that may result from the proximity of English to indigenous languages" (Ndebele 1987:3). Ahulu (1992: 1) expresses a different view when he argues that "for nearly thirty years now, no detailed, descriptive documentation of any such "new Englishes" as they are often called is available". He further highlights that "the evidence we have in the field largely consists of glossaries of coinages and other lexical modifications, and the listing of isolated examples of grammatical divergence."

On the other hand, Wright (1996:154) argues that "those who express concern for the recognition and acceptance of standard English in the education system are sometimes accused of ignoring socio-linguistic realities." Allied with this view he maintains, "is the suspicion that what the debate is really about is the maintenance of British hegemony over the language, through the agency of white English-speaking South Africans" (Wright, 1994: 7).

The question of varieties of English has become both subtle and complex. "In Nigeria, the need has often been expressed for a variety of Nigerian English which could be used as a model - both for teaching purposes and for every day discourse" (Odumuh, 1984: 230). Furthermore Odumuh maintains that there has been a persistent demand to define and describe a standard variety of Nigerian English.

He highlights two related problems regarding Nigerian English. "Firstly, that of a definition of "standard Nigerian English", used so far loosely to refer to a variety which is different from Nigerian pidgin but very amorphous ..." Secondly, "he points out that many scholars take the view that the distinctive Nigerian features are mainly phonological." (Odumuh, 1984:230).

Corson (1994) elaborates on the same question of language varieties. He argues that "these varieties are socially or regionally recognisable". He maintains that as a result of this, varieties are often distinguished by a name of their own. Corson, like others, seems to be referring to labels such as "Indian English", "Nigerian English", "Caribbean English" and "black English."

Furthermore, Corson claims that varieties serve valuable group identity functions for their speakers. They express interests that are closely linked to matters of self-respect and other psychological attributes. Both non-standard native and non-native varieties of

English serve these functions. Although Corson's viewpoint is cogent and pertinent in this case, it fails to take us much further. This debate will be expanded in Chapters 3 and 5.

Varieties of a language have to be seen in relation to the various language functions that must be fulfilled by a particular community.

In the South African context, the language functions and areas of use constitute a long list (Titlestad, 1995:179):

(1)   The needs of mother tongue speakers must be met.

(2)   The need for an international language must be met. We must be able to communicate with the rest of the world.

(3)   The needs of secondary and tertiary education must be met.

(4)   Access for all to libraries and to the media is important.

(5)   South Africa is a multilingual country. There is a need for a lingua franca or even more than one. English will be one of these languages.

(6)   The requirements of the law and of legislation must be met.

(7)   The requirement of government, of parliament and of the civil service must be met.

(8)   The needs of business and commerce must be met.

(9)   The needs of science and technology must be met.

At the moment, some of these listed functions could, theoretically, be fulfilled by Afrikaans to some considerable extent. However, a number of people in South Africa have negative attitudes towards Afrikaans. The only viable language to fulfil these functions is Standard English. The education system must provide a basis for these language functions. Non-standard varieties cannot fulfil these functions. It is envisaged that an acceptance of the reality and advantages of multilingualism in South Africa will form the core of both the language in education policy and its implementation in educational practice. South Africa has eleven official languages. Black languages have never been used as languages of learning beyond the primary phase. As a result of this, there are a number of constraints at the moment; lack of materials, lack of adequately trained teachers, entrenched negative attitudes towards black languages. In other words, these languages cannot at this stage fulfil the functions noted earlier in this section. This debate will be reactivated in Chapters 2 and 8.

At this point, we need to briefly explore what is, and is not, standard English. This concept of "standard English" means different things to different people.

Quirk (The Times, 1993) claims that there is a myth that standard English (general English - Quirk's alternative name) entails a particular accent or "talking posh." Titlestad (1995:181) takes this point further when he says that "all too often standard English is conceived of as being an elitist form, elevated in style and characterised by puristic precision."

Titlestad (1995) maintains that Received pronunciation or BBC English or, worst of all, "English English", becomes the immediate target. One of the immediate misconceptions some have as noted above, is that standard English is a matter of accent. Titlestad (1995:180) argues that "this is a frequent misconception often expressed in emotive terms and associated with such notions as 'BBC English' or 'Oxford English'".

Standard English as we will see in chapter three, is used by "educated" people who make use of English all over the world and may be spoken with an accent from any geographical locality or with a non-regional accent. It is the variety of English most comprehensively studied and is the dialect of literature, except when regionality is deliberately used.

Therefore, standard English in Titlestad's (1995) view has nothing to do with puristic extremes, nor with such social attitudes. It is worth indicating at this stage that there is a range of registers within standard English. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that "non-standard" does not necessarily imply "sub-standard".

We perhaps need to ask why non-standard varieties should be rejected, especially in education, in favour of a standard English. Wright (1996:154) gives a pertinent answer when he points out that in order "to ensure greater equality of access, increased social mobility and more coherence in this shattered society, the rural poor and the urban underclasses have to be given, as far as possible, the education which will empower them to the same extent as those in developed and privileged areas of the country". He

further stresses that all the learners "should be entitled to standard English." However, this does not mean that non-standard varieties should be denigrated and discarded. Corson's notion of "appropriateness" becomes pertinent here. This means that in one setting when talking to certain people, it is better to use one variety rather than another if communicative efficiency is to be served. In other words, the level of formality or the informality of the occasion is one factor that tends to influence the choice of variety that people make.

A more important concern for the teacher is what to do in the classroom especially about non-standard varieties of English. Given the fact that non-standard native and non-native varieties of English exist and that they fulfil different functions what might be the ESL teacher's approach to this dilemma?

In his response to the similar dilemma with regard to mother tongue non-standard and standard English dialects in America, Schafer (1982:63) argues that much of the confusion in this debate stems from the diversity of "expert opinion".

He gives three pertinent proposals which seem to shed some light on our South African dilemma (Schafer, 1982:65):

* eradication of the non-standard variety, especially in education
* encouraging bi-dialectalism or multi-dialectalism
* acceptance of a non-standard variety as a variety which serves a different function from that fulfilled by standard English

Schafer maintains that the first proposal stems from the false belief that non-standard varieties are "ungrammatical" and thus "inferior" for sophisticated use. This view is rejected by sociolinguists.
The second proposal is called "bi-dialectalism". Two assumptions are held by bi-dialectalists:

(1)   a dialect is an adequate and useful aspect of a cultural minority;

(2)   in order to relate to a larger world, it is important to master the standard dialect.

Other linguists have raised objections to bi-dialectalism. Sledd (in Schafer, 1982: 66) has expressed his doubt, claiming that bi-dialectalism cannot succeed. He argues that "the English teacher's forty-five minutes a day for five days in the week will never counteract the influence, and sometimes the hostility of playmates and friends and family during much of the larger part of the student's time." Sledd argues for acceptance of the non-standard dialect by society as a whole.

Burling (in Schafer, 1982: 66) tries to balance the conflicting views. He takes another look at the problem, advocating "a compromise between encouraging the use of non-standard English and bi-dialectalism." Burling argues that "since reading standard English is not dependent on speaking standard English, the major effort in primary education should be reading and writing."

In addition, he argues that the child should be permitted to use his or her non-standard vernacular. Later, he advises that "when a child is old enough to decide the matter, if he chooses to learn a prestige dialect, the school should give him the best help it can." This view on the surface appears to be plausible and perhaps even "democratic". However, it does not seem to be a practical solution. It actually compounds an already complex situation. Burling's proposals seem to fail to adequately address the teacher's dilemma in the classroom situation. This issue will be discussed in Section 9.6.

In the South African context, the situation is even more intricate. Perhaps the best solution is that the black "non-standard" users of English at the lower level of the cline should aim at the apex of the cline of bilingualism which will subsequently elevate their form of English to the international standard English level. This issue will be explored further in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

If we examine our South African situation, Wright (1995:4) asks whether the "advocates of educated black South African English are seriously proposing the creation

of a new Standard language?" to take the argument further he poses a number of questions:

"If it really is a new language, what are the implications? How would we distinguish it from other black Englishes or from the international standard?" He further warns that we would probably "risk losing the advantages for South Africa of English as an international language, its educational resources and its commercial and diplomatic functions." However, we must hasten to say that this does not imply "that all South Africans are itching to communicate with speakers of standard English" (Wright 1993:4) locally or abroad. Wright makes a crucial point that "merely to attempt to establish a language standard of inherently limited viability would not be sensible."

First of all this study seeks to identify and examine the problem areas with regard to ESL in black education. The following questions are pertinent to this language debate:

(a)   Does the unrelenting tide of nationalism contribute to the creation of a codifiable new English. Does this new form actually exist?

(b)   What are the actual details that constitute the separate variety?

(c)   Does the South African variety of black English have any adverse educational implications?

(d)   Do the inferior conditions of years of underfunding and of an unenlightened underlying philosophy of apartheid education have a bearing on the decline of the standard of English and the creation of a new variety of English?

Secondly the hypotheses below are formulated on the basis of the problem areas stated above.

(a)   The possible emergence of a variety of black English in South Africa has important educational implications.

(b)   The attitude of black teachers and learners towards international standard English and the rise of nationalism affects the status of standard English in South Africa.

(c)   The inferior conditions of years of underfunding and of an unenlightened underlying philosophy of apartheid education have contributed to the decline of the ESL teaching/learning.

The financing system of black education has had a devastating effect upon the per capita expenditure. In the following table, Pam Christie (1986: 98) shows us per capita expenditure for the different population registration groups. It also shows how this has changed since 1953.

YEAR	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
1953-4	R17	R40	R40	R128
1969-70	R17	R73	R81	R282
1975-6	R42	R140	R190	R591
1977-8	R54	R185	R276	R657
1980-1	R139	R253	R513	R913
1982-3	R146	R498	R711	R1211

TABLE 1:   PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Based on 1994 figures (Sunday Times, 27 August 1995), children attending white schools received R5400, at Indian schools each pupil received R4 600, in Coloured schools each pupil received R3700. At former DET schools each pupil received R2184. In the former homelands, their subsidies varied from R1050 to R2000.

As a result of these years of underfunding, the standard of English teaching has deteriorated. There has been lack of teaching and learning aids and shortage of proper and appropriate reading and language books. Over and above these constraints, black teachers have been given an insufficient academic grounding and opportunity to improve their own usage.

We have seen earlier in this study that black teachers used to be trained after standard six and later after standard eight. Quite a number of standard eight graduates who could not be accepted in other professions, took up a teaching career as the last resort. The majority of these teachers obviously would not become good teachers hence the teaching of ESL has been, and is still, unsuccessful in black education.

1.2.1   Nationalism

This is yet another factor which appears to have contributed to the deterioration of the standard of English teaching and learning in black schools. "Nationalism is evinced in a series of stages in the struggle of a given solidarity group to achieve basic aims of unity and self direction. A second basic part of nationalism is its stress on ethno-cultural characterisation and on the authenticity, purity and nobility of the beliefs, values and behaviours that typify the community of reference" (Fishman, 1989: 111).

In addition, Fishman defines nationalism as the "organisationally heightened and elaborated beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of a society." It is clear from Fishman's position that for such societally organised goal activity to take place, "it is first necessary for populations to become convinced that they possess in common certain unique ethno-cultural characteristics, and that these similarities, over and above obvious local variations and sub-group differences, are of importance to them."

In South Africa as a result of nationalism as defined above, we can easily identify three major schools of thought with regard to the language debate:

*   Those who argue that in South Africa we need to call for the detachment of English from the international standard English models, i.e. we need to develop our own variety/varieties of English.

*   Those who argue that unified Nguni/Sotho languages should be upgraded to replace English.

*   Finally, those who look beyond the intranational use of English, i.e. they view English as an international language and they also maintain that in order for South Africa to keep abreast of the world developments, English should be considered as an international langauge. This present study seeks to explore all these three schools of thought.

What appears to be the situation in the South African context is that a variety of English close to the international English exists and will continue to exist. At the moment, CCV Television channel employs a number of proficient and articulate black female presenters. Some of them are employed as news readers in Channel One. Their English proficiency, especially their accent is almost like that of the English native speakers. In other words, these presenters have excellent control of English grammar, vocabulary and accent. Television therefore is one of the most powerful media to influence the viewers, especially with regard to the future development of ESL in South Africa.

Furthermore, the current status of black languages has been elevated in the new Constitution. These languages have been suppressed for more than 300 years. Regardless of all these constitutional developments, it appears that English will remain the major language in education, administration and commerce for years to come.
 It is however clear that these languages will complement rather than replace English as a lingua franca and as a language of learning at secondary and tertiary education. This issue is further explored in Chapter 8.

1.3   CONCLUSION

A single international language has long been thought to be the ideal for international communication. Honey (1996:99) maintains that "the emergence of English as the dominant international language in a large number of domains has implications which are ... becoming a matter of widespread discussion among both linguists and the general public." In recent years there have been suggestions that English could break up into mutually unintelligible languages, much as Latin once did.

McArthur (1987: 10) argues against this point of view. He maintains that "the Latin analogy as a basis for predicting one possible future for English is not very useful." He argues that "Latin derived its power and authority from not being an ordinary language." He further states that "'devoid of baby talk' and being a first language to none of its users, it was pronounced across Europe in often unintelligible ways but always written the same way. Eventually, Latin did disintegrate into different languages: French, Italian etc."

Furthermore, McArthur argues that "present day standard English developed historically from the courtly, scholarly and literary aspect of a dialect that is now used by educated people all over the world. It is a system of grammar and vocabulary well established in text."

"The diversity in English is greater in countries where English is exclusively a second language and therefore has to be taught. Since in the non-native countries students are usually taught by teachers who are themselves not native speakers of English and who have inevitably acquired the language to varying degrees of adequacy, it is not surprising that the standards of achievement are variable and subject to change" (Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G. & Svartvik, J., 1985: 9).

In some countries, English is used primarily for internal purposes as an intranational language especially in multilingual countries such as India and Nigeria. It obviously serves an international function too in these countries.

In many countries, it serves chiefly as an international language, the medium of communication with speakers from other countries. As a foreign language, English is used for international communication, but as a second language, it is used mainly for intranational purposes.

McArthur (1987: 10) summarises this debate when he says that "educational systems can either live with, encourage or gain from such flexibility" of using English for both international and intranational purposes. He argues that "educational systems cannot

alter the demographic realities of the international standard English on one side and the core of negotiable standards on the other."

He further maintains that "many of us operate along continuums from a viable standard to fluent non-standard kinds of English, code-switching according to circumstances."

We have seen earlier in this chapter that varieties of a language have to be seen in relation to the various language functions that must be fulfilled by a particular community. Quirk et al (1985: 4) reaffirm this view when they distinguish five types of functions for which English characteristically serves as a medium when it is a second language:

* instrumental, for formal education and as the countries chief source of knowledge - e.g. in libraries and the media;

* regulative, for government administration and the law courts;

* communicative, for interpersonal communication between individuals speaking different native languages;

* occupational, both intranationally and internationally for commerce and for science and technology;

* creative, for non technical writings, such as fiction and political works.

In countries where English is a non-native language, the major models for both speech and writing have always been the two institutionalised varieties of British and American English. The choice of either of the two models, has depended on various factors:

* whether the country was formerly a British or American colony;

*   the extent to which Britain and America have most influenced its economic, cultural, technological and scientific development.

On the other hand, there are questions and controversies which have emerged as a result of the universal spread of English, especially to non-native countries. Kachru (1985) gives only four of these concerns:

*   the issue of codification and norms: who controls the norms and codification?

*   innovations which are formally and contextually deviant from the norms of the English native speakers:
what type of innovations and creativity are acceptable?

*   The pragmatics of selecting a norm:
what are the factors which determine norms for a region?

*   "de-Englishization" (which implies that English both in England and America ceases to be an exponent of foreign culture) of the cultural context of English in the "institutionalised" non-native varieties.

The questions and controversies raised by Kachru above, are relevant and plausible. However, Kachru does not take us far enough. He seems to be making only one major point: that the "non-native" local educated varieties of English should be institutionalised, recognised and accepted internationally. Kachru does not specify where on the cline the variety for teaching is to be chosen. Elsewhere, he does indicate that the "basilect" should be institutionalised above all in the education system with all the consequences that flow from this. One wonders how distinct these varieties propounded by Kachru are from standard English. Furthermore, it is not clear at which point these varieties become new Englishes. In the meantime, teachers in these countries remain uncertain about the norms to which their teaching should be geared: whether to those of the evolving local standard or to those of some external standard (Quirk et al, 1985: 7). In his argument, Kachru does not seem to consider the language functions described

earlier in this study. A further point is whether these evolving local varieties of English are subject to codification or are merely random errors i.e. whether they really constitute a standard. This debate is explored further in Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Other equally important issues do not seem to be covered by Kachru's questions: at the moment, the international community is converging into a "global village". This seems to be a notable trend for all the nations of the world and the globality helps the language more or less to conform. The international community should jointly create global peace, global economic, educational, scientific and technological development. A standard English language (excluding accent) is the only available resource at the moment which can unite nations across cultural and linguistic barriers internationally and intranationally. The concept of "standard English" is defined and discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

We have seen the world peace initiatives recently in Rwanda, Bosnia, Angola and right at our doorstep in South Africa and Lesotho. The point we are making is that, "if the non-native varieties diverge too far to remain part of the international standard English, they may develop into different languages altogether or at least cease to be varieties which enjoy mutual comprehensibility." This concern was raised by Svartvik (1985). And if they do not diverge enough, they do not become a new variety of English.

Furthermore, countries which aspire to remain part of the international community, where appropriate, should promote an English viable for general educated use close to the international standard. The advantage of the external standard, is that it has all the technology, books, learning aids and well trained teachers whereas the local standards do not have the necessary resources and teachers who are specifically trained to teach these non-native varieties. In addition, these non-native varieties do not seem to have clear-cut boundaries between "errors" which must be corrected and the ideal fixed point where the educated variety begins. Training colleges should play a major role in dealing with these issues.

A drawback in teacher training in South Africa, is the fact that a teacher's initial training is not carried forward when he or she starts work. Tertiary institutions should also work closely with schools. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that South Africa is currently going through a transitional phase. Institutions of learning are being democratised and restructured. At the moment there is a strong feeling that student teacher intake at colleges should be drastically reduced. It is generally agreed that political transition and development should be combined with a strategy to transform our colleges and to deracialise them (Chapter 9 discusses this issue further). While the rationalisation and restructuring of these colleges is taking place, some efforts have to be made to transform the teaching of standard English.

Svartvik (1985) from the Swedish point of view advises the non-native speakers of English that "the acquisition of (standard) English is an investment worth the effort and the money only as long as the language functions as a means of international communication for a range of purposes."

In conclusion, it is evident that we are a long, long way from finding ultimate answers to the many difficult questions we have been asking. Wright (1993:4) maintains that "no one doubts that English language in South Africa will continue to go through a process of indigenisation over time." He further indicates that "acculturation of languages is to be expected in situations of continuous language contact in multilingual societies and will take the form of deviations at the phonological, grammatical and lexical levels." And if the non-native varieties of English as noted earlier in this section, do not diverge enough, they do not become a new variety of English. They remain close to international standard English. Quirk at the recent English Academy Conference (1995) has used the concept of "general purpose English" rather than "standard" English especially because of the perceptions different people have about what standard English is or should be. The concept of standard English is often confused with accent, in other words "talking posh" (Quirk, 1993). The question of standard English and varieties of English will be explored in more detail in Chapters 3 and 5.

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CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the following key issues were raised with special reference to the deterioration of ESL teaching and learning in black schools:

*   the question of black English and its educational implications

*   the effect of the rise of black nationalism in ESL education

*   the neglect and underfunding of black education under apartheid government.

Before any of these issues can be fully examined, we need to put the English language in South Africa in its context. In other words, we must look at it within the context of multilingualism as South Africa is a multilingual country.

The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to explore

*   the language situation in South Africa (c.f. Section 2.2)

*   the history and the development of English in its new environment in South Africa (c.f. Sections 2.3-2.6).

2.2 LANGUAGE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, language debate in African education has reflected the relative political and economic power of Afrikaans and English on the one hand and the black languages

on the other. For the greater part of the period the African people's interests and wishes were subordinated to the political purposes and ideologies of white groupings: the conflicts between these groupings were to spill over into black education and in particular found expression in the language policies laid down from time to time. It is important at this stage to put the topic of this study which is "black English and education in South Africa - an investigation", in its context and perspective. In other words, this section, seeks to explore the language diversity in South Africa. This, hopefully will shed more light on the concept of ESL in South Africa.

According to the Language Plan Task Group discussion document, (1996) "linguistic diversity in South Africa was not properly acknowledged until the adoption of our new constitution. The current debate regarding the planning of the language dispensation for this non-racial, democratic South Africa and the role of the newly established language institution in the country called the Pan South African Language Board (Pan SALB), is taking place within the same political ambience." In addition, it was noted earlier in this thesis that on 12 December 1995, the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology announced the establishment of the Language Plan Task Group, also known as LANGTAG, for the purpose of advising him on devising a coherent National Language Plan for South Africa. The Language Plan Task Group (1996) document, states that "contrary to the constitutional provisions, there was a definite trend towards unilingualism." Many, according to this document, "felt that while multilingualism was a sociolinguistic reality in South Africa, it was in fact invisible in the public service, in most public discourse and in the mass media."

Langtag is not to be confused with the Pan South African Language Board (Pan SALB) while Langtag operates under the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology only, Pan SALB is an independent statutory body which was appointed by the senate in March 1996 in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act. Its work is to monitor the observance of the constitutional provisions and principles relating to the use of languages as well as the observance and content of any existing and new legislation, practice and policy relating to language matters. Its function is broader and it will ensure that politicians in parliament are guided by a body with non-political knowledge

of relevant multilingual issues in South Africa.

At the moment, some sociolinguists and educationalists argue that multilingualism should be promoted as an asset and that it should not be regarded as a problem that needs to be resolved.

According to the Pan SALB policy discussion document (March, 1995), there are approximately 25 to 30 languages spoken in South Africa, of which eleven are official languages. The figures below show the official languages and the number of the speakers of these languages. However, we need to be cautious about these statistics on language because they are based on the census statistics obtained in 1991. The census in 1991 was highly controversial and therefore it cannot be considered to be accurate. These statistics should be regarded as merely an indication of trends in language usage in South Africa.

The Constitution of South Africa, provides that the eleven languages below (cf. Table 2) will now be the official languages of the country at the national level. According to the 1991 census figures, English is the mother tongue of some 3,5 million people in South Africa today. Roberge (1996: 89) claims that there are 3,1 million mother tongue speakers consisting of 1,75 million white, 0,44 million coloured, 0,82 million Indians and 0,04 million Africans.

The following table (2) indicates the numbers and percentages of the users of the eleven official languages in South Africa.

Official language	Number	Percentage	Total
Nguni languages:			
1. isiNdebele	600 305	1,55	
2. isiSwati	991 008	2,57	43,11
3. isiZulu	8 580 380	21,96	
4. isiXhosa	6 580 380	17,03	

Official language	Number	Percentage	Total
Sotho languages: 5. Sepedi 6. Sesotho 7. Setswana	3 722 444 2 598 357 3 319 951	9,64 6,73 8,59	24,96
8. Afrikaans 9. English	5 804 411 3 482 375	15,03 9,01	15,03 9,01
10. Xitsonga	1 681 575	4,35	4,35
11. Tshivenda	858 704	2,22	2,22
Other languages	Not indicated	1,31	1,31

TABLE 2:   THE MAIN LANGUAGES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN 1991 (including the TBVC countries and self-governing territories - Schuring, 1993 in PSALB Policy Discussion Paper (1995))

According to SABC's statistics regarding intelligibility among viewers (Survey MRA - 1994, in Titlestad's 1996 a Langtag document), "there are 69% viewers who understand English, 65% who understand isiZulu and 59% who understand Afrikaans." In addition, "there exist considerable disparities in estimates of the proportion of South African blacks who have a knowledge of English: 61% according to the RCM survey (1993: 27), 32% according to figures derived from the 1991 census while De Kadt (1993: 314) cited by Gough (1996:53) gives a figure of 29% of spoken competence." English is perceived by some people as being non-indigenous, irrespective of its firm establishment in South Africa.

The Pan SALB document noted above makes an interesting point about English being the only non-indigenous official language. It argues that the situation with regard to Afrikaans is different although both English and Afrikaans are of European origin. It is argued that Afrikaans has become very strongly "Africanised" in the course of the 300 years. It is maintained that in this sense it qualifies to be a language of Africa. This appears to be a valid point. However the argument raises a number of questions:

*   Where do we draw the line between the indigenous and non-indigenous languages?

*   Does a language have to be 300 years in Africa in order to qualify as an indigenous language as is the case with Afrikaans?

*   What are the features in a language, especially a European language, which characterise it as an indigenous language?

It is evident from these questions above that it is not easy to distinguish between Afrikaans and English on the one hand, and black languages on the other in terms of their "indigenousness" in South Africa. English is spoken by South Africans as a mother-tongue.

At the moment, both English and Afrikaans languages in South Africa still perform more functions compared to black languages. These languages are languages of most books, of a powerful South African literature and they are languages of tertiary education.

We have noted earlier that "vernacular (black) languages are, at present, not sufficiently developed to carry the burden of South Africa's urban-industrial energies either technically or in relation to demographic distribution" (Wright, 1996:150). The different functions fulfilled by both the English language and black languages in South Africa have to be explored. In fact, these languages have to complement each other. The Department of Education discussion document (Towards a Language Policy in Education - November, 1995) highlights tensions which emerge and are often commented on in the source documents:

*   the development and promotion of previously disadvantaged languages is potentially in conflict with the prescribed non-diminution of rights relating to language and the status of languages existing at the commencement of the Constitution

* the principle of choice of language/s constrained by pragmatic requirements such as the availability of resources. Effective resource deployment and redeployment are crucial

* the principle of choice of language/s of learning may enter into tension with affirmative action measures for black languages.

In order to deal with the tensions mentioned above, we need to perhaps focus on language functions. After we have identified the functions that should be fulfilled by the disadvantaged black languages, we can begin to develop a comprehensive programme that will begin to address the constraints. According to the Department of Education (Discussion Document, 1995: 12), there are opportunities for strategic intervention which need to be considered:

* Curriculum development which encompasses teacher development, materials development, syllabus change and assessment practices.

* Redeployment of human as well as material resources. In terms of human resources, South Africa has a wealth of bilingual and multilingual teachers.

In addition, the draft report of the language in education sub-committee of Langtag (June 1996) states that "promoting multilingualism in South African education requires a number of initiatives such as qualification route, teacher training, syllabus design and classroom practice." The Langtag proposals fail to provide a clear programme of action, especially for the short term. Schools require guidelines. It is not sufficient to simply state that we should "promote the students' primary languages as languages of learning and teaching" without providing an enabling framework for both learners and teachers.

At the moment, the major language functions as noted earlier (Titlestad, 1995:179 - 180), can only be fulfilled by standard English, whether English is considered an indigenous South African language or not. For example:

* the need for tertiary education

* the requirements of law and legislation

* the needs of business and commerce

* the needs of science and technology

* access to libraries, world knowledge and the media

* the need for a lingua franca

* the language of learning in black schools, with a basis in mother- tongue use.

Some of these functions listed as noted earlier could, theoretically, be fulfilled by Afrikaans to some considerable extent. In addition to the state of development of the language and its supporting infrastructure, global and South African socio-political factors determine the dominance of standard English.

Nevertheless, official status was given to these eleven languages (c.f. Table 2) because the great majority of South Africans - "probably about 98% of the South African population" (Pan SALB Discussion Paper, 1995: 6), use one of these languages as their mother tongue or as a language of learning at the primary level.

The position of both English and Afrikaans as shown in Table 2 is protected by the new Constitution. The Gauteng Language in Education policy states that the previously disadvantaged or neglected languages should be promoted both as languages of learning and as subjects (Gauteng Language in Education, 1994: 5.2.6). It appears that the majority of black people in South Africa prefer English to be used as early as possible after initial literacy has been accomplished. This issue is fully discussed in Chapter 8. Refer to Figure 23. This situation immediately poses tension between the government's intentions and the peoples attitudes, perceptions and the language choice.

The Constitution also recognises the Oriental and European immigrant languages, but not as official languages.

This new language policy fulfils the following important requirements:

*   it recognises peoples' right to exercise their rights in their own language
*   it recognises the reality of the linguistic diversity of South Africa.

It was noted earlier that black languages are at present not sufficiently developed to fulfil certain major language functions. It is also important in considering standard English, to bear in mind the particular functions that it serves in education and professional life. English serves as a language of wider communication for such an extensive and important range of purposes that children must learn to use it competently.

In support of this view, the Cox Report (1989:4.7) makes a similar point about Britain which applies to South Africa too. It stresses that "the English curriculum must respond to the entitlement of all pupils to learn, and if necessary to be taught, the functions and forms of standard English."

At this point, it is important to briefly highlight the historical background of English in South Africa. English was first transplanted to South Africa in 1795 and it was established in 1806 in the Cape. In 1820 about 5 000 British settlers arrived at Algoa Bay. Gradually, the English language spread into the interior. According to Lanham (1996), the next settlement bringing a large number from Britain took place beyond the boarders of the Cape, in Natal, over the period 1848-62. Lanham argues that the Natal settlers differed from the 1820 settlers in social and regional origins. The settlement in Natal was largely made up of the middle or higher in social class. Bruce, South Africa's Emily Post (Lanham, 1996: 21) at the turn of the century pronounced that "the purest English is spoken in Natal". She singled out the Cape Colony when listing the aberrations of English in South Africa, to be avoided by "Africa's daughters".

2.2.1   The South African black languages

The South African black languages as shown earlier in Table 2, are found largely in the Eastern part of South Africa. The southern most region is called the South-Eastern Zone

languages out of these language groups are now official languages (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Sepedi, Sesotho, Siswati and isiNdebele) and they are recognised in government, law and education. Some of these languages are clustered into language family groups:

*   Nguni (Northern Ndebele, Southern Ndebele, isiSwati, isiXhosa, isiZulu)

*   Sesotho (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana)

*   Tshivenda

*   Xitsonga

These languages were first reduced into writing in the 19th Century by missionaries who were serving black communities; until 1860, their literature was confined to translations of scriptures, later on these were extended to other categories of writing. The main thrust of this thesis is the investigation of "standard" English versus "non-standard" English ("black English"). However, this debate cannot be separated from black languages and the rise of black nationalism as noted in Section 1.2.1.

2.2.2 Oriental immigrant languages

Immigrants from Europe and the East form an important part of the South African community. The following are European immigrant languages: Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian and Portuguese. Oriental languages include: Gujerati, Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Chinese. The majority of Indians use English as their mother tongue.

The oriental and European immigrant languages do not form part of the eleven South African official languages. However, the South African Constitution recognises them and it promises to protect, promote and develop them too.

2.3 ENGLISH IN SOUTH AFRICA - A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.3.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to discuss and examine various aspects of socio-linguistic

positions from both a historical and linguistic perspective.

The first section is concerned with the historical overview of English in South Africa following Hall's hypothesis (Llamzon, 1986: 101) which was first used to analyse the existence of pidgins. It has since been applied to actual languages, especially in language contact situations. Moag (1982) has used this hypothesis to analyse the language situation in the Philippines. He has used five phases to show how American English was indigenised and developed in the Philippines. These phases are:

*   the transportation phase

*   the indigenisation phase

*   the expansion phase

*   the institutionalisation phase

*   the restriction phase

This study will briefly describe these phases and then concentrate more on English as a second language in South Africa. The first phase refers to language spread. In other words, this phase indicates how English was brought into a new environment and how it started taking root. In South Africa, English was transported for the first time in 1806 when Britain invaded the Cape. This issue will be explored further later in this section.

The second phase, i.e. "indigenisation" is a stage when a transplanted language becomes localised. In other words, English forges its own linguistic and cultural identity. This identity is most evident in the large number of loan words from local indigenous languages. Pakistan serves as a good example. In order to read an English newspaper in Pakistan with complete comprehension, one must be familiar with such words and concepts as "baradari" (clan), "goonda" (thug), "Kabbadi" (a sport), "Kachchi abadi" (shanty town) (Baumgardner, 1990: 60). Filling lexical gaps in British English, "Pakistani English" has freely borrowed from the indigenous domains of food, clothing, politics, education, art and music. The register of religion, however, accounts for by far the largest number of borrowings. It is important to note that loan words from indigenous languages do not necessarily produce a new variety of English. All depends on the quantity. Furthermore, this is a process by which English is creating and

expanding its shared vocabulary.

Another area in which "Pakistani English" has forged its own identity is word-formation. The combination of English affixes with bases of both English and Urdu origin has produced vocabulary previously unattested in other varieties of English. One of the most productive prefixes in Pakistani English is "de" as in "de-notify", "de-load", "de-seat" and "de-shape". One wonders whether every Pakistani uses this form of English or whether it is a form used by English users at the bottom of the cline. In South Africa the situation is different. Unlike Pakistan, South Africa still has English mother tongue speakers who help to keep the tradition of English education in the black community and SAE close to international standard English. But they do use specifically South African words such as "braai wors", "indaba", "veld", "shebeen", "shebeen queen" etc. These words might already be included in the Dictionary of SAE. There are about 5000 words in the Oxford Dictionary of South African English on historical principles. While used for indigenous purposes on appropriate occasions, 5000 words in relation to the word-hoard of English as a whole is infinitesimal. Furthermore, some of these words might eventually be absorbed into general English usage.

The third phase of a life cycle of a non-native variety of English in its new environment is called the "expansion" phase. At this phase, the new variety becomes used by many local people and it therefore expands its domain of use. For example, it begins to appear in local media such as newspapers, radio and television. This new variety can only spread faster if the local people see the need for learning and using it. Ahulu (1992) from the Ghanaian point of view argues that "those with authority in education who determine the educational and career prospects of learners, do not accept that non-standard varieties should be used for educational purposes mainly because they are local-based and not written in textbooks and dictionaries."

The fourth phase is called the "institutionalisation" phase. Institutionalisation refers to a stage when a variety becomes more acceptable. It becomes codified and used in education, government offices, major newspapers and in television.

Dictionaries and grammar books are produced in this variety. Wright (1996:158) maintains that "pressures for the institutionalisation of non-standard English will tend to decline when better quality English education becomes more readily available in the state system; when the linguistic and economic incongruity of attempting to restandardised for South Africa a language already standardised in the print-based usage of millions world-wide registers more fully; and when it is recognised that a degree of competence in the educated standard need not inhibit the use of heavily indigenised local and regional varieties in appropriate circumstances." He further points out that "educated BSAFE and SAFE are each varieties of international standard English." Institutionalisation has not yet taken place in South Africa except for the dictionary of South African English. It was noted earlier that one of our major black newspapers, The Sowetan, according to Gabriele Stein (at the English Academy Conference in 1995) uses international standard English. There is no trace of the so-called "black English" in this paper. The point made here is that "black English" is not yet established in South Africa, especially in education or in the mass media.

The last phase, i.e. "restriction phase" refers to the stage when the local people begin to reject the foreign variety and adopt a local indigenous language. The Filipino language situation serves as a good example. In the 1960s - 1970s during the rise of Filipino nationalism against American domination, Filipino was introduced to replace American English. In South Africa, English is at the moment the language of black aspiration and advancement. There is no indication of the development or existence of the "restriction phase" in South Africa. Both English and the black languages complement each other. The Langtag exercise, mentioned earlier, may herald the beginning of such a phase, but it is doubtful whether full development will take place.

It was noted earlier that unlike other ESL countries, South Africa has been probably fortunate to have English native speakers who have kept English closer to the international standard. Standard English is an international language used throughout the world and essential for many purposes.

This section seeks to further explore the history of English in South Africa. This historical overview will yield information on the forces which gave impetus to the

development of ESL in South Africa. Until the early 1950's, South African schools and universities were educating relatively competent ESL speakers. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 devastated the black education system. Black ESL learners were separated from English native speakers. The most effective educational environment in which English language competence could be systematically developed was destroyed. The tradition of English in the black community was set in the mission institutions of the Cape, especially the Eastern Cape. Later it also gained momentum in Natal and then much later in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (Lanham & Macdonald, 1979: 14).

Lanham and Macdonald argue that the residential mission schools provided an authentic cultural context for learning of English which countered the threat to the norms of international English. They further maintain that contact with English speaking whites was greatly extended by the inclusion of many white English children in the mission school enrolment of 22 245 reported by the Superintendent General of Education in the Cape in 1875. It is reported that white pupils were attracted to mission schools because of the high standard of English, classical and mathematical education provided.

Furthermore, Greenberg (1959) has called Africa one of the most complex linguistic areas of the world, rivalled perhaps by the situations in aboriginal South America and New Guinea. With less than one tenth of the world's population, Africa accounts for at least one fifth of the world's languages, most of them are spoken by relatively small groups of people (Berry, 1970: 80). According to Lanham (1983), English was first established in 1806 when Britain invaded the Cape for strategic reasons. This point was made earlier in this study. Many Englishmen served as administrators and in the military on a temporary basis at the same time and there were some who settled permanently in the Cape. The first major group of the English speakers was the 1820 Settlers. The next settlement noted earlier, bringing large numbers from Britain took place in Natal, over the period 1848-62. It is important at this point to state that long before English was established in South Africa, Dutch was the major European language at the Cape. The major African languages in that region were isiXhosa, Khoi and San.

According to Lanham (1983) these settlers came from different parts of the United Kingdom. They brought with them more than twenty-five English, Scots and Irish regional dialects. The Received Pronunciation standard in Lanham's view, was represented only in the speech of some of the group leaders and also the existing officials and officers. This was stronger in the Natal settlements than among the 1820 settlers in the Cape. These dialects had more than phonological differences. These English accents have not boiled down to a fairly consistent white English speaking set of sounds but lexical and grammatical consistency has been established in line with international educated use.

Finally, settlers' children and grandchildren, irrespective of class or occupation developed a different accent from that of the actual settlers. The interesting thing is that the grammar and lexis that emerged was that of standard English, not the accent. The label "standard English" is misleading because of certain presuppositions it carries for many people. This issue will be discussed fully in chapter 3. But at this point it might be briefly stated that the definition of standard English used in this thesis excludes accent and is not to be associated with received pronunciation.

2.3.2 English as a second language in South Africa

English as a second language has its foundation in the history of English in South Africa dating from Lord Somerset's proclamation of 1822 which made English the only official language. This anglicization policy for both the Dutch and the African people was strengthened by Somerset's schoolmasters and clergymen imported from England and Scotland. They filled influential positions in Dutch and African communities.

The Dutch came to value and accept English in education as a means to social mobility. Lanham (1978) maintains that in the Boer Republics of the north these attitudes to English were maintained, and English retained its prominence in education. Lanham claims that Afrikaans parents in Pretoria in 1890 were actually demanding more English and less Dutch in their schools. Consequently, competent English-Afrikaans bilingualism was common and English was highly valued as the language of business

and the learned professions.

Lanham indicates that attitudes to English began to change in the closing years of the century with the growing realisation that Afrikaans not Dutch was the language of Africa. Afrikaans therefore, became part of the identity of the emerging Afrikaner nationalism. Language became a heated political issue and hostility to English developed in predominantly Afrikaans-speaking communities, a process aided by the political tensions of the 1890's. In these communities, the standard of and enthusiasm for English declined.

However, in recent years, a new motivation to competence in English has come to exist for younger Afrikaners, particularly those who are better educated and live in cities and towns. Lanham (1978) indicates that high levels of competence in English are particularly noticeable at executive levels in commerce and industry, in Afrikaans universities and government departments dealing with external affairs. A significant finding of the 1973 Human Sciences Research Council Languages Survey sampling urban communities, is that nearly 25% of the 18-24 age group of Afrikaans speakers would like to be taken as English in the company of English speakers and 58% feel that ability to speak English is prestigious. The 55+ group, on the contrary, largely showed opposite attitudes (Lanham, 1978: 22). One would assume that these attitudes of the younger group have not changed much. English as a language of wider communication is increasingly in demand. Its future as the major link language in South Africa is beyond dispute and it plays an irreplaceable role as an international language and language of tertiary education.

It appears that English will remain a language of wider communication. In addition, English is the vehicle by which new ideas have permeated this country and has carried it forward along the path of progress.

Much of the foundation of the features of black English usage was laid in the mission schools of the Cape and Natal in the last century. Institutions such as Lovedale, Blythswood, Adams College and several others have trained and educated the black "Royal Reader" elite, thus providing an authentic cultural context for English. The

concept of the "Royal Reader" elite emanates from the period when the so-called "Royal Reader" was used. This reader was commonly used by the missionaries. Lanham (1978) maintains that the scholarly missionaries educated a group of men and women with high competence in English, a deep insight into the world of English ideas and values, a strong language loyalty to English and a sense of the great tradition of English literature. As has been said, in the 19th century white children were sent to mission schools to get a good education.

At this point it is appropriate to refer to the concept of "Landeskunde". Landeskunde implies that if you are learning a target language, you need to learn the target language values and culture, and gain insight into the world, ideas and literature of the target language speakers.

Quirk (1988) maintains that it is not necessary to acquire the values and culture of the target language group while learning the target languages. In this case, he is referring to the English language. He makes a crucial point when he argues that what matters is to teach a "genuinely useful" international English without the imparting of Landeskunde (Quirk, 1988).

English in South Africa as indicated above, is perceived as an access language to the world community. However, in black education, there are several constraints in teaching and learning as it was shown in Section 1.1 mainly, because the majority of ESL black teachers have had inferior training and as a result, they have great difficulty overcoming mother tongue interference, both in their own proffered model of usage and in those of their pupils. Zotwana (1989: 276) reaffirms this view when he maintains that "as a language teacher, one has to deal not only with the control of one's language deviance from the standard, but also with that of the students. This is not an easy task, for the students do not only have problems with adjusting to the language of the school, but also do not see any need for doing so".

The following examples do not indicate an emergence of a new language variety. But they merely show the developmental phases of the cline (c.f. Kachru's cline of competence - Sections 3.3, 5.3.2 and 7.5.3).

(a)   Me and my friend instead of "my friend and I" (a colloquial white usage as well)

(b)   Don't eat all that money instead of "don't spend all that money."

(c)   Do you see him! instead of "he is provoking me."

The sentence (a) above, is a direct translation from first language: "Mina na nsati wa mina" (Xitsonga), "Nna le mosadi wa ka" (Sesotho), "Mina nomkami" (isiZulu). All these sentences start with "me". From the examples (a, b) above, it is evident that sentence (a) is a direct translation from black languages but it is strongly colloquial mother tongue English too.

In African culture, the speaker always begins by referring to himself or herself first, i.e. "me", whereas, in standard English we begin by the referent: "my friend". Examples (c) and (d) are also a direct translation from black languages. However, they differ from (a) above.

(c)   (isiZulu) ungadli yonke leyo mali

      don't eat all that money - don't spend all that money.

(c)   (Xitsonga) U nga dyi mali yaleyo hinkwayo

This expression (c) at times can cause intelligibility problems as the two words "eat" and "spend" do not mean the same thing in English. In other words, this idiomatic expression does not exist in English. The following expression can also be misleading to an English mother tongue speaker:

(d)   (isiZulu) Uyambona! - Just look at him!

(d)   (Xitsonga) Wa n'wi vona! - Just look at him!

This expression (d) has an underlying meaning. It's often used when someone provokes you and then you address the third person next to you. This same expression to the English native speaker would mean literally "seeing someone".

The errors shown above (a - d), are minimal and insignificant. These characteristic features are not consistently or reliably realised. They occur mostly at the bottom of the

cline of bilingualism. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. The point, briefly, is that not all black speakers of English would necessarily use these phrases, and phrases like them. In what sense then, is there a black English?

The other difficulty as noted in Section 1.1, facing the majority of ESL black teachers is that classes are large with an average pupil:teacher ratio of at least 80:1 which, to say the least, must heavily inhibit attention to individual pupils' progress. The Gauteng Department of Education is beginning to address this problem of teacher/pupil ratios. All the Gauteng schools with the teacher/pupil ratios above 40 (primary) or 35 (secondary) are gradually decreasing their ratios and those schools below these ratios are increasing their numbers. This process started in January 1996.

Lanham (1965:201) maintains that in sheer desperation, especially in larger classes, teachers often resort to choral verse speaking, recitations and mass speech drills, all of which encourage unthinking language usage. It is worth noting at this point that transformational generative grammar and structuralism contributed to these recitations and mass speech drills, all of which encourage unthinking language usage.

Transformational generative grammar (Stern, 1983: 144) recognises language as a "rule-governed system". These rules which are not only intricate but also quite abstract are made explicit by a transformational generative grammar. Learning a language involves internalising the rules.

Structural linguistics, it was argued, does not lead to an understanding of a language as a system of rule-governed relationships. In language teaching, it sanctions imitation, memorisation, mechanical drill, and practice of sentence patterns as separate and unrelated items. It has limited use provided that the process does not stop at pattern drill.

Both teachers and pupils in black schools have limited exposure to standard English speakers. This was caused by the now defunct 1953 Bantu Education Act and Group Areas Act which made it very difficult for blacks outside white areas to achieve regular contact and practice in ESL.

Furthermore, the social function of English for black South Africans has not been adequately studied. In black education, the concept of English as a second langauge is used loosely especially in urban areas where different language groups interact and intermarry. Children in this context often begin their elementary education having acquired their second, third or even the fourth language. English therefore, does not necessarily become the second language, but the fifth or sixth language. In this study, this concept of "English as a second language" (ESL) will be maintained and used with regard to all non-native learners and users of English.

It has been indicated earlier that English in black schools is taught predominantly by black teachers. In the lower standards, many black teachers are severely limited in the English they can offer the children and indeed, they prefer to use their mother tongue in class. In competence and intelligibility, the English of these children consequently falls to low levels. In his 1965 (p. 204) article as noted earlier, Lanham indicates that "the most serious consequences of ineffective English teaching in black primary schools only become evident in the last years of secondary school education."

Lanham argues that there was a time when the standard of English teaching was high and this gradually declined after the demise of the mission schools in the early 1950s. By 1965 (p. 200), however, Lanham argues that "only a very small percentage of older primary school teachers, located mainly in the English speaking cities, belonges to a generation that commands the best African English on the continent," a command that has been destroyed by apartheid education since 1953.

There are several organisations closely involved in teaching and learning ESL, or in assisting black teachers to improve their teaching skills, for example, The English Academy of Southern Africa which was established in 1961 to represent English language (in the broader sense) practitioners, academics and those interested in maintaining standards of English usage in South Africa. This Academy has long targeted black education as one of its major interests. Several of its members have done tremendous work to assist black teachers of English, especially in poetry teaching, oral work and dramatics. In 1973, The English Academy of Southern Africa organised a highly successful conference which was held at the University of Lesotho. Out of this

conference emerged the English Language Information Centre (ELTIC) which now acts as a resource centre of English language teaching materials and expertise. ELTIC's main focus now is on multilingualism in education. It is currently running pilot projects in multilingualism in Pretoria Districts One and Three.

Lanham (1978) an internationally known linguist, embarked on a research project in 1962, which was aimed at assisting black teachers to improve their pronunciation of English. The project which began as a series of experiments in eighteen Soweto schools, was planned to provide, eventually, a teaching programme for the crucial first four year period at primary school. The main aim of attention in the experiments included:

*   a systematic attack on aberrant African English pronunciation, including an attempt to provide authentic models of English in the classroom in the form of recorded materials.

*   the teaching of English reading using a phonemic alphabet.

The use of tape-recorded models of correct pronunciation was central in the whole project, giving teachers and pupils classroom access to a mother tongue pronunciation model.

Lanham's aim was to equip black teachers and thereby, hopefully, their pupils, with a model of English which is easily understood by all South Africans. However, his main focus was on pronunciation rather than looking at the whole language package. While pronunciation is important to a certain extent and must be mentioned, it must be seen in perspective when standard English is discussed. Nevertheless Lanham's concern that spoken English should be of a kind that was widely comprehensible, should not be passed over unthinkingly.

As pointed out at the end of chapter one, Strevens (1977) and Quirk (1993) exclude accent in their definition of standard English. Therefore, all the other language aspects such as grammar, lexis and vocabulary should be addressed. These are actually even

more important because the English-using countries share these features to a greater extent than pronunciation. This issue is dealt with fully in chapters 3 and 4.

2.4   SEMANTIC CHANGE

This section seeks to highlight the crucial point that semantic change, coinage and lexical borrowing are processes by which English is creating and expanding its lexicon as an international language. These processes do not necessarily lead to a new language or variety. A language may gain or lose lexical items. Fromkin and Rodman (1983) argue that it is also common for lexical items to shift in meaning, providing yet another way in which languages change. They maintain that there are three ways in which a lexical item may change semantically. Its meaning may become broader, its meaning may become narrower; its meaning may shift.

*   **Broadening**: When the meaning of a word becomes broader, that word means everything it used to mean, and then it includes other new meanings. For example, the word "holiday" originally meant "holy day", i.e. a day of religious significance.

*   **Narrowing**: In this case the meaning of a word is narrowed. To a speaker of seventeenth century English "meat" meant "food" and "flesh" meant "meat".

*   **Meaning shifts**: The third kind of semantic change that a lexical item may undergo is a shift in meaning. For example, the word "bead" originally meant "prayer". During the Middle Ages the custom arose of repeating one's prayers (i.e. beads) over and over again counting them by means of little wooden balls on a rosary. The meaning of "bead" shifted from "prayer" to the visible manifestation of a prayer. English in South Africa has also acquired new meanings, when ESL usage is in question. The following are some of the examples of ESL uses which have emerged as a result of native language transfer. For example

Father: biological father

Small father: uncle

Big father: uncle

Father: step father

Mother: step mother

The adjectives attached to "father" have something to do with the notion of the extended family in the traditional kinship system. Cousins are referred to as "brothers" or "sisters" in order to strengthen their relationship. Words such as "uncle", "aunt" and "cousin" are perceived in this case, to distance and displace their close relations. These examples do not signal the beginning or the existence of a new English. They provide an occasional South African flavour to our colloquial usage. Nevertheless, they do show how a process of acculturation can lead to language development and expansion as noted earlier in this section. This issue will be discussed fully in chapter 5.

Let us re-examine and explore the development of ESL further. Lanham (1982:329) maintains that many blacks in the 1880's "were attracted to the mining cities" like Johannesburg and adjacent urban areas such as the famous Sophia Town and Alexandra. Several of these blacks were fortunate to receive missionary education. It was noted earlier in this section that this is the period when the "Royal Reader English" emerged. This is an English reader which was commonly used in mission schools. The Royal Reader English was based on the Grammar-Translation Method. Richards and Rodgers (1986) cite Johann Seiden-Stucker, Karl Plötz, H S Ollendorf and Johann Meidinger, as some of the Grammar Translation Method proponents. As the names above suggest, GTM was the offspring of German scholarship, the object of which was "to know everything about something rather than the thing itself" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). For example, learners had to analyse rules of the language rather than learn how to communicate effectively in the target language. It was first known in the USA as the Prussian Method. The principal characteristics of the GTM were to:

*   learn a language in order to read its literature, a language is approached first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language;

*   focus solely on reading and writing, with little or no systematic attention paid to speaking or listening skills.

For example, the Royal Reader was translated into isiZulu and it was used in the different native schools of the Natal Colony by the late superintendent of the Government Zwartkop Native Industrial School (Gibbs, 188.7):

Text: The Skylark (E: English; Z: isiZulu):

E.   The skylark is a very famous bird in England.

Z.   I skylark li yinyoni e dumekile kakulu England.

E.   It is called the skylark because it flies up high in the sky.

Z.   Li bizwa i skylark kukuti ilark lezulu, ngokuba li ya ndiza pezulu ezulwini.

This, as was indicated earlier in this study, was perceived by black learners as the best quality of English as there was no international standard, the only standard was educated Southern British. Hence those who had the privilege of attending and graduating from such schools, and are still alive today, invoke and lament the good old days when they were taught "pure" English by English mother tongue speakers. Most of them, as pointed out in chapter one, attribute the decline of the standard of English to the demise of mission schools in the early 1950's. There may be a case for this in fact. In his 1979 article, Lanham maintains that the products of the missions were an elite group with high competence in English, a deep insight into the world of English values and ideas and a strong language loyalty to English which nevertheless remained for the great majority a "second language" or as black educators now prefer: "a second first language". The main point is that a body of teachers whose own usage was sound served a relatively small number of children in relatively small classes.

It was noted earlier that South African English (SAE) has not yet been institutionalised. There are only two fully institutionalised varieties: American English and British English. An institutionalised variety is one which according to Wright (1993:6) quoting Quirk (1990: 6), is "fully described and with defined standards observed by the institutions of state". Wright argues that other native varieties such as Australian and

South African English "are on the way to developing their dictionaries, grammars, language bureaux, syllabi and curricula which may eventually establish them as institutionalised." At the moment there is a debate going on addressing this issue. While there is indeed a dictionary of South African English, how many other features of local grammatical usage are there that would require a distinctive codification in grammars and teaching grammars?

Furthermore, it is useful to take a holistic approach when dealing with the language situation in South Africa. Rather than tackle the English situation exclusively in the South African context, we should look at it globally. Strevens (1977) and Quirk (1993) address the question of institutionalisation satisfactorily (c.f. chapter 3). They provide a detailed account of what standard English is and should be. They view it as a universal non-regional dialect without any affinity either with a particular region or with a particular accent. Quirk (a letter to Titlestad, 4 October, 1994) argues that "since standard English is basically the shared vocabulary of the English-speaking countries, it can in no way be said to be basically a written form. He further makes the point that the shared vocabulary is spoken 99,9% of the time, written for 0,1%."

In other words, Strevens and Quirk perceive standard English to be a variety which is used by "educated" people who make use of English all over the world. This variety may also be spoken with a non-regional accent i.e. Received Pronunciation, but RP is not necessarily a feature of standard English. For example, Quirk (1993) argues that Clinton, Keating, Mandela and De Klerk all speak standard English. This concept of standard English will be dealt with in chapter 3 in greater detail.

In future, whatever choice South Africans will make with regard to a standardised South African English will be determined by various factors. We live in a shrinking world called a "global village". It has been shown in chapter one that in order to communicate internationally, for economic, technological, educational and political purposes, we need English. Needless to say, it has become the world language. The variety of English that is viable at the moment is standard English. Earlier in this thesis, we have noted that there are only two institutionalised varieties of English, i.e. the British and the American standard English.

At this point we need to return to Moag's five phases of language spread and development. It is clear from the discussion earlier in this study that his phases do not seem to address all linguistic questions and issues facing our South African society adequately. These phases are therefore, an attempt to categorise various historical issues and language change and development in the new environment in order to make them more understandable. Quirk (1988/1995) provides a more comprehensive language spread framework.

2.5   QUIRK'S LANGUAGE SPREAD MODELS

Quirk (1995:32) tackles the spread of English differently from Moag's approach. He argues, firstly, that language spread can "traditionally and endemically" be caused and "accompanied by population spread." He gives an example of Gujerati which is spoken in England because groups of Gujerati-speaking immigrants have settled there.

Secondly, he maintains that "language spread may reflect the spread of ideas without much population movement." He gives an example of the spread of scientific information, computer technology and pop music through the medium of English.

Thirdly, he claims that language spread may reflect political domination with only sufficient population movement to sustain an administrative system and power structure.

Quirk terms these three phases:

*   the demographic model
*   the econocultural model
*   the imperial model

2.5.1   The demographic model

Language is regarded "as one of the prime bases of nationhood." Between 1800 and 1940, as Fishman (1982) reminds us (in Quirk, 1995: 33), no fewer than three dozen new standard languages were recognised in Europe alone, resulting from the growth of

rationalist movements. From the intensity of nationalism beyond Europe, especially during the past thirty or forty years, came the recognition of analogous linguonational identities to be numbered not by the dozen but by the hundred. Nonetheless, nationhood realised through a single language is widely regarded as ideal. Quirk refers to it as Demographic Model A. Among the major countries, perhaps Japan comes closest to Model A. More usually, we have the Demographic Model B, which results in multilingual nations such as South Africa, India, Nigeria etc.

A less common product of demography-led language spread according to Quirk, is the emergence of countries which are politically separate but which share a language. The demographic pattern includes examples as various as Arabic in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, and elsewhere. This last demographic pattern is called Demographic Model C.

2.5.2 The Econocultural Model

"While the demographic model is relevant in some degree to all languages," the econocultural model of language spread according to Quirk (1995:34) applies more to English than to any other language. This model raises questions relating to standards. Quirk argues that these questions concern two broad areas:

*   the general and
*   the restricted.

The first area i.e. the general, is concerned mainly with the authorities responsible for setting standards in the education systems.

He maintains that in his own experience, the issue that worries education ministers is not the choice between American and British standards, but

(1)   what they detect as an increasing unwillingness or inability to identify standards in America or Britain, and

(2)   what they infer from (what Quirk, 1988: 232 calls) the false extrapolation of English "varieties" by some linguists.

What worries Quirk most, are the political or regional labels attached to English. He gives a pertinent example which reaffirms his position regarding varieties of non-native Englishes. While he was in Japan he was asked whether Japanese learners should settle for the "relaxed and clearly insulting goals" of "Japanese English", called by foreign expert advisors "Japlish" (Quirk, 1995: 35). Quirk regards these labels such as "Japanese English", "Nigerean English", Ghanaian English", "Indian English" etc. as false extrapolations from established varieties (American and British standard varieties). In other words, it is not clear if these labels stem from linguistic, political or racial background nor is it clear whether the mistakes of EFL learners can rightfully be said to constitute a "new English". This issue will be further discussed in chapter 5.

The second area of standards raised by the econocultural model is called "restricted". Quirk gives examples of the English used in transnational corporations, for example in service manuals for electronic equipment in non-English speaking countries. He makes the point that English for these purposes has to reflect not only what is going on in America and in Britain, but equally what is going on in Japan and the Soviet Union. In other words, English serves the mutual communication internationally. He therefore argues that it is under these circumstances that the motivation is strongest for the establishment of standards that are "genuinely and usefully international" (Quirk, 1988/1995: 36).

2.5.3 The Imperial Model

This is Quirk's third model. He (1988/1995) gives examples of the imperial model during the actual colonial times. He indicates that the British ran Nigeria in English; the Germans ran Tanganyika in German. Local elites spoke the imperial language and became the more elite in so doing.

He argues that when the Germans withdrew from Tanganyika in 1918, their linguistic footprints were obliterated. But his counter example is that when the British withdrew from Lagos, English remained. He gives justification for this situation:

*   English serves as an ethnically neutral link language between Ibo and Yoruba;

* the British were in Nigeria longer than Germans were in Tanganyika;

* the English evolved complex educational and administrative structures which involved the indigenous population in running these systems;

* English seems to the Nigerians to be a more useful language econoculturally in communication with the rest of the world and also as a linking language within Nigeria.

Quirk then goes on to challenge the desirability and feasibility of a local standard within the imperial or econocultural model of linguistic spread. He expresses his concern regarding varieties of the non-native English. For example, "Nigerian English", "West African English", "South African English", "Singaporean English". He argues that these labels are misleading if not entirely false, he claims that the analogy is derived from designations like American English, or Iraqi Arabic. He further cites an example of the label "black English"; he argues that quite often it is used by sociolinguists to mean different things e.g. the "mother tongue non-standard English" in the Caribbean and North America are likely to refer to their varieties as "black English" while in Africa, black users of English would also label their English as "black". These designations as we will see in chapter 3, are not grounded on linguistic terms alone but also on political terms. Black users of English wishing to distinguish themselves from white native speakers, tend to use these sorts of labels to make that distinction.

To sum up, we have looked at Moag's five phases (c.f. Section 2.3.1) by which human language may be spread, localised and developed. In his approach he was able to show what happens to a language when it spreads beyond its borders to other areas and nations.

Quirk on the other hand, goes beyond this question:

* He also looks at what happens when a language spreads to other areas.

* He then looks at how this spread takes place.

* He also brings in the most important factor which Moag does not address, that is, the economic, scientific and informational power factor (the power of the econocultural model which is the powerful factor these days).

2.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have attempted to put ESL in South Africa in its linguistic, economic and social perspective. At the moment, English enjoys higher status compared to the other ten official languages. Our need for English in South Africa is certainly econocultural. In other words, at the moment we need English for tertiary education, we need all the international advantages that English can bring, we need standard English to have access to world knowledge. We need it for law and commerce.

English is also seen as the language of western "success" and increasingly in South Africa, it is perceived as the language of unity, power and politics. Furthermore, it carries with it unrivalled access to pedagogical, scientific and technological resources.

However, there is a case against English. Some of the South Africans perceive English to be a kind of ecological disaster that will smother all other languages (Titlestad, 1996a: 3 - Langtag opening address). Titlestad argues that there are those South Africans who think that English would help to drive a wedge between the affluent and poor. He further points out that "the Minister of Education's recent language policy announcement, frees communities from the need to teach English or use it as the language of learning, and frees pupils from the need to offer English for matric. However, this raises the question of equipping matriculants for tertiary education."

According to the Pan SALB policy discussion document (March, 1995: 12), the current status of English leads to "the linguistic disempowerment and socio-political disadvantagement of the non-English speakers since they usually feel inhibited in speaking their mother tongue in public ..." This situation according to this discussion document, is conceived to be contrary to current internationally accepted linguistic principles and that it constitutes an infringement of people's language rights.

It is important to note that the position of English, especially in education should be approached within the global perspective. In response to the concern raised against the status of English, the NEPI Framework Report (1993: 182) talks of "ensuring that all South Africans have access to English, without jeopardising the use (and expansion) of

African languages".

Titlestad (1996a: 3 - Langtag Opening Address) makes a key point that if the case against English is "taken up in any serious degree by our schools, the effect for the foreseeable future will be to deprive academically gifted children of the opportunity to go to university, and to cripple South Africa for lack of highly qualified person power".

Let us turn back to the "black English" debate. Let us imagine that the so called "black English" were to be accepted as a new standard and codified in South Africa, at which point of the cline would we find features which are fixed and codifiable? What would be the consequences both for the teaching of English and for the international uses of English?

At the moment, codification of black English is inconceivable because the ESL learner's "interlanguage" system (which refers to the language system used by the ESL learner between L_1 and ESL) "is permeable, in the sense that rules that constitute the learner's knowledge at any one stage are not fixed" (Ellis, 1985: 50).

Earlier in this study we have shown that Moag's language model has limitations. We have also looked at Quirk's three models in terms of which human language may be spread. Quirk (1995) argues that most government authorities and industrial organisations in the countries concerned seem to believe - not unreasonably - that any local variety and especially one of uncertain stability, will be of diminishing usefulness in contrast to the native-speaker-based standard English with its world-wide currency.

The next chapter (3) examines several issues which have been raised earlier in this study, especially the key concept of "standard" and "black English". Furthermore, chapter 3 explores the implications of non-native uncoded varieties of English in the ESL classroom.

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