

## CHAPTER 5

### QUIRK'S VIEWS REGARDING THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding two chapters (3 and 4), the main focus was on persistent ESL learners' errors. The question of errors has always been a cause of great concern to the ESL teachers and textbook writers. This chapter therefore, seeks to explore various key positions held by sociolinguists regarding the spread of English. In other words, the South African debate around English is part of the international debate.

We have also pointed out that English is generally acknowledged to be the world's most important language. It is spoken as a native language by more than 300 million people, most of them living in North America, the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean and South Africa (Quirk et al, 1985: 4).

In about twenty-five countries English has been legally designated as an official language, in about ten of these countries it is the sole official language and in some fifteen others such as South Africa and India, it shares that status with one or more other language/s. Most of these countries are former British territories.

We have seen in chapter 2 how English spread to all the different parts of the world. Quirk (1988) provides a useful model. He indicates that language spread is caused and accompanied by

- \* population spread (demographic model)
- \* spread of ideas (econocultural model)
- \* political domination (imperial model).

It was noted earlier that the "emergence of English as the international language in a

large number of domains has implications which are rightly becoming a matter of widespread discussion among both linguists and the general public" (Honey, 1996: 99). Honey argues that in the face of the increasing number of the functions for which English is regarded as more useful or convenient than any other language, and the growth in the numbers of its speakers and learners who may now number as many as a quarter of the entire population of the world, it is only slowly that we are beginning to sort out the practical and theoretical implications. Honey regards English as a "megalanguage". He maintains that it is spoken by millions of people and that it enables these people to participate in the most advanced forms of modern knowledge, including science and technology. He further makes an important point when he says that "other megalanguages like Russian, Japanese and Arabic, on which huge resources have been expanded to enable their speakers to participate in modern science, are now struggling to keep up." For example, he claims that "the textbooks now used for advanced degrees in some Japanese universities are now necessarily in English."

Honey makes an important point when he claims that "credentials of English as a megalanguage are strengthened by the extent of its use in two international domains, information technology and entertainment, especially vocal music." He further argues that neither German nor any other megalanguage poses any threat to that predominance. He maintains that "most of the scientific and technological developments have either taken place in, or been rapidly appropriated by, the Anglo-Saxon world." Standard English or general purpose English is the language of the bulk of conferences and is the language of science. Very many people therefore have good practical reasons for wanting to learn standard English.

However, Odumuh (1994), Ndebele (1987) and Buthelezi (1989/1995) reaffirm Kachru's position noted earlier in this thesis, when they call for the recognition and acceptance of "local varieties" of English taking their place among the other international varieties. They advocate for codification of these local varieties of English.

Unlike Ndebele, Buthelezi and Kachru, Odumuh admits that there are problems of identification, for example, of "Nigerian English". He poses a key question which

indicates the complexity of this issue:

"If Nigerian English exists, what are the parameters for identification?" There seems to be fewer problems identifying those institutionalised varieties "in the sense of being fully described and with defined standards observed by the institutions of state" (Quirk, 1995: 24). As noted earlier, there are two: "American English" and "British English". Quirk maintains that there are one or two others with standards rather informally established, notably "Australian English".

Honey (1996: 114) makes an interesting point about "standard English". He argues that standard English is "superior" to other varieties of English. This of course, is a contentious assertion. We need to explore it further. Dialectologists according to Honey start from the assumption that all dialects are "linguistically" equal. "But what," Honey asks, "do the word "linguistically" mean? And how can it be irrelevant to the evaluation of linguistic equality or adequacy that a particular language or dialect may have a vastly greater vocabulary than another, or greater grammatical or stylistic resources?"

More recently, Ben Rampton (Honey, 1996: 109), a linguist at Britain's Thames Valley University has declared that "it is now quite widely recognised that the idea of linguistic equality was overstated". Joseph (1987 - in Honey, 1996: 110) a supporter of the theory of linguistic equality, at least had the grace to admit that this position in its absolute form is somewhat naive and that the notion of the equal adequacy of all dialects is a dogmatic assertion that has never been tested.

The concept of "standard English being superior" to other varieties or dialects seems to be inappropriate and subjective. Quirk (a letter to Titlestad, 4 October, 1994) gives an appropriate definition of standard English. He claims that standard English is "basically the shared vocabulary of the English speaking countries". It was also noted earlier in this thesis that Quirk uses an alternative concept called the "general purpose English". In other words, what distinguishes standard or general purpose English from non-standard varieties is the fact that standard English fulfils broader linguistic functions than the non-standard varieties. These functions have been illustrated throughout this

thesis.

Nevertheless, Honey makes valid points when he justifies the use of the notion of standard English being conceived as superior. He argues that, the linguistic grounds which make standard English a qualitatively superior variety for the fulfilment of a wide range of functions in modern society are its greater lexical, grammatical and stylistic resources and the fact that the "congruence factor" inhibits speakers of many dialects from incorporating such "educated" linguistic resources into their own dialect. This view is supported by the Chairman of the Cox Committee discussed elsewhere in this thesis when he asserts his personal view that "standard English is superior to the other dialects" (Honey, 1996: 114). He makes the point that the attitude to promote uncodifiable varieties of English "tends to ghettoise the underprivileged", while these advocates of these varieties "themselves would never dream of allowing their own children to speak a (non-standard) dialect" (Honey, 1996: 114).

This latter point was precisely the argument of "The Language Trap" (Honey, 1983 - in Honey, 1996: 114), and a similar point is made by Deborah Cameron in respect of Afro-American intellectuals who claim, with some bitterness, that the promotion of the Black English Vernacular by linguists such as Labov "will be to disadvantage inner-city children". Lastly, Cameron makes a key point that "since nobody else but linguists believe that all varieties are equal, for educationists to act on it was indeed to perpetuate social disadvantage". In South Africa, if we allow black English to be advocated as the language of learning, we will be perpetuating the Verwoerdian philosophy of keeping blacks at the bottom of the pack.

Schmied (1991: 174) takes this debate of developing a local variety further. He argues that a closer look at this debate reveals some of the difficulties involved. There is lack of:

- \* a detailed description of the performance varieties at all levels of the continuum
- \* the identification of an acceptable level for a standard that would on the one hand be sufficiently close to other standards English especially the international

standard, to ensure linguistic intelligibility, and on the other hand sufficiently distinct from them to convey African culture and ideality

- \* the codification of the national variety in dictionaries, grammars or teaching handbooks
- \* the propagation of it in the national mass media
- \* the acceptance and widespread use of the national variety of English by an educated majority.

The fundamental questions raised throughout this thesis regarding the acceptance and recognition of non-native varieties of English in education, remain unresolved:

- \* What do teachers teach?
- \* Where do we draw the line between "errors" and the national variety of English?
- \* Which language books should the teachers use?
- \* How do the teachers deal with the learners' errors?

This debate will be explored further in chapters 6, 7 and 9.

We have also seen earlier in this study that Kachru shows complacency when he settles for a variety of educated Indian English "low" on the cline (Kachru, 1982). He even suggests that this variety would replace the well established institutionalised varieties of standard English (i.e. Standard British and American English). His proposal does not seem to be practical. For example, second language learners who are still at the bottom of the cline do not yet have a "stable" form of the target language. In other words, what do teachers teach? Are there textbooks, grammars and dictionaries? For practical educational as well as functional reasons, learners should aim at the highest level of competence on the cline.

The other difficulty is that we must be able to identify a fixed cut-off point on the cline at the level where the non-native variety's grammar and lexis are stable and identifiable so that we must be able to codify the non-standard variety and make the variety

teachable and codifiable. The teaching of a cline with all its contradictory forms is hardly practicable.

Quirk on standards in his recent House of Lords speech raises the question of "lower" versus "higher" standards of ESL raised by Kachru earlier. "Quirk (1990: 1) makes a pertinent remark that "it is neither liberal nor liberating to permit learners to settle for "lower" standards than the best, and it is a travesty of liberalism to tolerate low standards which will lock the least fortunate into the least rewarding careers."

## 5.2 THE QUIRK CONCERNS REGARDING THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH

In this section, we explore some of Quirk's concerns about the spread of English and Kachru's reply to these concerns. In his 1985 article, Quirk has attempted to address the controversial issue of standards in the global context. He maintains that during Shakespeare's time, English was not in global use. In those years, it was known exclusively to native speakers. Now English is in daily use all over the world. With the growth of national separatism in the English speaking countries, many foresee a fissiparous future for English. Quirk does not share this view. He argues that "we have increasing dependence on a common technology whose development is largely in the hands of multi-national corporations" (Quirk, 1985: 3). He further maintains that "we have strong world-wide will to preserve inter-comprehensibility in English" (1985: 3). In 1990, Quirk wrote an article reacting to a document which was published by the Department of Education and Science (in London) on the teaching of English in Britain. There was much dissatisfaction in this document with what teachers taught, how they taught and the results of teaching as they showed in the capabilities of the British school leavers. Quirk's main focus in a series of articles has been the question of standard and variation.

Quirk examines the teaching of English outside Britain; specifically in countries where English is not a native language. The main thrust of his paper is to express deep dissatisfaction with, what he calls "liberation linguistics". The concerns expressed by Quirk are a direct challenge on the positions held by many sociolinguists about the

"pluricentricity and multi-identities of English" (Kachru, 1991: 4). Quirk (1990: 9) makes a sharp criticism of "liberation linguistics" advocating as we have seen earlier, that "it is neither liberal nor liberating to allow learners to settle for lower standards than the best".

- (1) His first concern is the fact that the interest in new Englishes has got out of hand and has started blinding both the teachers and taught to the central language structure from which varieties might be seen as varying (Quirk, 1990: 4).

He refers to the Kingman Committee which found that teachers were distracted by the belief that children's capacity to use English effectively in Britain "can and should be fostered only by exposure to varieties of the English language".

- (2) Quirk's second concern refers to what he calls the "profusion" and "confusion" of types of linguistic variety that are freely referred to in educational, linguistic, sociolinguistic and literary critical discussion. He gives the following examples (Quirk, 1990: 4):

- legal English
- American English
- Working-class English
- BBC English
- Black English
- Computer English
- Ashkenazic English

He argues that these varieties are on desperately different taxonomic bases. He gives as an example "legal English" which refers to a style that may be used equally and at times indistinguishably in American English and British English.

On the other hand, he indicates that "Ashkenazic English" is a term which has been used to characterise the usage of Ashkenazic Jews in the United States. He

questions whether it holds for Ashkenazics living in Britain or Australia.

- (3) The third concern which has been fully discussed in chapter 3, involves the distinction between "institutionalised" and "non-institutionalised" varieties of English. In one of his latest articles, Quirk claims that only the American English and British English are institutionalised. In other words, they are "fully described and with defined standards observed by the institutions of state" (1990: 6). He further indicates that most non-native varieties are not institutionalised.
- (4) His fourth concern involves some teachers of English who believe that "any notion of correct or incorrect use of language is an affront to personal liberty" (Quirk, 1995: 26). Quirk goes further to draw an interesting analogy that "if recent history has given us a 'liberation theology', why not also a 'liberation linguistics'? The trouble, as the Kingman Committee sees it, is that such educational fashion went too far: giving the impression that any kind of English was as good as any other and that denying this, nothing less was at stake than "personal liberty" itself. By contrast, the Kingman Report sees such an educational ethos as trapping students in their present social progress and their geographical mobility.
- (5) The fifth concern involves the widely recognised and justified sociolinguistic and pedagogical notion of ESL and EFL. Quirk argues that his econocultural model of language spread is as applicable in India, Singapore and Nigeria as it is in Japan, Germany and Russia. He claims that there is certainly no clear-cut distinction between ESL and EFL. In order to reinforce his view, Quirk poses a challenging question: "is English used instrumentally and intranationally among Norwegians and among Germans less heavily than among Indians?" He further asks that if that be the case, "is it more a difference of degree than of kind?" (Quirk, 1990: 10).
- (6) The sixth concern refers to English used and taught for local purposes (this concern has been raised in earlier chapters of this study). Quirk (1988) argues that if we accept with Kachru that the majority of India's (estimated) 23 million English users have a norm, that is low on the cline of Englishness, he wonders who gains as a result of this. Students obviously stand to lose.



Regarding the implications of selecting the local variety as a norm in education, he argues that "students, liberally permitted to think their new variety of English was acceptable, would be defenceless before the harsher but more realistic judgement of those with authority to employ or promote them. He further regrets that "they have in effect been denied the command of standard English which ... is more likely to increase the freedom of the individual than diminish it" (1990: 10).

- (7) Quirk (1990: 9) expresses his last concern regarding "the buoyant demand for native speaking English teachers which means that one often finds, in Tokyo or Madrid, young men and women teaching English with only a minimal teacher training, indeed with little specialised education: they are employed because, through accident of birth in Leeds or Los Angeles, they are native speakers of English". He argues that not merely may their own English be far from standard but they may have little respect for it and may well have absorbed the linguistic ethos that is simplified into the tenet that any English is as good as any other.

Finally, the last point could be added as the eighth concern. Kachru does not raise the question of language pockets and mobility of teachers and pupils. Most of all, Kachru does not indicate what the teachers should teach. In South Africa, if we are to have mixed schools, pupils and mobility of teachers, then group characteristics become all the more doubtful.

### **5.3 KACHRU'S POSITION REGARDING THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this section is to examine some implications of the global diffusion of English focusing on issues raised by Quirk in the preceding sections. Kachru (1985) views the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles representing the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages.

We need to revisit some of the questions raised earlier in this study (Kachru, 1985) regarding the spread of English:

- \* Who controls the international norms?
- \* What types of innovations and creativity are acceptable?
- \* What are the factors which determine a norm for a region?
- \* What are the parameters for the acculturation of English?

Kachru examines the above concerns within the framework of his image of three concentric circles.

### 5.3.2 Kachru's Concentric Circles of world Englishes

Kachru (1985) categorises the world Englishes into three concentric circles namely:

- \* the inner circle
- \* the outer circle
- \* the expanding circle

The inner circle consists of all the native English speaking countries such as Britain, America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

We have indicated earlier that in countries where English is a non-native language, the major models for both writing and speech have generally been the standard varieties of the inner circle especially the British and the American English with allowance made for pronunciation.

Ahulu (1994: 26) argues that it is "important for teacher trainers and curriculum designers to know what forms they are recognising and emphasizing as the educational target. He further stresses that "there can be no purposeful and effective teaching/learning without any required standard." Earlier, it was noted that there are linguists who argue strongly for the acceptance and recognition of the non-native

varieties of English. This situation leads us to the second circle, i.e. the outer circle Englishes.

The second circle involves English being used as a second language. Kachru (1985) says that the outer circle needs a historical explanation. He maintains that it involves the earlier phases of the spread of English and its institutionalisation in non-native contexts.

Kachru argues that the political histories of regions where non-native varieties are used have many shared characteristics: these regions have gone through extended periods of colonisation, essentially by the users of the inner circle varieties. He further argues that the linguistic and cultural effects of such colonisation are now a part of their histories and as a result they cannot be wished away.

Furthermore, Kachru claims that in functional terms the institutionalised varieties (British and American English) have three characteristics, first, English functions in what may be considered traditionally "un-English" cultural contexts. Second, English has a wide spectrum of the development and domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an internal and an international language. Third, English has developed nativised literary traditions in the novel, short story, poetry and essay. In other words, Kachru argues that English has an extended functional range in a variety of social, educational, administrative and literary domains.

Abbott (1991) acknowledges that English in each region will have an indigenous lexical set but points out that a certain grammatical, lexical and phonological uniformity is needed which can be provided by what he calls mother-tongue Englishes. He warns of the united scope for mutual comprehension internationally if the main features of each form of English become too divergent.

The third circle termed the "expanding circle", brings to English yet another dimension. The users of English in this circle use it as a foreign language. Kachru (1985) maintains that the geographical regions characterised as the expanding circle do not necessarily

have a history of colonisation by the users of the inner circle. He further highlights that this circle is currently expanding rapidly in terms of numbers. He also alleges that it is the users of this circle who actually further strengthen the claims of English as an international or universal language.

He further indicates that countries such as South Africa and Jamaica are not easy to place within the concentric circles since in terms of the English using populations and the functions of English, their situation is rather complex.

In addition, he states that the outer circle and the expanding circle cannot be viewed as clearly demarcated from each other. He argues that the status of English in the language policies of such countries changes from time to time. What is an ESL region at one time may become an EFL region at another time or vice versa.

These regions according to Kachru (1985) are geographically distant from English-speaking nations of the inner circle and this factor, he cautions, has serious implications for the learning and teaching of English.

Kachru goes on to emphasise that these three circles, bring to English a unique cultural pluralism, and linguistic heterogeneity and diversity which are unrecorded to this extent in human history. With this diffusion he admits that naturally it would bring scores of problems concerned with codification, standardisation, nativisation, teaching and description and a multitude of attitudes about recognition of various varieties and subvarieties of English. In 1965, Kachru talked of the cline with three measuring points:

- \* the zero point
- \* the central point
- \* the ambilingual point

It appears that there is a difference in the logic of the two images - the "cline" and the "concentric circles".

His earlier cline, shows the different stages of ESL development from the lowest point when the learner comes into contact with the English language for the first time. This language contact could be between the learner and an English mother tongue teacher or a non-native ESL teacher. It was shown earlier in this study that the growth from the zero point to the highest point of the cline, i.e. the apex, depends mainly on the ESL teacher's ability and the quality of his or her teaching. Kachru's cline of bilingualism concerns ESL learning as a process without separating the first, second and the foreign language learning into different pockets. However, his concentric circles model represent different types of English, i.e. mother tongue, ESL and EFL. He does not seem to indicate any overlap within these three circles. For example, other users of English such as Indians, Coloureds and blacks etc in his model would simply be classified under the "outer circle" as ESL users despite the fact that some of these so-called "non-natives" use English as their first language or home language. To include South Africa in this outer circle is not in fact to heed Kachru himself closely, for he warns that South Africa does not fit neatly into this pattern (Kachru, 1985).

Kachru's Concentric Circles Model is too simplistic. The real situation in different communities is more complex than the mere three "concentric circles".

Furthermore, his model as indicated earlier, does not address the fundamental and central questions:

- \* Which variety of English within the "circles" is viable for pedagogical purposes?
- \* What does the ESL teacher teach?

The logic of his model must be questioned. Titlestad (1995: 189) raises two concerns regarding these circles:

- \* Do the indigenised Englishes of the "outer circle" really become new Englishes in relation to the scope inclusivity and use of the international standard form?

- \* The expanding circle is a misnomer. These English foreign language areas basically want to acquire a standard English for international use, not a language for internal use. English is not expanding although numbers might. This is evident from the Eastern European countries which are currently demanding standard English in order to join the "global village" and participate economically, technologically, scientifically etc. with other English speaking countries.

In one of Kachru's earliest articles entitled *Models of English for the Third World: "White Man's Linguistic Burden or Language Pragmatics?"* Kachru (1976) claims that in the multilingualistic and culturally pluralistic context of India, the English language has naturally developed its regional, social and occupational varieties just as a living language is expected to do. He further maintains that the standard or educated variety of Indian English cuts across these regional varieties, in the same way as does standard American English in America or standard Scots in Scotland (1976: 233). It is not clear what Kachru means by "educated variety" - it was noted in chapter 3 that educated varieties of English form part of the general purpose English.

Kachru's comparison between the Indian varieties of English and the American and Scottish English is not clear and is at the same time farfetched because English is a mother tongue for Americans and Scots (with their dialectal differences) whereas it is a second language for Indians especially in India. On the one hand we have the native varieties of English and on the other, the non-native varieties. He fails to distinguish between written variety and spoken. What do schools teach?

Furthermore, Kachru argues that a fraction of Indian English speakers whose aim is to interact with those speakers of English who use it as their first language, certainly have such goals in mind if they desire positions in the foreign service or international business, or if they desire interaction with the international scholarly community, to be proficient in a model which is "very high" on the cline of intelligibility (1976: 235). Kachru's proposal is difficult to implement, especially with regard to the question of the pedagogical models in education. Earlier in chapter 3, we have seen that Kachru

(Quirk, 1988) maintains that on the cline of bilingualism, the models for ESL teaching may be "low" on the cline, and that they exist and work, and they call for the replacement of "pedagogical models" that have become "suspect". Are the new models codified in grammar and textbooks?

On the other hand, in his 1976 article, he maintains that the Indian English speakers whose goal is to interact with mother tongue speakers, should aim for a model which is "very high" on the cline. In other words, he implies that those who do not wish to interact with the English mother tongue speakers should aim at the lower levels of the cline. Again, what is the teacher supposed to teach? To which pupils? In one of his later articles (1991), Kachru shifts from his earlier bidialectal position of condoning basilectal English to be used in education, when he argues that for teaching purposes, one might focus on one specific variety and at the same time emphasize awareness and functional validity of other varieties. This is bidialectalism. It has been shown earlier in this study that bidialectalism does not work - it actually compounds the teachers problems in the ESL classroom.

### 5.3.3 Indianisation of English

Kachru (1986) argues that Indianisation is mainly the result of the impact of Indian languages on English and of conscious or unconscious innovations in the language to functionally adapt it to the local milieu. Odumuh (1984) reaffirms this view when he says that 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 everyday discourse.

Kachru further argues that the processes of Indianisation goes beyond the surface linguistic levels and involves the underlying cultural presuppositions and their linguistic realisations.

Kachru (1985) gives the following linguistic features which characterise Indian English:

\* Contextually determined collocations:

- . tiffin carrier < a carrier of a snack or a light meal
- . Himalayan blunder < a grave or serious mistake
- \* Hybridisation
  - . Swadeshi hotel < a native, vegetarian hotel
- \* Comparative constructions
  - . as low as an elephant, as good as kitchen ashes

The following examples come from Kachru's (1986: 32) selected glossary of Indian English:

- \* England-returned < one who has been to England for educational purposes
- \* batch-mate < a classmate or fellow student
- \* co-son-in-law < any one of several sons-in-law
- \* to stand on someone's head < to supervise carefully

Mathai (in Greenbaum, 1993:82) argues that some of the examples of Indian variants of English "are clearly misuses or bad translations of Indian idioms." He indicates that "many of these are regional or heard only at certain levels, and would not be understood even by some Indians." Mathai further argues that the regional standard language, as elsewhere, would in fact tend to be non-regional and represent the consensus of educated speakers world-wide as illustrated earlier by Quirk and Strevens. It has also been argued that English in India constitutes a continuum of competence in language, but of course a similar continuum of competence is observable in native speaker countries. And a continuum or cline again raises the question of how to codify this variety in India illustrating the whole problem of determining what is a local variety or standard in this kind of fluid situation, and once again, the difficulty of what the teachers teach.

Svartvik (1985) has criticised some of Kachru's examples stating they conform to English rules. This situation however, does not reflect anything "new" but merely demonstrates English word formation process. In other words, in different English speaking countries, users coin new words and new idiomatic expressions which name



specific things in that locality. This simply does not signal the beginning of a new variety of English except in a very limited way. However, there are also fossilized forms which may range from the "basilect" to the "mesolect" levels. These fossilized forms also do not indicate the beginning of a new English because they occur at different levels and therefore difficult to codify. It is also difficult for some of the Indian or Nigerian English users to align themselves with anything "lower" than standard English. Kachru refers to this conflict as the users' linguistic schizophrenia. He says that this is shown in a complex love-hate relationship with the language. This means Indian English users have a dilemma when they are faced with the two varieties of English, the local and the international varieties. He concedes that some Indians do opt for standard English. Kachru (1986: 32) maintains that the middle classes prefer English-educated women in matrimony, and he also claims that "England-returned" and "American-returned" grooms are in demand. The reason for this preference is that they see these two countries as being scientifically, technologically and economically advanced. Kachru also admits that all social classes prefer English medium schools for their children.

#### **5.3.4 Kachru's response to Quirk's concerns - "Liberation linguistics and the Quirk concern"**

This section examines Kachru's response to Quirk's views described above in 4.2. These concerns were first expressed by Quirk in 1985 at the 50th Anniversary Celebration meeting of the British Council in London.

The main thrust of Quirk's recent papers (1983, 1988, 1990 and 1995) is to articulate his deep dissatisfaction with what he calls "liberation linguistics". Kachru (1990) alleges that the concerns Quirk expresses are an attack on the positions which sociolinguists have taken about the spread of English, its functions and its multinorms.

Kachru (1991) sharply criticises Quirk about his concerns, he refers to Quirk as "a

venerable scholar" whose life-long desire is to maintain what he considers "standards" for international English and the world's need for a functionally successful international language. He does however agree with Quirk that English "is the best candidate at present on offer" (Quirk, 1988/1990). However, Kachru argues that in expressing this concern, Quirk has not only thrown out the bath water, but with it the baby of sociolinguistic realities.

Kachru further accuses Quirk of perceiving the spread of English primarily from the perspective of monolingual societies and from uncomplicated language policy contexts. He argues that the concerns he expresses are far from the realities of multilingual societies and negate the linguistic, sociolinguistic, educational and pragmatic realities of such societies.

Kachru also attacks Quirk by saying that in articulating his concerns, he is not presenting an alternative model for describing and understanding the diffusion, functions and planning of multilinguals' linguistic behaviour with reference to English.

In addition, Kachru thinks that the arguments presented by Quirk contribute towards the development of a framework for what he refers to as "deficit linguistics". He believes that Quirk's "deficit linguistics" entails the following six assumptions:

- \* Rejection of the underlying linguistic motivations for the range of variation and suggesting that such variational models are motivated by an urge for linguistic emancipation or what Quirk calls 'liberation linguistics'.
- \* Rejection of the sociolinguistic, cultural and stylistic motivations for innovations and their institutionalisation.
- \* Rejection of the notion of institutionalisation of the non-native varieties of English (in this case black English is a good example).
- \* Rejection of the endocentric norms for English in the outer circle.

- \* Rejection of the distinction between the outer circle (ESL) of English and the expanding circle (EFL).

Odumuh (1994: 5) reinforces Kachru's position when "he called for the recognition of the existence of "Nigerian English" as a variety taking its place among other varieties, (he) advocated its immediate codification (i.e. producing a dictionary of Nigerian English and writing its grammar) and did not hesitate to propose using this as a model for teaching in Nigerian schools". Ahulu's (1992) research casts doubt on whether these varieties of English do exist when he gives an example of "Ghanaian English". He argues that the corpus shows no grammatical categories that regularly occur divergently only and never standardly. He maintains that if we accept the general view that there is a distinctive Ghanaian English usage that can be clearly distinguished from standard practice in terms of such tendencies as "omission of articles, pluralisation of non-count nouns, etc. then we must allow for a great deal of overlap between Ghanaian English usage and standard practice in the language produced by educated Ghanaians."

He further makes an interesting and illuminating observation that "educated Ghanaians do not consistently omit articles in every context where standard practice would require them, nor are non-count norms consistently made to take the regular plural morph whenever they are expected to have semantically plural interpretations."

Unlike Kachru, Odumuh admits as noted earlier in this chapter that there are problems of identification of Nigerian English - he poses a question which indicates the complexity of this issue: "If Nigerian English exists, what are the parameters for identification. We seem to have little problem recognising American English - the hallmarks are spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and idiom" (Odumuh, 1994: 8).

The crucial question which does not seem to have been resolved is what do teachers teach in Nigerian schools?

Quirk (1995) makes a pertinent point when he says that the trouble as the Kingman

Committee sees it, is that such an educational fashion of promoting local varieties of English went too far, grossly undervaluing the baby of standard English while overvaluing the undoubtedly important bathwater of regional, social and ethnic varieties: giving the impression that any kind of English was as good as any other. The Kingman Report sees such an educational ethos as trapping students in their present social and ethnic sectors and as creating a barrier to their educational progress and their career prospects.

Ahulu (1992) makes a key point that those with authority in education and professions, who more or less determine the educational and career prospects of learners, do not accept the linguistic ethos that is simplified into the tenet that any form of English is as good as any other.

#### **5.4 ABBOTT'S RESPONSE TO KACHRU'S ARTICLE - "LIBERATION LINGUISTICS AND THE QUIRK CONCERN"**

It was pointed out earlier in this chapter (c.f. section 5.2) that Quirk's "concerns" were prompted by a document which was published by the Department of Education and Science (in London) on the teaching of English in Britain. There was much dissatisfaction with what teachers taught, how they taught and the results of teaching as they showed in the capabilities of the British school leavers. His main focus has been the question of "standards" and "variation". This debate, he has extended to the other English speaking countries in India, Africa, Europe, America etc.

In his article, Abbott (1991: 55) critically examines Kachru's response to Quirk's concerns, highlighted in section 3.3.1 and discussed earlier in this chapter. He draws our attention to Kachru's views that things have changed linguistically and demographically since imperial days. He acknowledges this view. He further makes an interesting point regarding the diversity of the English speaking community around the world. He proposes an establishment of some sort of "Commonwealth of Englishes" to bring unity among the users of English in the diverse three circles, a partnership of equals in which each can express individual, social and cultural identity in the manner

intelligible to other members. However, he does not show how this proposal can be implemented. Nevertheless, it is interesting and it requires to be explored further.

He makes a point that where intercomprehensibility is needed solely for intranational purposes, a national standard can be formulated so as to ensure that for example, "Hausa English" and "Igbo English" more or less conform to the "standard Nigerian English" laid down. This is where Quirk and Abbott differ sharply because Quirk thinks these labels are misleading (c.f. section 5.2 for full discussion). Ahulu (1992) supports Quirk's position. He claims that arguments rejecting the pedagogic notion of "standard English" and suggestions that all forms of English are equal, have resulted in a confusing proliferation of the labels shown above.

Abbott further admits that in every country today English is seen as a valuable international commodity. He also concedes that there are different vested interests, aims and requirements in Kachru's three circles. Nevertheless, he argues that each has an interest in ensuring the intelligibility of the English used by its adults in international contexts. This point reinforces Quirk's position regarding non-native Englishes.

Furthermore Abbott concurs with Quirk (1990) that the wish to liberate the outer and expanding circles from the hegemony of the native speaker shows a fine anti-imperialist attitude. He acknowledges that the idea of the establishment of standardised nativised Englishes is attractive as a way of fostering national pride. But he argues that there is a "catch". This catch he claims lies in the great difficulty of ensuring intelligibility within and between the outer and expanding circles without recourse to a common model.

Abbott shares Quirk's concern that these Englishes are all subject to the disparate influences of various mother tongues and mother cultures, and he fears that without a shared model they could be held apart and may tend to grow even further apart.

Finally, Abbott warns that the countries of the outer circle could of course devise and promote their nativised Englishes, but this would be to distance themselves from the

huge body of information printed in standard English. He even doubts if the countries of the "expanding circle" would follow suit. He then supports Quirk's standpoint that there is a strong case for using native speaker Englishes as models, he claims that it is one of common sense, even of necessity, and that it is not motivated by linguistic imperialism. He argues for teaching a "genuinely useful" international English without the imparting of *Landeskunde*. In Quirk's article "The question of standards and the international use of English" in *Language Spread and Language Policy* (Quirk, 1988), he emphasises the need for the "econocultural" model of English, the one that brings knowledge and provides international communication. He rejects the notion of *Landeskunde* (a German word) which he says is increasingly undesirable. This means the study of a culture along with the study of a language.

## 5.5 RESPONSES TO QUIRK'S AND KACHRU'S 1985 PAPERS

The following section focuses on the direct commentaries to both Lord Quirk's and Professor Braj Kachru's papers on the "English Language in the Global Context" in 1985 at the 50th Anniversary celebration meeting of the British Council in London when the debate began.

### 5.5.1 Kennedy's response to Quirk's presentation

Kennedy (1985) expresses his reservations and doubts about some of the views advocated by Quirk regarding the desirability of a global standard. In response to these, Kennedy argues that the issue of "standards" in countries where English is a native language is fundamentally an attitudinal and especially and aesthetic one. He maintains that the standards which emerge are those of the groups which have power and prestige in the economy, entertainment, the media and the arts.

Kennedy echoes Abbott's and Quirk's concerns regarding the question of "intelligibility". He argues that it is very easy to use English internationally and not be understood. He further acknowledges the validity of Quirk's argument for the recognition of a global standard. However, he doubts whether that is within the bounds

of the possible. What seems to be required in order to attain the global standard, is to improve ESL and EFL teaching. According to Quirk (1995: 27), all the students know perfectly well that their command of standard English is likely to increase their career prospects - and that teachers and taught alike accept the basic conclusion that it is the institution's duty to teach standard English.

Furthermore, he takes issue with Quirk over the statement that there is a "relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries)". He argues that whenever there has been careful research on the use of English in an ESL context, an organic complexity has been revealed in functional range, use and purpose, and that it is what the users of the language do, not what a small élite would like them to do which counts in the end.

The answer to this according to Kennedy is to ask what are the functions beyond a street corner lingua franca that English performs? Also, what academic resources are there if English is removed?

He maintains that the vast majority of users of English tend to adopt local varieties, regardless of the admonitions of English teachers. He claims that even in the case of English native language countries such admonitions may have had, as a primary effect, a lowering of self-esteem rather than a change in language behaviour. Finally he concludes this debate by asking the question: although standards of English may be adopted or encouraged, can they influence significantly the directions English moves in and the use of English in a global context? But this is precisely what keeps it standard. Not regional but global use.

### **5.5.2 Crystal's response to Quirk's presentation**

On the other hand, Crystal (1985) in his response, agrees with Quirk's position on standard English. What concerns him though, is the way the discussion of standards ceases very quickly to be a linguistic discussion, and becomes instead an issue of social identity. Crystal is worried that this social identity perspective is missing in Quirk's

presentation of English as a global language.

Crystal (1985) further elaborates on the question of social origins. He maintains that the notion of "social origin" is evident in the dictionary definitions of the term, i.e. "something established by authority, custom or general consent as a model or example" (Longman Dictionary of the English Language). He argues that the term renews its connection with society whenever there are arguments about usage though often the social assumptions remain below the surface.

He gives the following pertinent example, applicable at a local level: the arguments used by teachers when correcting a child's written English are often couched in purely linguistic terms: "you shouldn't use "ain't" - why? - because it isn't standard English". Crystal argues that this is to identify the problem, not to explain it, and that any follow-up question of the sort - But why do I have to write/speak standard English? leads inevitably to social reasoning (the need to pass exams, to get a job, to qualify as a member of a profession, and so on).

This example leads us to the notions of "appropriateness"; and "correctness". Corson (1994) maintains that we learn criteria of "appropriateness" when we acquire different language varieties. Each variety has its own set of 'implicit recommendations that are purpose related and the use of these recommendations is context specific' (Corson, 1994: 275).

The example given above shows that teachers lack of understanding or tolerance of the non-standard variety of English. The child's expression "ain't" is not appropriate in a formal context. However, it is correct and appropriate in an informal context.

On the other hand, Corson maintains that we learn criteria of correctness when we decide on firm language rules of syntax, semantics and phonology and apply these across all the varieties of a language. When we ignore these rules of a language, we move outside it completely.



Teachers therefore, have to be sensitive to non-standard varieties of English. Learners have to be made aware that their non-standard variety is not inferior but that it is inappropriate for pedagogical purposes.

Crystal finally asks the following intractable and thought provoking questions:

- \* the question should not be so much, do people use English internationally, but in what state of mind, with what attitude, do they use it?
- \* Are they proud of it, or ashamed of it?
- \* Do they see it as a strength or as a weakness?
- \* Who do they see themselves being identified with, when they use it, and are they happy to be so identified?

The focus of these questions is on attitudes and perceptions about the English language. Nobody would doubt the validity of these questions. However, language attitudes and perceptions neglect that other vital aspect of language planning; i.e. what language is used for outside native speaker groups.

It was noted earlier that some languages, notably English, "perform valuable functions beyond their groups. English is the language of most books in our significant libraries, a resource that will never be replaced, but is likelier to expand" (Titlestad, 1996 - Langtag Workshop on Language Equity). As the Framework Report of NEPI puts it (1993: 182), our education system especially in South Africa, should "ensure that all South Africans have access to English because it is currently the language of access to further education, and because it is an established lingua franca in South Africa, without jeopardising the use of African languages." Lastly, it was shown earlier that standard English is the shared English of all users world wide.

The following discussion will shed more light with regard to some of these questions.

### 5.5.3 Greenbaum's response to Kachru's presentation

Greenbaum (1985) admits that Kachru has touched on a large number of important issues in his paper. In response to Kachru's views regarding global English, Greenbaum focuses on standardisation, which in his view is central to the theme of global English.

Greenbaum points out that Kachru has argued in favour of the developing of norms in the "Outer Circle" of English speech fellowships. Kachru claims that in some ESL countries local educated varieties are becoming increasingly recognised and accepted locally as "standard varieties" in their own right, despite the negative response by some non-native speakers of English. But this raises all kinds of questions. For example,

- \* are there so called "standard varieties" taught in schools?
- \* are there dictionaries and grammar books written in these varieties?
- \* are they accepted by education authorities as pedagogical norms?
- \* in which sense are they standard?

Kachru seems to be contending for the recognition and acceptance of these varieties and that this should be extended internationally, particularly by those in the "Inner circle" of English speech fellowships i.e. the native English speakers. He does not seem to have considered Greenbaum's questions, even in more recent writings.

Kachru reaffirms Quirk's (1988), Kennedy's (1985) and Abbott's (1991) position regarding the question of intelligibility which in Greenbaum's view is a central issue. However, Greenbaum differs from Kachru's view when he makes the point that even in the British Isles, speakers do not understand each other's English. He further argues that although dialect speakers from different regions may not understand each other, those who use the "shared" standard English will understand one another world wide.

Greenbaum also indicates that at the international level, the differences between the national standards of the "Inner Circle" are relatively few, except for pronunciation. And even the pronunciation differences are not a major impediment, once the speakers

have tuned into each other's system of pronunciation.

Furthermore, Greenbaum raises very crucial concerns which have been raised earlier by Abbott (1991), questioning Kachru's position regarding ESL whether the educated varieties of the "Outer Circle" can assume the status of national standards without reference to the international norms of the "Inner Circle", whether they would diverge too far to remain part of the international standard English.

He goes on to raise his concerns about the learning and teaching of English:

- \* Will there be sufficient time devoted to the learning of English?
- \* Will the teachers have an adequate command of the language?

One could add to this the question of choices made at the education system about which forms to sanction and which not and how these forms should be supported by textbooks and grammars.

Finally, he sums up his section by stating that if the emerging national standards are to remain intelligible internationally, then the countries of the "Outer Circle" will have to invest heavily in the teaching of English.

#### 5.5.4 Svartvik's response to Kachru's presentation

Jan Svartvik's (1985) response to Kachru's presentation is interesting, especially because he belongs to the so-called "Expanding Circle" (EFL), being a Swede. In a way, his response partly echoes Greenbaum's crucial question raised earlier in this section: "Whether the educated varieties of the "Outer Circle" could assume the status of national standards without reference to the international norms of the "Inner Circle", whether they would diverge too far to remain part of the international standard English."

Svartvik maintains that the Swedish speakers of English regard the "Inner Circle" as their model of English, whether their interests are literary, linguistic or narrowly orientated for specific purposes.

The Swedish peoples' norm according to him is solidly native-speaker based, in spite of the fact that very few EFL-users will ever get close to, let alone internalise, the rules of such a norm. He also recommends that ESL users in the outer circle too, could benefit more from a native-speaker norm.

Svartvik's strong argument in favour of English as an international medium is that it is the most widely used language, and that it will remain usefully so only as long as it remains intercomprehensible.

He further puts his case clearly, when he argues that his preference for the native-speaker norm is based on functional criteria, not on the notion of "correctness" or social status or even admiration of the political systems of the English-speaking nations. He also clarifies his position regarding his recommendation of the "Inner Circle" variety as a model that it is not based on fear of "deviations" (which would occur anyway, even when there is a home-based norm).

His prediction for the future of English in the world today is that it will work in the direction of greater homogeneity. He argues that when discussing norms a distinction

between speech and writing would be made. He makes an important point that English grammar is strikingly homogeneous in the different standard varieties of written English. He argues that examples cited by Kachru, such as "Himalayan blunder", which means "a grave or serious mistake", "black money" (black market), "I telling" (I will tell), "I done tell" (I have told) and "done come" (actually arrived), idiomatic collocations such as "my shoes are biting me" and my "nose is watering" ... show that these innovative examples tend to adhere to standard word formation rules. Mathai (Greenbaum, 1990: 82) argues that many of these type of examples which are referred to as Indian English are regional or heard only at certain levels, and would not be understood even by some Indians. Therefore, these examples raise the question of whether Indian English is in any sense a coherent body of linguistic detail. In other words, Kachru's list of examples does not seem to constitute an Indian English, but an occasional Indian flavouring in relation to the scope of "general purpose English".

He sums up his debate by exhorting the non-native English users to the effect that for them the acquisition of English is an investment worth the effort and the money only as long as the language functions are perceived as a means of international communication for a range of purposes.

Finally, Svarvik concurs with Quirk and he also challenges Kachru's views regarding standardisation of the different varieties of English. He questions the validity of having a variety of norms even for institutionalised outer circle fellowships, considering the likely long term negative consequences for global English.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

In order to conclude this chapter, we need to reflect on some of the key issues addressed in the preceding sections. Arguments were advanced for and against two main positions held respectively by Quirk and Kachru:

- \* the desirability of a global standard

- \* the establishment, promotion and recognition of non-native national varieties of English.

The advocates of the first position, argue that English is the most powerful language in the world today. All the leading countries in the world, especially in the economic arena, make use of English for marketing their goods. World organisations such as United Nations and the Security Council, use a common language (e.g. English). In Africa, the Organisation of African Unity makes use of English too, even though they have expressed or wish for an African language policy, but they do not seem to have made progress.

The only difficulty regarding this position is that it does not provide mechanisms or proposals on how to keep the world Englishes together. Kachru (1991) asks a pertinent question challenging the feasibility of this position: can international codification be applied to a language which has over 700 million users across the globe?

The proponents of the first position advocate that current institutionalised varieties of English should remain the pedagogical norms for outer and expanding circles.

The second position maintains that non-native contexts bring to English a unique cultural pluralism, and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity. As a result of this, it is contended that these non-native Englishes should be liberated from the hegemony of the inner circle English varieties. Kachru also endorses the variety low on the cline as the pedagogic model. Quirk (1990: 7/1995: 26) dismisses this view and he perceives it as "trapping students in their present social and ethnic sectors and as creating a barrier to their educational progress, their career prospects, their social and geographical mobility". Quirk asks further whether Indian English has been codified and whether there are grammars that make educational use possible. In other words, is the teaching apparatus there and have the necessary linguistic decisions been taken.

It has been suggested (c.f. Section 5.3.2) earlier in this thesis that for English to succeed both as a local and a global medium of communication, its users would need

to acknowledge and acquire, where appropriate, "norms" for both domestic intranational and international communication. Kachru elaborates briefly on the question of "norms". He gives three types of norms especially for the "Outer Circle" and the "Expanding Circle":

- (1) Norm-providing varieties (Inner Circle):  
these varieties have traditionally been recognised as models since they are used by the native speakers. Historically, the British variety was generally accepted as the model and it is relatively recently that the American model has been presented as an alternative model. It has been a model in e.g. the Philippines or South America.
- (2) Norm-developing varieties (Outer Circle):  
in regions using these varieties there has been a conflict between linguistic norm and linguistic behaviour.
- (3) Norm-dependent varieties (the Expanding Circle):  
people who learn English as a foreign language, depend entirely on the Inner Circle as a model. This is also evident in Svarvik's argument earlier in this chapter.

This whole debate comes back to our doorstep in South Africa. South Africa has just rejoined the international community. To meet the needs of effective global communication, we therefore must invest in the teaching of English. However it is also crucial that we should have a model which teachers can aim at.

Ashworth (1985) argues that standard English is the best model to employ where English is used as an international language. However, she suggests that a local form of English may be the preferred model where English is used for intranational purposes. It is difficult to negotiate between the two varieties in the practicalities of teaching. Instead of teaching the two varieties, it is advisable to strive for the international standard proficiency. Those who fail to attain the highest point on the cline, may not

be intelligible to other users of standard English, but they are usually understood by their immediate community. In this case, they would have limited access to technological and scientific advancement, provided through standard English. In any case, the intranational model is not codified for teaching purposes and it will actually look after itself in terms of everyday use. It does not need to be taught.

Quirk (in a recent article in *The Times* - 12 July 1993) highlights "the apparently wilful misconceptions that make it easier to keep the classroom available for class war. There is the myth highlighted earlier in this thesis by Quirk, for example, that standard English entails a particular accent - talking posh. It does not. He argues that only a trifling minority of standard English speakers have such an accent and standard English is spoken equally well by Bill Clinton, Paul Keating, Virginia Bottomley and John Smith - not to mention Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk".

The issues raised and discussed in this chapter relate to the spread and diffusion of English within the framework of the various language functions that must be fulfilled in society. The following summary of the points are examples of language functions with special reference to South Africa (Titlestad, 1995 and 1996a-Langtag Opening Address):

- \* The needs of both English and the other ten major South African languages noted in chapter 2 must be met. Fortunately, the new Constitution provides for the development and promotion of black languages. This includes the question of initial literacy and the medium of instruction in education.
- \* We must strike a balance between sensitive nationalistic feelings and the reality of language function in society.
- \* South Africa needs a lingua franca or even more than one, in order to facilitate internal communication. English at the moment plays this major role. However, a certain uniformity of usage is encouraged in order to maintain "intelligibility".



- \* There is also a need for an international language. In order to keep abreast of the world developments, not least with the rest of Africa, we need standard English. In other words, the future of English as an international language rests on the practicability of teaching the language.
- \* English is the home language of 3,5 million South Africans.
- \* The need to have access to the majority of books in our major libraries.
- \* The requirements of the law and of legislation must be met. This requires a standardise language rather than an evolving poly-model which is 'unstable' and difficult to codify.
- \* The requirements of government, of parliament and of civil service must be met. Government departments in different regions must communicate with one another in a standard from of language or languages.
- \* English is currently a significant language in parliament (97% of speeches).
- \* The needs of business and commerce must be met. The International Monetary fund brings different communities of the world together. And they need a common language to put the financial positions of their respective countries. They definitely need a standardized international language in order to understand each other.
- \* There is a need for secondary and tertiary education. English is becoming more and more the main language of tertiary education.
- \* The needs of science and technology must be met. There is again, a strong international dimension to this, and standard English is required. Modern technology makes use of standard English, for example in their manuals and the labels.

English provides access to the print and electronic media.

for these language functions can only be provided and fostered by effective communication systems. These functions are relevant to all English speaking countries in the world. In addition, more, Quirk (1990: 8) makes a crucial point when he gives the following as an example:

"A colleague of mine who this year spent some time working in Kenya told me in a letter: There is heated debate here as to whether there is such a thing as "East African English" or whether the local variety of English is just the result of the increasing failure of the education system".

The same questions are relevant in our South African context and could be asked with reference to South African "black English". South African black English is being developed as a result of the increasing failure of the now scrapped Bantu Education system, this failure appearing to be the main contributing factor towards the declining quality of English in black education. This is not to suggest that specific varieties of South African black English will not emerge, indeed such features may already exist. If these can be accurately described we cannot simply use them as ESL models. The debate raises further questions: How extensive would these variant forms be? Would they constitute a new English? And there would still be the essential uses of the traditional standard. Those who argue in favour of "black English" being used as a pedagogical model are merely completing Verwoerd's purpose in Bantu Education, which was to limit the black populations access to South Africa's chief source of knowledge.

Quirk (1991) gives a very pertinent analogy with reference to the concentric circles model introduced earlier by Kachru. He compares the Englishes in the three different circles to a planetary system. He maintains that "the non-native Englishes are held in orbit by the gravitational pull of a central cluster of mother tongue standard Englishes. Each

that it loses

(including accent)  
Quirk (1995: 29) affirms  
that native and non-  
native Englishes constitute their

require students to  
develop an arena. They  
perform specific functions

learners could opt for  
Quirk suggests that all  
Englishes perform social and  
cultural progress, their  
development of English,  
and that they increase the  
quality of English (Quirk, 1995: 26).

learners should not  
be required to bring it  
to a level more than  
that of the mother tongue - where on  
this basis

## CHAPTER 6

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEVIANT ESL FEATURES - THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters (4 and 5), we have seen the different positions held by sociolinguists regarding the status of the English language in the global context. The main focus of the debate was whether English around the world could be centred on a global standard English or whether the "Outer Circle" Englishes could develop their own independent norms. Most importantly, deviant black ESL features have been discussed and it was concluded that these persistent deviant features are "errors" rather than a development of a new English.

Our goal in this chapter, is to obtain sufficient background and an overview on the psychology of the second language learner and the learning process so that our ESL teaching can become more effective. As a result of this we hope that deviations between South African ESL and standard English, excluding accent, will become minimal in future. However some aspects of lexis can be acknowledged. We must admit that an element of bidialectalism already prevails. For example, one cannot deny "Soweto English" in its own sphere. The problem is the model in education.

Learning a second language can either be productive or useless. One's efforts can end in the acquisition of "native-like" proficiency or a stumbling repertoire of "fossilized" forms. Kachru (1985) claims that a "new English" develops at this point. He argues that "we can therefore regard the new English as a sort of communal interlanguage somewhere between the target language and the mother tongue" (c.f. section 6.1.1 - figure 11). Kachru however, fails to indicate the point on the continuum at which a new English begins for codification purposes. He does not explain how he would distinguish between errors and a new English. And he does not tackle the educational complexities that arise.

One of the major differences between first and second language acquisition is the fact that all normal human beings achieve proficiency in their first language, but manifest great variation in the degree to which they acquire second languages.

The whole issue involves the question of how one goes about learning or acquiring a target language and how a teacher goes about teaching it. In order to be successful, a learner need not have a special inborn talent for learning languages. Both learners and teachers simply need to "do it right".

While the research continues, enough has been learned to suggest that the learner's contributions can help to improve current teaching practices.

We hope that the information about the second language learning processes that is discussed in this chapter will help teachers devise effective lessons and develop materials that enhance ESL developmental tendencies. Such information and knowledge should begin to help teachers understand why ESL students perform well or badly.

The reasons for the occurrence of deviant forms, different from standard English ones are manifold. Several of them have been fully discussed in chapters 4 and 5. This section examines some of the second language acquisition theories. Second language acquisition is a complex learning process. It is slippery in every way. A glance at the last two decades or so of research and practice in language teaching yields a clearer picture.

It would perhaps be more interesting to examine these issues within the framework of "interlanguage theory" which addresses them in broader terms. The concept "interlanguage" was coined by Selinker (1969, 1972). It means the interim grammars constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language. Craig (1971: 375) refers to it as an "interaction area". He maintains that its existence is dependent on the cross influences from the two extremes (mother tongue and the target language).

This section will focus on various uses of this term "interlanguage" and its educational implications. It will also examine research related to this concept and finally, focus on second language acquisition errors.

### 6.1.1 Interlanguage theory and fossilization

Selinker argues that there are different development processes between L1 and L2. He maintains that in the process of L2 acquisition there is a likelihood of "fossilization". He defines fossilization as "the state of affairs that exists when the learner ceases to elaborate the inter-language in some respect, no matter how long there is exposure, new data, or new teaching". Fossilization, it is argued, results from language transfer or other processes. For example, strategies of communication may influence some individuals so that they stop learning the target language once they have learned enough to communicate. Selinker argues that the development of L1 acquisition does not result in fossilization because it is inevitable, whereas there is no such inevitability about the learning of a second language. Corder (1981) argues that the learning of the mother tongue is part of the whole maturational process of the child, while learning a second language begins only after the maturational process is largely complete in their mother tongue. In the South African ESL context, especially in black education, this happens at ten when pupils enter into the higher primary phase. All content subjects at this level are taught in English.

The fossilized forms will be referred to as "errors" in this present study. The making of "errors" as we have seen in chapter 4, is a process followed both by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language. This study centres on the crucial question whether language "errors" committed by ESL learners in education should be corrected or considered as a new English.

Corder (1981) maintains that there have always been two justifications proposed for the study of learner's "errors": the pedagogical and the theoretical justification. The pedagogical justification according to him implies that a good understanding of the nature of error is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them can be found

whereas theoretical justification claims that a study of learners' language is itself necessary to an understanding of the process of second language acquisition. He further says that the teacher has been on the whole more concerned with how to deal with these areas of difficulty than with the simple identification of them.

Corder maintains that in the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought in respect of learners' errors. Firstly, the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place. He therefore concludes that the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school however, is more convincing and it states that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts.

On the other hand, Corder (1981) maintains that the spontaneous speech of the **second** language learner is a "language" and has a grammar. He further argues that since a number of sentences of this "language" are isomorphous with some of the sentences of his or her target language and have the same interpretation, then some, at least, of the rules needed to account for the learner's "language" will be the same as those required to account for the target language.

Corder (1981:15) claims that the learner's language should be called a "dialect" in the linguistic sense (which means two languages which share some rules of grammar):

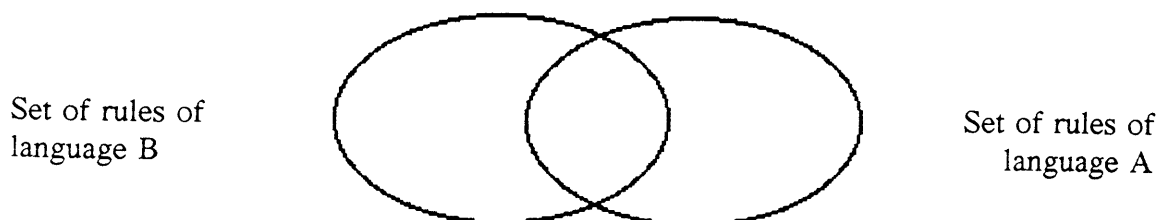
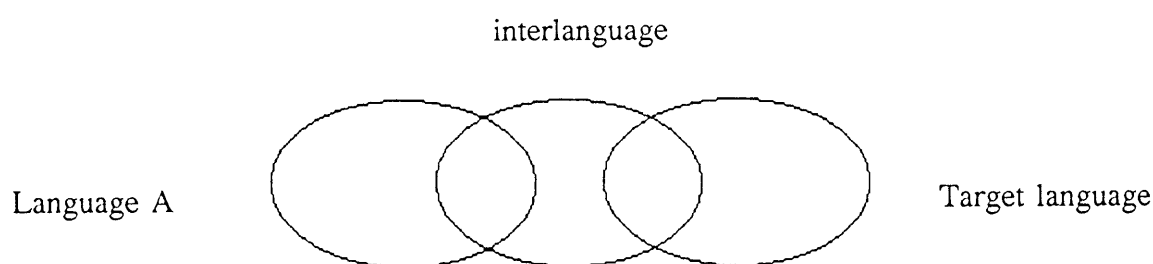


FIGURE 11: RULES OF THE ESL LEARNER'S LANGUAGE AND THAT OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE

Corder goes on to indicate that the ESL learner's dialect is unstable in that its conventions are not shared by a social group.

Selinker (in Corder, 1981: 17) has proposed the name interlanguage for this class of idiosyncratic dialect, implying thereby that it is a dialect whose rules share characteristics of two dialects or languages, whether these languages themselves share rules or not (c.f. Figure 12 below):



**FIGURE 12: LEARNER'S INTERLANGUAGE**

Various alternative terms have been used by different researchers to refer to the same phenomenon; Nemser (1971) refers to "approximative systems" Craig (1971) to "interaction area" and Corder (1981) to "idiosyncratic dialects" and "transitional competence".

These terms reflect two related but different concepts. According to Corder, interlanguage refers to the structured system which the learner constructs at any given stage in his or her development. Second, the term refers to the series of interlocking systems which form the interlanguage continuum.

Ellis (1985) gives the following assumptions underlying interlanguage theory. They are:

- \* at any given time the approximative system is distinct from the L1 and ESL

- \* the approximative systems form an evolving series
- \* that in a given context situation, the approximative systems of learners at the same stage of proficiency roughly coincide.

Ellis argues that both L1 and ESL learners make errors in order to test out certain hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. Corder (in Ellis, 1985) saw the making of errors as a strategy, evidence of learner-internal processing.

We have pointed out earlier in this study that a black English variety in the South African context is not codifiable because it is unstable. This means that it is in the process of development from one point of the continuum to another. It is actually "impossible" at the moment to have a fixed and stable point where it can be codified.

Turning back to "errors", we must therefore make a distinction between those errors which are the product of certain circumstances and those which reveal the learner's own underlying knowledge of the language to date, or what is called "transitional competence" (Corder, 1981: 16).

Corder (1981) argues that the "errors of performance" will characteristically be unsystematic, whereas the "errors of competence" will be systematic. He further advises that it will be useful therefore to refer to "errors of performance" as mistakes, reserving "errors of competence" to systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his or her knowledge of the language to date, i.e. his or her transitional competence. Finally, Nsakalo Lengo (1995: 21) makes a useful distinction between errors made by native speakers and non-native speakers. He maintains that "many of the deviant forms produced by uneducated and less educated native speakers are regarded as non-standard, while foreign language learners' errors are mostly accounted for in terms of their learning stages. Their utterances are tested against the norm for the standard variety of the target language".



## 6.2 ERRORS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Corder (1981) maintains that in the course of learning a second language, learners will produce utterances which are ungrammatical or otherwise ill-formed, when judged by the generally accepted rules of the language they are learning. Ahulu (1994) makes this point very clear when he argues that in fact, there is no "Ghanaian English", but only a set of "errors" that ESL learners throughout the world are likely to make. Kachru, as is explained in Chapter 5, conceives of the term "errors" to mean "creative modifications" of standard English. This section seeks to explore this concept much further.

Corder points out that there are a number of ways in which teachers have regarded, and still do regard, the errors made by learners. He claims that they may consider them as being an unfortunate but inevitable sign of human fallibility. For example, lack of attention or poor memory on the part of the learner, or, if they are modest enough, some inadequacy in their own teaching. In other words, errors arise because there has not been enough effort on the part of the learner or enough explanation or practice on the part of the teacher.

Corder further makes a pertinent point, that there is no need to analyse the nature of the errors, since greater and repeated efforts will correct them. Furthermore, he argues that it is just a random event, and if teaching and learning as highlighted earlier in this study, were maximally efficient, errors would be minimised. In the South African context if ESL teaching and learning can become "maximally efficient", there would be no need to put labels such as "black English" to the English language because the differences between the ESL and standard English will be negligible, especially in grammar and lexis (which are the main components of standard English).

Brown (1987: 268) maintains that researchers and teachers in recent years have come more and more to understand that second language learning is a creative process of construction of a system in which learners are consciously testing hypotheses about the target language from a number of possible sources of knowledge:

- \* limited knowledge of the target language itself
- \* knowledge about the native language
- \* knowledge about the communicative function of language
- \* knowledge of language in general.

Brown (1987: 170) unlike Corder, defines the term "error" to mean "noticeable deviation" from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Kachru (1985: 18) on the other hand, as noted earlier has a completely different view of this concept. He conceives of the term "errors" to mean creative modifications of standard English.

Brown further defines a "mistake" as a performance error that is either a random guess or a "slip" in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly (Brown, 1987: 170). All people make mistakes, in both native and non-native language situations. Brown argues that native speakers are normally capable of recognising and correcting such "lapses" or mistakes which are not the result of a deficiency in competence, but the result of some sort of breakdown or imperfection in the process of producing speech.

Brown gives a pertinent example when he says if an ESL learner asks: "Do you can ride a bicycle?" He argues that he or she is reflecting a competence level in which all verbs require a pre-posed "do" auxiliary for question formation. He further points out that he or she has committed an "error", most likely not a "mistake" which reveals his or her level of competence in the target language.

There are different ways according to Brown, to describe the progression of linguistic development that ESL learners manifest as their attempts at production successively approximate that of the target language system. Unlike Kachru's cline of bilingualism, or Schmied's and Patkowski's models discussed earlier in chapter 3, Brown (1987) focuses on what ESL learners do in terms of "errors" alone in the process of second language acquisition.

The first is a stage of "random errors", a stage which Kachru calls a "zero point"; and

Schmied refers to as a "basilect" stage. This stage is characterised by wild guesses and overgeneralisations. For example, the word "child" in the plural form could become either "childs" or "childrens", said by the same learner within a short period of time. This stage indicates a level of experimentation and inaccurate guessing.

The second stage is called "emergent stage". This stage finds the learner growing in consistency in linguistic production. This stage is almost similar to Schmied's "mesolect" stage and Kachru's "semi-educated" stage. The learner at this stage begins to discern a system and to internalise certain rules. These rules may not be "correct" by the target language standard. Brown argues that generally, the learner is still at this second stage, unable to correct "errors" when they are pointed out by someone.

His third stage is called a "systematic stage" in which a learner is now able to manifest more consistency in producing the second language. Brown maintains that while these rules in the head of the learner are still not well-formed, they are more internally self-consistent and more closely approximate to the target language system. The most salient differences between the second and the third stage is the ability of the learner to correct their errors when they are pointed out. Brown gives an example of an ESL learner at the third stage conversing with the native speaker of English:

Learner: I was write my homework when Sam arrived  
NS: (laughing) I was write?  
Learner: Oh, no, I was writing my homework.

The fourth stage in the development of interlanguage is called the "stabilisation" stage. Here the learner has relatively few errors and has mastered the system to the point that fluency and intended meanings are not problematic. This stage according to Brown, is characterised by the learner's ability to self-correct. It is at this stage where "fossilization" takes place, a concept which was defined earlier in this chapter. We have noted earlier that English at this "systematic stage" becomes "standard English" or an "educated" form of English.

At this point, we need to relate this chapter to the main debate and the key argument of this present study. "Fossilisation" which refers to "relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person's second language competence" (Brown, 1987: 186) occurs at different points (especially at the basilect and the mesolect levels) of the competence continuum. We have seen in the preceding chapters that the "apex" (acrolect level) of the second language learners depends on a number of factors. Most importantly, it depends on some of the questions which were posed earlier in this study:

- \* What is the teacher's native language?
- \* What is the teacher's experience and training?

If an ESL teacher is a non-native speaker and inadequately trained, the possibility is that his or her learners' highest point of competence on the cline would be a distance away from the target language. Kachru as we have seen earlier in this study, seems to incline towards this basilect level. Quirk on the other hand, is readier to see the need on a global scale for an international standard and is far more critical of the logic by which some sociolinguists argue about new forms of English.

### 6.3 CONCLUSIONS

We can draw certain conclusions about the strategies adopted by the learner in the process of language learning. In this sense, error analysis is part of the methodology of the psycholinguistic investigation of second language learning.

Corder (1981) takes this issue further, arguing that since infants learning their mother tongue have been shown to follow a similar course of development, we may speculate that the second language may have some optimum course which represents the most economical route between the first and second language.

Corder (1981) also makes the important point that the practical aspect of error analysis is its function in guiding the remedial action we must take to correct an unsatisfactory state of affairs for learner or teacher. He reiterates the point that has been raised

throughout this study that if teaching and learning were maximally efficient, errors would be minimized.

It is also important to note that even if good programmes for training teachers are developed, many current problems of teaching standard English in an ESL context remain. We need to realise that ESL is best learned in situations that permit maximum face-to-face interaction and much individual attention. An important point was raised earlier namely, that black students in South Africa do not have these opportunities in crowded classrooms and there is a shortage of good instructional materials appropriate to the various maturity levels of the students and their levels of English.

However, if committed pupils and skilled ESL teachers are involved, and adequate facilities are provided, some of the above problems will be overcome. This is reaffirmed by "The Star" editor (28 December, 1994) when he says that "what is missing in all too many of our black schools is a culture of learning and/or teaching".

Brown (1987) also warns that second language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in "a quick do-it-yourself kit". It is a complex process involving a seemingly infinite number of variables and factors. Furthermore, he claims that so much is at stake that academic courses in second and foreign languages are often inadequate training grounds, in and of themselves, for the successful learning of a second language. He further makes a crucial point that few if any people achieve fluency in a target language solely within the confines of the classroom.

What we have seen from the preceding chapters (3, 4), are grammatical and phonological "deviations" which do not affect intelligibility. In order to avoid further deviance, it was suggested that something has got to be done to address the issues raised in this chapter. For example:

- \* lack of skilled ESL teachers and appropriate role models
- \* inadequate ESL resources
- \* separate residential areas

- \* poor teacher training
- \* little understanding by teachers of second language acquisition theories
- \* lack of effective ESL in-service training
- \* overcrowded classrooms.

But some of the issues in Brown's point of view, can be adequately resolved if we look at the teaching process as the facilitation of learning and we know something about the intricate web of factors that are spun together to affect how and why one learns or fails to learn a second language. Brown (1987) suggests that an ESL teacher can begin the quest for an understanding of the principles of second language learning and teaching if he asks the following questions:

- \* Who does the learning and teaching? The answer to this is simply learners and teachers.

More importantly:

- \* Who are these learners?
- \* Where do they come from?
- \* What are their native languages?
- \* What are their levels of education?
- \* What are their socio-economic levels?
- \* Who are their parents?

The answers to these questions are more revealing. Many of the learners who go to the former Department of Education and Training schools, come from a low socio-economic background. The majority of their parents are illiterate. As a result of this situation, learners receive very little language support from their homes. Very few of these homes have books. Many of them do not have electricity. All these factors have a bearing in learning the second language.

Brown asks a second set of crucial questions about the ESL teacher:

- \* What is the teacher's native language?
- \* What is the teacher's training and experience?
- \* What is the teacher's knowledge of the second language and its culture?
- \* What is the teacher's philosophy of education? Most importantly, how do the teacher and the student interact with each other as human beings engaged in linguistic communion?

In black schools, teachers and learners share the native languages. However, what seems to be most important are questions two and three. This issue has been highlighted throughout this study, especially the fact that most of the black ESL teachers have received inadequate training to teach English as a second language.

These questions have been handled in broad terms in order to show the diversity of issues involved in the quest to understand the principles of language learning and teaching in our schools. Unless these issues are addressed adequately and effectively, ESL will deviate more and more from the norms of standard English.

#### **6.4 THE ESL TEACHER'S POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE LANGUAGE DEBATE**

In the preceding chapters (3, 4, 5 and 6), a number of concerns were raised and discussed (we are going to list only six of those, central to this thesis):

- (1) Is there a codifiable variety of black English in South Africa apart from specific phonological features?
- (2) Should we consider individual errors made by individual ESL users, who have been denied decent educational facilities and opportunities, as a new English?

- (3) Is an error/mistake a learner's "error" or part of a new language?
- (4) Are there implications in opting for a non-standard "uncodifiable" variety of English in education?
- (5) Where would one fix the so-called educated black English on the "cline of bilingualism" and does this constitute a new English?
- (6) What are the specifically black features of educated black English?

These issues are at the centre of a hot debate which continues to haunt and confuse the ESL teacher. Ultimately, it is the teachers who remain right at the centre of these concerns.

#### 6.4.1 ESL teacher's dilemma

To simply concede that there is a distinct black variety of English from standard English apart from pronunciation, leaves broad areas of controversy. An ESL teacher for example,

- \* is not trained to teach this variety of English
- \* it is not codified or perhaps not even codifiable at the moment. This means that it does not have its own dictionary, textbooks and grammar
- \* it is not well researched and documented.

Pronunciation as shown in chapter 4, also raises some problems for the ESL teachers and pupils.

The next question facing the ESL teacher (if the black variety of English exists), relates to standard English. What does he or she do with the two varieties of English in the ESL classroom situation. We have seen (in chapter one) how bidialectalists approached this dilemma. Schafer (1982) as noted earlier provides three alternatives:



- \* eradication of the non-standard variety
- \* encouraging the two varieties
- \* acceptance of the non-standard variety as a separate but equal language.

There is obviously no need to "eradicate the non-standard variety". One needs to return to the notion of "appropriateness" which Morse (1973) examined when studying standard English and non-standard Jamaican English. He argues that the Jamaican's native locutions are appropriate for purposes of communication in their native community, they are right and standard English is inappropriate; but since the territory within which they are appropriate is limited and the territory within which standard English is appropriate is world-wide and since moreover no books or magazines and no newspapers outside their native community are written in their native idiom, they must develop some acquaintance with standard English if they are to get through college. This view is also shared by Quirk (1985, 1988, 1993, 1995).

The second option encourages bidialectalism. It has been indicated in chapter one that because of social pressure against both the standard and non-standard varieties, bidialectalism becomes ineffective in the classroom situation. We also noted that non-standard varieties are not codified and teachers are not trained to teach them. It is therefore important for the teachers to have some kind of guiding policy by which to discuss the non-standard varieties.

Time is not available to teach both the standard and non-standard varieties especially if the differences are considerable. A number of questions arise concerning non-standard varieties of English:

- \* How extensive are these non-standard varieties or language pockets of English?
- \* The mobility of teachers and pupils becomes a problem and language pockets a complicating issue.

The last option is concerned with a kind of bidialectalism or the "acceptance of both

standard and non-standard varieties as separate but equal languages". This is plausible. In other words, non-standard does not mean inferior. We need to consider the implications of accepting the two varieties as separate but equal languages. There would be no problem for the teacher as long as these varieties fulfil their respective functions described in chapter one. In other words, as long as the non-standard variety is not used for pedagogical purpose. A non-standard variety will be a barrier to the "highly prized" goal of standard English as stated earlier; which opens opportunities and better prospects and ensures the function of English as an international medium of communication.

Coming back to our South African situation, one has to admit that ESL is characterised by the persistence of peculiar forms and usages that can be found at almost all the levels of the "cline of bilingualism". Several factors which account for these deviations have been highlighted earlier in this study:

- \* poor ESL teacher training (c.f. chapter 9)
- \* inadequate resources
- \* overcrowded classrooms (c.f. chapter 8)
- \* limited exposure to "educated users" of English
- \* poor library facilities

Earlier in this study, it was emphasised that these "deviant usages" do not necessarily produce a new English. Let us look at the following deviant usages:

(1) Are you \* **discussing** about me?  
talking  
writing  
reading

(2) He \* **convinced** the electorate to vote for him  
persuaded  
forced

paid

- (3) I am going to \* **eat** my holidays in Durban  
spend
- (4) James likes \* **crying**  
complaining

Deviant examples such as "discussing" (1) and "convinced" (2) above are collocation errors. Examples (3) and (4) are errors which are specifically the result of mother tongue interference. All the above errors can be rectified if they are detected before they become fossilized. Furthermore, they do not cause communication problems. It is also difficult to characterise these errors (1, 2, 3 and 4) as "non-standard black English" because it is not every black user of English who make these errors and it is also not easy to determine a fixed point on the cline of bilingualism where one can place the user of the above errors.

Furthermore, if we opt for a non-standard English especially in education, the implications will work against us. A non-standard English may not fulfil the major language functions described earlier in this study. For example:

- \* the needs for tertiary education
- \* the requirements of the law and legislation
- \* the needs of business and commerce
- \* the needs of science and technology
- \* access to libraries and the media.

The following pertinent questions raised in chapter 4 still need to be briefly explored here:

- \* Should learner errors be corrected?
- \* Which learner errors should be corrected?
- \* If so, when should learner errors be corrected?

- \* How should learner errors be corrected?
- \* Who should correct learner errors?

The debate on non-standard varieties of English centres on these questions. What compounds the whole issue is the fact that many ESL teachers' English needs attention too. As noted earlier, Buthelezi expresses her concern when she says that "a vicious cycle is perpetuated" whereby learners acquire features of SABC directly from some of their incompetent teachers and then reproduce them innocently.

A number of steps have to be taken in order to address this "vicious cycle". (A holistic approach has to be pursued):

- \* Reviewing of the ESL curriculum, especially at the tertiary and primary institutions where the foundation is laid
- \* Retraining of some of the teachers - especially at the primary school level
- \* Establishment of school-based teacher development programmes to empower and instill confidence in these teachers
- \* Retraining of some of the tutors at the tertiary institutions, especially at colleges of education.

This issue will be explored further in chapter 9. At the moment an ESL teacher is faced daily with these intractable questions. Hendrickson (1980) points out that before correcting student errors, teachers should be able to consider whether the errors should be corrected at all, and if so, why. He goes on to indicate that when students are not able to recognise their own errors, they need the assistance of someone more proficient.

An increasing number of ESL educators suggest that only errors that impede the intelligibility of a message should receive top priority for correction. This approach has long term consequences. Errors which are left unattended to are likely to result in

fossilisation.

Finally, Wingfield (in Hendrickson, 1980) advises that the teacher should choose corrective techniques that are most appropriate and effective for individual learners. He lists five such techniques:

- \* the teacher should give sufficient clues to enable self-correction to be made
- \* the teacher corrects the script
- \* the teacher deals with errors through marginal comments and footnotes
- \* the teacher explains orally to individual learners
- \* the teacher uses the error as an illustration for a class explanation.

#### **6.4.2 Conclusion**

Errors have played an important role in the study of language acquisition in general and in examining ESL. Researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language. If errors are not detected or corrected, they become fossilised. It has been noted earlier in this thesis that Buthelezi argues that these fossilised forms become what she calls "South African black English". In his 1985 article, Quirk has attempted to challenge the notion of what he calls "liberation linguistics" as we have seen earlier in chapter 5. Quirk makes a sharp criticism of liberation linguistics advocating that it "is neither liberal nor liberating to allow learners to settle for lower standards than the best". One of his main concerns is the fact that the "interest in new Englishes has got out of hand and has started blinding both the teachers and taught to the central language structure from which varieties might be seen as varying" (Quirk, 1990: 4).

Schools therefore must prepare pupils for future tertiary education. The Kingman Report as noted in Section 5.3 states that the fashion of promoting local varieties of English traps students in their "present social and ethnic sectors and that it creates a barrier to their educational progress and their career prospects."

Errors therefore, should be seen to be an indicator of the learners' stages in their target language development. From the errors that learners commit, one can determine their level of mastery of the language system (Lengo, 1995: 20).

The success rate of the ESL learners will therefore depend on the following factors described throughout this study:

- \* the qualifications and experiences of the ESL teachers
- \* availability of resources
- \* manageable classes
- \* learners' exposure to standard English.

Finally we conclude by citing Titlestad's advice (1995) that for all students, command of standard English is likely to increase their access to the bulk of books in major libraries and their access to the media and is essential for future academic training. He also warns that teachers and learners should accept the basic conclusion that it is the institutions' duty to teach standard English. This concept of the "teacher's dilemma" will be explored further in section 9.6.

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