

Addressing the 'Standard English' Debate in South Africa: the case of South  
African Indian English

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Declaration of Originality

I, Lisa Wiebesiek, hereby declare that except for the citations in the text and such help as I have acknowledged, this dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted for a degree to any other University.

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## Abstract

This dissertation is an investigation into the ‘Standard English’ debate in South Africa using South African Indian English (SAIE) as a case study. I examine the ‘Standard English’ debate from both a sociolinguistic and a syntactic point of view. Since English underwent a process of standardization in the eighteenth century, the concept of ‘Standard English’ has influenced peoples’ attitudes towards different varieties of English and the speakers of those varieties. ‘Standard English’ has, since this time, been used as a yardstick against which other varieties of English have been judged. In South Africa, where during the apartheid era, language as well as skin colour and ethnicity were used as a basis for discrimination, the ‘Standard English’ debate and the standard language ideology need to be explored in order to draw attention to areas of potential discrimination.

Through an extended review of the literature on the ‘Standard English’ Debate and a particular focus on South African Indian English, as well as interviews with South African Indian participants, I investigate how the ‘Standard English’ debate is, more often than not, a debate about ideology, power and inequality, rather than simply about ‘good’ or ‘correct’ language usage. I argue that language attitudes are, in many cases, attitudes towards speakers, making them a potential vehicle for discrimination and prejudice. I examine the social history of the South African Indian community and SAIE and argue that the unique history of the South African Indian community has affected the development of SAIE and attitudes towards its speakers, and the attitudes of speakers of SAIE toward their own variety. Furthermore, I explore how this history has affected the syntactic structure of SAIE and provide, through a syntactic analysis of South African Indian English wh-questions, evidence for the fact that these constructions are formed on the basis of a systematic and rule-governed grammar that is different to that of ‘Standard English’, but is not, as a result of this difference, incorrect.

## Introduction

The development of local varieties of English in former British colonies has added a new dimension to the ‘Standard English’ debate. This dissertation is an investigation into the ‘Standard English’ debate in South Africa, involving a sociolinguistic and syntactic examination of a local variety of English. The study as a whole comprises of three interconnecting parts: a discussion of the debate itself, a case study of South African Indian English (henceforth SAIE) through which I explore the debate in the South African context, and a syntactic analysis of a feature of the grammar of SAIE which substantiates the discussion of the debate.

Broadly, then, this research involves two lines of inquiry: one sociolinguistic and the other syntactic. Clyne (1987: 242)<sup>1</sup> observes that

[i]f the weakness of recent applied linguistics has been its separation from linguistic theory, so has the weakness of recent theoretical linguistics been its separation from real human problems...Application without theory is mere methodology (an error much of applied linguistics has fallen into). Theory without application is mere speculation (an error which much of theoretical linguistics has fallen into).

The foundation of this dissertation is the argument, following Clyne, that the formal and sociolinguistic analysis can inform and enrich each other. Therefore, in this study, I aim to bridge the gap between socio- and applied linguistics and linguistic theory, thereby providing a more comprehensive exploration of the topic.

The first question that needs to be addressed is: What is the ‘Standard English’ debate? This is a surprisingly difficult question to answer. According to J. Milroy (199: 23) “...what is involved is only superficially a debate about language and is more fundamentally a debate about ideologies”, specifically ideologies of power identity. These ideologies are manifested in attitudes towards people and their use of language. Broadly speaking, there are two types of people who display attitudes towards language,

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<sup>1</sup> In Kilpert (2002: 2)

namely linguists and other language professionals, and the general public (i.e. those not involved in language study).

Among most linguists and other language professionals, a common argument is that all languages are equal, and that no language or linguistic variety is more ‘correct’ than any other (Trudgill 1975; Joseph 1987; Milroy and Milroy 1987; Andersson and Trudgill 1990; Milroy and Milroy 1993; Chambers, Trudgill and Schilling-Estes 2004). This argument is, more often than not, accompanied by the observation that different dialects or varieties of a language that are considered to be non-standard have grammars of their own; therefore, the structures generated by this grammar cannot be *un*grammatical. With regard to this perspective, linguists argue that these dialects or varieties should be accepted as different rather than condemned as ‘incorrect’ and ‘imperfect’.

Since English began to undergo the process of standardisation in the eighteenth century, the concept of ‘Standard English’ among the general public has influenced peoples’ attitudes towards different varieties of English and the speakers of those varieties. ‘Standard English’ has, since this time, been used as a yardstick against which other varieties of English have been judged. On the one hand, the ‘Standard’ is perceived as good English, correct and pure, and its speakers educated and socially powerful. ‘Non-standard’ varieties of English, on the other hand, are frequently considered to be bad English, inaccurate, impure, and its speakers uneducated (McArthur 1998). As Preston (2004: 40) asserts:

It is perhaps the least surprising thing imaginable to find that attitudes towards languages and their varieties seem to be tied to attitudes towards groups of people. Some groups are believed to be decent, hard-working, and intelligent (and so is their language or variety); some groups are believed to be hard-nosed, aloof, and unsympathetic (and so is their language variety) [...]

The belief that there is one and only one correct form of English, and that any form that deviates from it is wrong and bad English is the defining characteristic of the *standard language ideology* (L. Milroy 1999: 174).<sup>2</sup> L. Milroy observes that the ideological nature of the debate allows the language of the least socially and economically powerful section of the population to be stigmatised, with very little protest even from the speakers themselves (ibid.: 176). She uses Woolard and Schiefflin's (1994: 62)<sup>3</sup> concept of *symbolic revalorisation* to illustrate how the standard language ideology both reflects and camouflages other social ideologies present in a society. Woolard and Schiefflin define symbolic revalorisation as "a process whereby discrimination against particular social groups is implemented by assigning negative values to their language". They suggest that where discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity is not publicly acceptable, discrimination on linguistic grounds is. L. Milroy (1999: 177) draws on transcripts from a 1987 episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* on the topic of African American Vernacular English<sup>4</sup> to illustrate this point:

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<sup>2</sup> This claim is an interesting one given the perceived existence of a number of 'Standard Englishes', for example 'Standard British English' and 'Standard US English', 'Standard Australian English', etc. The problem is that there are a number of people who would contest the existence of any standard other than 'Standard British English'. 'Standard US English', for example, has become more and more acceptable as the United States has become more and more socially, economically and politically powerful. However, there are still prescriptivists who claim that US English is 'bad' English. It is indeed ironic that there seems to be very little consensus as to what exactly 'Standard English' is. Attempts to adequately define 'Standard English' constitute a large part of the debate itself.

<sup>3</sup> in L. Milroy (1999: 176)

<sup>4</sup> African American Vernacular English is the name for the variety of English spoken by African Americans (McArthur 1998: 199).

- (1) Second Caller: Hi, Oprah?  
 Winfrey: Yes.  
 Second Caller: I guess what I'd like to say is that what makes me feel that blacks tend to be ignorant is that they fail to see that the word is spelled A-S-K, not A-X. And when they say *aksed*, it gives the sentence an entirely different meaning. And this is what I feel holds blacks back.  
 Winfrey: Why does it give it a different meaning if you know that's what they're saying?  
 Second Caller: But you don't always know that's what they're saying.
- (2) Ninth audience member: The problem seems to be that everybody tries to push something down your throat by arrogance. That's not the way to get something done. You could speak your own language, you could have your own way, but don't force someone else to have to suffer and listen to it.  
 Winfrey: You say what?  
 Tenth audience member: Well I'm an accountant and –  
 Winfrey: Well, wait, wait, let me get back to you. What is causing you to suffer?  
 Ninth audience member: Well I think there is a certain way of speaking that has been considered the acceptable way of speaking. And because of that this is the type of language you speak when you're out in the world. If you want to speak Spanish at home that's fine. If you want to speak black with your friends that's fine. But don't insult someone else's ears by making them listen to it.

These transcripts illustrate clearly how covert racial prejudice is transferred onto language, thus providing a socially acceptable medium through which to discriminate against minorities, and socially, politically and economically less powerful segments of the population or community. Furthermore, they illustrate a crucial characteristic of the standard language ideology; namely that it is not a set of neutral beliefs about the

correctness or purity of the English language, but is rather a manifestation of more general social attitudes and ideologies.<sup>5</sup>

In South Africa, where, during the apartheid era, language as well as skin colour and ethnicity were used as a basis for discrimination, the ideological nature of the ‘Standard English’ debate is even more sensitive and problematic and, hence, deserves further examination. Since the general elections in 1994, it is no longer socially acceptable to discriminate on the basis of skin colour and ethnicity<sup>6</sup>. It would be naïve, however, to assume that prejudice is no longer present in the social consciousness of South African society. Examples of anti-Indian hate speech (in the form of graffiti) collected from the female lavatories in the E.G. Malherbe Library on the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) are evidence of the persistence of racist sentiments (see Appendix Four). In South Africa, through the process of symbolic revalorisation, language attitudes have become a socially acceptable medium through which racial prejudice is expressed (see Parmegiani 2003, 2006 and the discussion of this work in Chapter One of this dissertation).

SAIE provides an interesting example through which to explore the ‘Standard English’ debate and the standard language ideology in South Africa. This variety, associated with the South African Indian community, arose out of the unique circumstances of indenture and apartheid. Upon arrival in South Africa, the majority of indentured labourers had little or no knowledge of English. Nevertheless, by the early 1960s the process of *language shift* in the South African Indian community had begun leading to English becoming the first language (L1) of the majority of South African Indians (Mesthrie 1992a).

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<sup>5</sup> Linguistic profiling may operate upwards and horizontally, as well as downwards. For example, there are often negative attitudes towards upper-class Zulu speakers who have native-like English proficiency. They are sometimes called ‘coconuts’, i.e. brown on the outside, white on the inside. For an insightful narrative on this label see *Coconut* by Kopano Matlwa. Within the South African Indian community, some speakers are disparaged for talking too much like a ‘white person’, while yet others are disparaged for talking too much like an ‘Indian’ (see the transcript for Interview Seventeen in Appendix Two).

<sup>6</sup> The 1996 Bill of Rights provides equal rights for all South Africans, regardless of race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (1996 Bill of Rights, Chapter Two, Section 9, 30 and 31, [www.info.gov.za](http://www.info.gov.za)).

The conditions that prevailed during the period of language shift were far from ideal for language learning. Importantly, in the early phases of language acquisition, opportunities to learn English were limited, and there was very little opportunity among the first generations of South African Indians for contact with L1 English speakers. Furthermore, the Indian presence in South Africa was intended by the South African government, and often the indentured labourers themselves, to be only temporary, making it unnecessary to have more than a superficial knowledge of English for use in trade and at work. In all likelihood, it is the above-mentioned circumstances that led not only to SAIE being perceived negatively, but also to the development of its unique structure.

L. Milroy (1999: 23) claims that, at times, statements to the effect that it is a 'scientific fact' that all languages are equal creates confusion, because it is not possible to prove empirically that different varieties of language are equal as linguistic objects per se. The question of whether or not two varieties of language are equal is a matter of social attitudes and opinions that cannot be measured empirically on linguistic grounds. Nevertheless, I believe that it is worthwhile exploring the rule-governed and structurally complex nature of those varieties that are labeled 'non-standard'. If nothing else, a syntactic analysis of a feature of a 'non-standard' variety like SAIE, can draw attention to the fact that although it generates constructions that differ from those generated by 'Standard English' grammar, the grammar of SAIE functions according to the same general principles. The distinction observed between the two varieties can be traced back to differences in parameter settings, neither grammar can be said to be more structurally complex, and hence 'more equal' (in Orwellian terms) than any other.

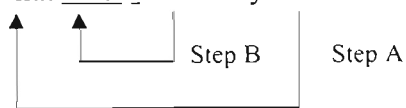
The feature of the syntax of SAIE which I analyse, is the structural difference observed between the formation of so-called wh-questions in SAIE and 'Standard English'. Wh-questions are questions formed by means of a wh-pronoun which, in English, generally begin with wh-, such as *why*, *when*, *where*, etc. In non-subject wh-questions in 'Standard English', the wh-phrase is fronted, i.e. 'moved' to the front of the construction. This operation is accompanied by the process of *subject-auxiliary inversion*. Subject-auxiliary inversion is a process whereby the linear order of the subject of the sentence and the

auxiliary is inverted, resulting in the auxiliary preceding the subject. Consider sentence (1):

(1) a. What must I buy?

This non-subject wh-question is derived as follows:

(1) b. What ~~must~~ I ~~must~~ buy ~~what~~?<sup>7</sup>




The diagram shows the sentence 'What ~~must~~ I ~~must~~ buy ~~what~~?'. A bracket labeled 'Step A' spans from 'what' to the end of the sentence, with an arrow pointing to 'What'. A second bracket labeled 'Step B' spans from the first 'must' to 'I', with an arrow pointing to 'must'.

The movement shown in step A is wh-fronting, which will henceforth be referred to as *wh-movement*. The movement in step B is subject-auxiliary inversion.

Importantly, and in contrast to ‘Standard English’, subject-auxiliary inversion *does not* occur in SAIE. So, it is possible for speakers of SAIE to generate a construction like the following:

(2) What I ~~must~~ buy ~~what~~?



The diagram shows the sentence 'What I ~~must~~ buy ~~what~~?'. A bracket spans from 'what' to the end of the sentence, with an arrow pointing to 'What'.

In this example, wh-movement has taken place, but subject-auxiliary inversion has not occurred.

In reference to the “Minimalist Program” (MP) (Chomsky 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2001), which is the most recent version of the Principles-and-Parameters approach of Generative Grammar, I argue that this difference is not a ‘mistake’ made by speakers of SAIE in an attempt to form a ‘Standard English’ construction, but is rather the result of a systematic and rule-governed difference between the grammar of SAIE and that of ‘Standard English’.

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<sup>7</sup> Strikethrough indicates that the moved phrase leaves an unpronounced copy position.

My analysis of wh-questions in SAIE is based on the minimalist analysis of subject-auxiliary inversion presented by Pesetsky and Torrego (2001). Pesetsky and Torrego make a unique suggestion about the nature of nominative case. I apply their analysis of wh-questions in 'Standard English' to wh-question phenomena in SAIE in an attempt to provide an explanation for the difference observed.

The purpose of the syntactic analysis of wh-questions in SAIE is to provide convincing evidence that the difference between wh-questions in SAIE and 'Standard English' is the result of a difference in the grammar of these two varieties, specifically a different parameter setting. The implication of such evidence is that the difference between SAIE and 'Standard English', at least in terms of syntactic structure and complexity, is not wrong, merely *different*.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to add a note on the terminology used in this dissertation. The term 'Standard English' itself is awkward, and efforts to determine exactly what 'Standard English' is, and its importance, constitute a central issue in the 'Standard English' debate. It is as difficult to define 'Standard English' as it is to define clearly any other variety of English (Trudgill 1975). Although 'Standard South African English' is a term used in the literature (see, for example, Mesthrie 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1996), I find the use of the term problematic because South African English is *not* a monolithic variety. Following Bex and Watts (1999), in this dissertation, the term 'Standard English' is defined as a prestige variety of English that is afforded a certain degree of respect in society as a whole. I use this term to denote a form of English to which I can compare SAIE.

The orthography of the term 'Standard English' is also problematic. For Bex and Watts (1999: 9) the different orthographic representations of 'Standard English' are an issue in the 'Standard English' debate. They chose to use an uppercase 'S' and 'E' in recognition of the fact that for some linguists, 'Standard English' is a social variety, and use inverted commas in recognition of the fact that for others, 'Standard English' is a myth, socially constructed for ideological purposes. Following Bex and Watts, I have chosen to use an

uppercase ‘S’ and ‘E’ and inverted commas to indicate that, in the context of this dissertation, ‘Standard English’ may be both a social variety of English and a socially constructed myth depending on why the term is being used and by whom.

The appropriateness of the use of the label ‘SAIE’ is questionable. The majority of South African Indians live in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) (Mesthrie 1992a, 2001 census data). As a result, much of the research done on SAIE has taken place in KZN. Mesthrie points out that as a result, the label SAIE is possibly misleading because it is an ethnic label not necessarily coinciding with the linguistic behaviour of South African Indians across the country (1992a: 6). It is highly likely that there is regional variation in the way that English is spoken by South African Indians. Furthermore, the use of ethnic or racial labels is a dubious practice, particularly in South Africa (Van Rooy and Van Rooy 2005). This study is concerned with the English spoken by South African Indians in KZN and I continue to use term SAIE to describe this variety (see also Mesthrie 1992a, 1992b, 1995).

The term *dialect* has so often been used in a pejorative sense that I am reluctant to use it myself. As McArthur (1998: xvi) points out: “*Dialect* as used by linguists is more or less neutral, but its wider lay use is generally negative: for most people, a dialect is a ‘non-’ or ‘sub-’ standard variety of a language.” In order to avoid such negative connotations, I use the term *variety* throughout the rest of the dissertation. In terms of varieties of English, Kachru (1982: 46) argues that “a crucial distinction is warranted between a deficient variety and a different variety”. Accordingly, I argue that SAIE is a different, but *not* deficient variety of English.

This dissertation is structured in such a way as to draw together the three interconnecting parts of the study to form a cohesive progression of the arguments being advanced, and a comprehensive discussion of the four main research questions. The first of these questions, ‘*What is the ‘Standard English’ debate?*’ has been briefly addressed above in the sense that I argued that the ‘Standard English’ debate is relevant to the South African context due to the important role that English plays in this country. It should, therefore,

be investigated and defined within this context. In order to do this adequately, it is necessary to determine precisely what is being debated, by whom and why. This question is, largely, dealt with in *Chapter One: Literature Review – The ‘Standard English’ Debate*.

The second research question deals with how the history of SAIE has affected the way in which it is perceived in terms of the ‘Standard English’ debate. As mentioned earlier, SAIE developed within the unique circumstances of indenture and apartheid. These circumstances have led to SAIE being regarded negatively by speakers of SAIE and speakers of other varieties of English. When compared to the prestigious ‘Standard’ variety of English in South Africa, SAIE is regarded as non-standard, deviant and incorrect. In *Chapter Two: South African Indian English*, I discuss the socio-historical circumstances prevailing during the development of SAIE and why they led to a negative opinion of this variety.

Furthermore, I explore the syntactic operations governing wh-constructions in SAIE. Sentences such as *What I must buy?* occur in SAIE but not in ‘Standard English’. It is assumed that the grammar which derives the corresponding ‘Standard English’ sentence *What must I buy?* is the result of a combination of principles and parameters. Having acquired a knowledge (whether conscious or unconscious) of this grammar, speakers are able to use these rules to create an unlimited number of sentences with the same structure such as *What did I say?*, *Where are you?* and *When did you go there?*. For a speaker of SAIE, it is possible to generate the SAIE “equivalent” to these three ‘Standard English’ sentences, namely, *What I said?*, *Where you are?* and *When you went there?*. Given that the grammar of SAIE is based on the same principles as the grammar of ‘Standard English’, the syntactic difference between these two varieties of English must be related to a different parameter setting. What are the rule-governed syntactic properties that result in the similarities between wh-questions in SAIE and ‘Standard English’, and which parameter is responsible for the differences? I present my analysis of wh-questions in SAIE in *Chapter Four: South African Indian English wh-Constructions*.

The fourth and final research question being posed is: *What does the syntactic analysis of wh-questions in SAIE reveal about varieties of English and the 'Standard English' debate in South Africa in particular?* It is with this with question that *Chapter Five: Findings – South African Indian English and the 'Standard English' Debate in South Africa*, is concerned. Since the syntactic analysis of wh-questions in SAIE is intended to show that the derivation of these structures is rule-governed in the same way that 'Standard English' structures are, the analysis provides evidence for my hypothesis that, although the rules and operations of SAIE are slightly different from those of 'Standard English', they operate on the basis of the same principles. Therefore, I argue that this 'non-standard' variety is not inferior to 'Standard English' in terms of syntactic complexity. The *Conclusion* is a summation of the relevance of and the role played by the 'Standard English' debate and the standard language ideology in South Africa, using SAIE as an explanatory tool. Furthermore, in the *Conclusion*, I summarise the main arguments presented in the dissertation, and discuss the potential for further research.

The research methods employed in pursuit of answers to these questions had to satisfy the demands of both sociolinguistic and syntactic research, and are discussed in *Chapter Three: Research Methods and Research Results*. The data that I use is drawn from three sources: an extensive literature review, a series of twenty interviews with South African Indian participants, and a corpus of wh-question data that I have collected throughout the duration of the research. This study is, thus, a combination of empirical and non-empirical research. The literature review covers the 'Standard English' debate and includes a discussion of the standard language ideology, language and power. The interviews were conducted with twenty South African Indian students on the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The participants were required to perform grammatical judgment tasks that provided syntactic data. Participants were then asked to explain the reasons for their responses to the grammatical judgment tasks, thus eliciting sociolinguistic data.

The appendixes are organised as follows. Appendix One is comprised of my corpus of SAIE non-subject wh-question data from SAIE in Section One, and also includes a

selection of examples of Yes/No data from SAIE in Section Two. The transcriptions of the interviews are found in Appendix Two. Appendix Three includes examples of Anti-Indian legislation. Appendix Four includes examples of hate speech directed at the South African Indian community in the form of graffiti. An example of the informed consent forms given to participants is found in Appendix Five. Appendix Six is an example of the interview schedule presented to participants. Copies of the response sheets from all twenty of the interviews are found in Appendix Seven. Appendix Eight is a map of the greater Durban area showing Chatsworth, Phoenix, Westville, and the Berea.

## Chapter One: Literature Review – The ‘Standard English’ Debate

A review of selected literature on the ‘Standard English’ debate and related topics forms an integral part of the research and the discussion of the topic. Section One comprises of a discussion of literature on the ‘Standard English’ debate. Section Two is concerned with examining literature on language and power. In Section Three I consider literature on World Englishes. Lastly, I briefly consider the issue of ownership in Section Four.

### Section One: The ‘Standard English’ Debate

There are essentially two sides in the ‘Standard English’ debate. On the one hand, there is a group of linguists and other language professionals who argue in favour of a more tolerant approach to and perspective on non-standard varieties of English and their speakers. This is generally known as the descriptive approach to language variation (see Subsection 1.1 below). On the other hand, there are those who are firmly ‘pro-standard’ and argue that non-standard varieties of English are incorrect. This approach is usually known as the prescriptive approach to language variation (see the discussion in Subsection 1.2 below). In this section of the chapter, I will consider both of these perspectives. Of course, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Taking a prescriptive view of language variation does not necessarily entail intolerance of non-standard varieties.

#### *1.1 The Descriptive Approach*

Trudgill (1975) maintains that all dialects of English are “equally complex, structured and valid linguistic systems” (ibid.: 26). However, he points out that many people would be reluctant to accept that ‘Standard English’<sup>8</sup> is no better than any other variety of the language. He attributes this reluctance to a persistent belief that ‘Standard English’ is *the* English language; consequently all other varieties of English are ‘deviations’ from *the* language. The result is the idea that these deviations are ‘corruptions’ due to stupidity, carelessness, laziness or a lack of education. From this perspective any variety of English other than ‘Standard English’ is *bad* while ‘Standard English’ is *good*. While Trudgill

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 2.

acknowledges that arguments of this nature have no merit and do not hold from a 'purely' linguistic point of view, he observes that it is necessary to recognise that they exist.

Attitudes towards varieties of English are not only linguistic attitudes; they are social attitudes that appear to be about language. Different groups of people are evaluated differently in terms of the social structure of society. Some groups are more powerful (socio-economically, politically, etc.) and have more prestige than others and, consequently, so does the variety of English associated with these groups. Groups that are stigmatised, or lack prestige, are evaluated less favourably as is their variety of English.

Trudgill points out (ibid.: 38-39) that all varieties of English have grammar. Different varieties of English simply have different grammars. It is not uncommon to hear people say that the use of double negatives, for example, 'isn't English'. It certainly is. It is not 'Standard English', perhaps, but double negatives are constructions that are generated by the grammars of a number of varieties of English such as African American Vernacular English. Trudgill argues that all (normal) adult speakers know and use the grammar of their variety of English perfectly. Native speakers of a language do not make mistakes<sup>9</sup>. This claim is supported by Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar and the concepts of competence and performance.

Particularly relevant to the South African context is Trudgill's contention that "[i]t is difficult to belittle a speaker's language without belittling the speaker as well...language can be socially symbolic...to reject a speaker's language is to appear to reject not just him, but also all those like him who he identifies with and values" (ibid.: 67). Language attitudes can thus be used as a vehicle for the expression of prejudice, oppression and dominance. "If groups of people are prejudiced against other groups, they will probably always be able to find linguistic differences to support their prejudice" (ibid.: 70). In

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<sup>9</sup> Performance errors are characteristic of any speaker of any language or variety. When a speaker is tired, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, for example, they often make typical errors in their speech, such as switching the order of two words in a sentence or switching the order of two sounds in a word. The 'mistakes' I refer to here, are those differences between 'Standard English' and non-standard varieties of English that are seen as incorrect and wrong, but are, in fact, consistent, systematic, rule-governed differences between the grammars of two distinct varieties of English. The native speaker of a non-standard variety is *not* making a mistake by using non-standard constructions; they are using grammar of the non-standard variety. The errors that people make in speech and writing are different in nature.

South Africa it is no longer acceptable to express prejudice in terms of race and/or ethnicity. Prejudice, however, still exists and linguistic differences are used to support it. Andersson and Trudgill (1990) point out that wherever there is variation, there will be evaluation. They argue that the most powerful source of judgment about varieties of English has to do with the relationship between language and social class. In South Africa, socio-economic class is undoubtedly an important factor, but race is an equally dividing factor. Post-apartheid South Africa is still troubled by racial prejudice and inequality. The unfortunate fact is that in this country, the variety of English that is considered to be the most prestigious, the dialect called 'Standard English', is the dialect of English spoken by white South Africans (those who are first language or 'L1' speakers of English). Varieties of English which are stigmatised and thought to be 'bad' English are often those varieties associated with non-white speakers of English, specifically Black, Indian and Coloured South Africans, the previously disadvantaged sections of the population. In this way, racial discrimination continues on the level of language attitudes since language attitudes both reflect and maintain the prejudice that has been levelled at these groups of South Africans in the past.

Andersson and Trudgill account for the persistence of non-standard, stigmatised varieties by arguing that they have *covert prestige*. Covert prestige is defined in Chambers and Trudgill (1980: 98-99) as "prestige in the sense of being favourably regarded by one's peers, and of signalling one's identity as a member of a group". In South Africa non-standard varieties have covert prestige as markers of a distinct group or cultural identity.

Andersson and Trudgill observe that as human beings mature from infancy to adulthood we do not only learn to use language in different ways, but we also learn to view language in different ways. "Through the years we acquire, each and every one of us, a whole ideology of language" (Andersson and Trudgill 1980: 46). Native speakers of a language acquire the rules of that language unconsciously, while simultaneously, and also unconsciously, absorbing an ideology about language that maintains that some varieties are good and some varieties are bad. At the same time, attitudes towards speakers of these varieties are absorbed which maintain that the speakers of some varieties are

intelligent and have prestige, while speakers of other varieties are uneducated and lack prestige.

Chambers and Trudgill (1980) observe that in situations where there is a class differentiation in the distribution of a linguistic variable, it is the variable associated with the usage of the higher class that is assigned more prestige, a higher status. As mentioned above, in South Africa race, prestige and status seem to correlate with language attitudes in, potentially, a more divisive way even than class<sup>10</sup>.

Chambers (2004) writes, that variants that occur in different varieties of English are not linguistically significant, but rather socially significant. Users of certain stigmatised variants are judged unfavourably on the basis of their language use. Variants are not stigmatised as a result of any inherent linguistic quality, but are stigmatised as a consequence of the social stigma attached to users of those variants. These negative judgments can have serious consequences, causing speakers of non-standard varieties to “suffer socially, economically and educationally...” (Chambers 2004: 3).

Bex and Watts (1999) point out that since English has spread worldwide resulting in the development of local varieties of English, writing about ‘Standard English’ as though it is a single variety is problematic. They argue that, as a result of this spread, notions of ‘Standard English’ vary depending on the people using English, their reasons for using it, and the functions for which they use it. Bex and Watts define ‘Standard English’ simply as a prestige variety that is afforded a certain degree of respect within society as a whole (Bex and Watts 1997: 7). This prestige variety is linked to notions of correctness that are manifested in prescriptive approaches to language. Often these prescriptive notions of correctness lead to a blurred distinction between language structure and social identity. This is where, for Bex and Watts, language attitudes reveal their ideological nature. For in equating correct or ‘standard’ language use with good social behaviour, and incorrect or ‘non-standard’ language use with bad social behaviour, language attitudes become attitudes towards speakers of those languages, leading to social discrimination. This aspect of the standard language debate is particularly pertinent in the case of SAIE,

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<sup>10</sup> See footnote 5.

because it is an L1 variety, rather than a second language (L2) variety. Speakers of L2 varieties of English in South Africa can retreat into the confident use of their L1s (e.g. Zulu, Sotho, etc.) when their English is judged as 'incorrect' and 'non-standard'; speakers of SAIE, however, do not have this opportunity, and are in danger of feeling insecure about the use of their own L1, and hence their social behaviour, and group and individual identity.

J. Milroy (1999) starts by pointing out that, contrary to popular belief, the success of one language or variety over another, is *not* due to the inherent grammatical superiority of one over the other, but is, rather, due to the success of one group of speakers over another. On this view, the success of 'Standard English' over other varieties is due to the social, political and economic success of speakers of 'Standard English' in contrast to speakers of other varieties. One of the main claims that Milroy makes is that "standard languages are fixed and uniform state idealizations – not empirically verifiable realities" (J. Milroy 1999: 18). He maintains that this is true of all varieties, whether 'standard' or 'non-standard', that are studied and described by linguists, simply because, in order to describe language, one must ignore, to a certain extent, the fact that there is variation in all natural language.

One of the most important arguments that Milroy makes in this paper is that when 'Standard English' is being discussed or described, it is not the English language as a whole that is being described, but rather just one variety of English. This is often overlooked due to the perception of 'Standard English' as the only correct form of English. Milroy observes that this notion of correctness perpetuates the standard language ideology through prescription. He goes on to note that these notions of correctness cannot be successfully countered with arguments proffered by linguists to the effect that in terms of grammatical complexity all varieties are equal, because the 'rightness' of the 'correct' forms is considered to be unquestionably obvious by non-linguists. Milroy draws attention to the fact that negative judgments of non-standard varieties of English by fluent native speakers can operate as an instrument of power. Involved in judgments of this

nature is the implicit assumption that English is the property of the elite. L1 (or L2) speakers of non-standard varieties of English are thereby denied ownership of their L1.

The idea of *legitimacy* is related to the issue of ownership and is, for Milroy, an important aspect of the standard language ideology. Given that ‘Standard English’ is viewed as the only correct form of English, it is perceived as the only legitimate form of the language. Denying non-standard varieties of English legitimacy in turn denies the speakers of those varieties access to an acceptable and legitimate variety of English. Milroy draws on the important distinction between *grammaticality* and *acceptability* first made by Chomsky (1957, 1965, 1981, 1986). To illustrate, if the derivation of non-subject wh-questions in SAIE (that lack subject-auxiliary inversion) is governed by a systematic grammar, then these constructions must be grammatical in SAIE. They are not, however, generally considered acceptable by speakers of other varieties of English, even speakers of SAIE, because they deviate from what is perceived as the ‘Standard’. Milroy argues that aside from the existence of a codified written form, the majority of the properties that are unique to standard languages, prestige for example, are socially based. This illustrates the ideological nature of the ‘Standard English’ debate.

Watts (1999) argues that it is not ‘Standard English’ that is the legitimate language, but rather the social construction of what ‘Standard English’ stands for in terms of market places. On this view he argues:

[i]t is through the acquisition and application of forms of language that access can be gained to cultural market places such as education, professional training, the acquisition of specialised skills, etc., and it is through the different forms of cultural resource that access can be gained to material market places  
(ibid.: 63)

Hence, if access to these cultural and material market places is gained through the acquisition and application of ‘Standard English’, it is easy to see how speakers of non-standard varieties are disadvantaged.

Cheshire (1999) points out that even linguists can never be completely objective because, like everyone else, they are members of society. Our behaviour is naturally influenced by our social background and governed by social norms. These factors influence what we decide to study and how we decide to study it. Our awareness of and belief in a 'Standard' variety of English influences what we perceive as non-standard. Cheshire observes that "[i]t is no coincidence that, although the contracted form *ain't* was once used by both the upper and lower classes in English society, it is now confined only to the lower classes" (ibid.: 147). In South Africa, awareness of social status is a highly sensitive subject and takes on a very serious form when considering the previously legitimised discriminatory practices of apartheid. The 'morally, socially, or politically charged' nature of language attitudes in this country are evidence of this awareness.

For Carter (1999), to become a speaker of 'Standard English' is to become a speaker of a clearly marked, socially symbolic variety which is problematic since non-standard usage is very often a marker of an individual or group identity. On this view "[t]he shift from non-standard to standard dialects can also become one which implies a devaluation of one dialect (and the identity derived from its use) in favour of another" (Carter 1999: 163). Carter draws attention to the implications of the 'Standard English' debate and the standard language ideology for notions of intelligence and education (ibid.: 164). The use of 'Standard English' is often associated with education and it is a small jump from education to intelligence, i.e. people make assumptions about other peoples' intelligence on the basis of his/her level of education. The fact is that a good education does not presuppose the use of the standard, nor does the use of the standard presuppose a good education. The use of non-standard varieties has no real correlation with intelligence, what it does reveal is the social background of the speaker. In South Africa and in other English-speaking countries, e.g. Britain, the United States of America, and Australia, 'good' English is associated with both education and intelligence.

L. Milroy (1999) discusses the standard language ideology and introduces the process of *symbolic revalorisation* that has already been discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. Milroy states that the standard language ideology is a particular set of beliefs

about language that are “typically held by the population of economically developed nation-states where the processes of standardisation have operated over a considerable time to produce an abstract set of norms...popularly described as constituting the standard language” (Milroy 1999: 173). Importantly, these beliefs about language also emerge, in a slightly different form, in former British colonies.

Crowley (1999) offers an interesting commentary on Honey’s (1997) book *Language is Power: The Story of Standard English and its enemies*. Honey takes, in many ways, the opposite view on the ‘Standard English’ debate and the standard language ideology to that taken by the Milroys, Bex, Watts, Trudgill, and Crowley, in the sense that he is exclusively pro-standard, and expresses very little tolerance for non-standard varieties of English, or, for that matter, speakers of these varieties. Crowley points out that there are two enduring features of the ‘Standard English’ debate: confusion around the term ‘Standard English’, and confusion about the fact that it is not simply a debate about language, but has impact on larger social and political issues. According to Crowley, ‘Standard’ shifts in meaning between a level of excellence and a degree of uniformity in language reached via the process of standardisation. ‘English’ shifts in meaning between the written and the spoken form (Crowley 1999: 271). The first problem that Crowley identifies with Honey’s opinion of ‘Standard English’ is that, for Crowley it is a codified and stable written form, whereas, for Honey it is both a spoken and written form. Crowley claims that Honey’s assertion is a common error that leads to the impression that there exists a standard spoken English and that it shares a common structure with standard written English. Another criticism that Crowley levels at Honey’s work is the fact that he unilaterally equates standard usage with educated usage. Crowley maintains that the one does not necessarily entail/include the other. He also denies the charge laid against linguists and educators by Honey, that they argue in favour of the abandoning of the standard.

### *1.2 The Prescriptive Approach*

At this point it seems appropriate to examine in more detail Honey’s (1997) position. The main focus of this book is Honey’s claim that linguists, in defending the use of non-

standard varieties of English, are depriving speakers of those non-standard varieties the opportunity to learn the 'Standard' and are thus depriving them of access to upward social mobility.

Honey (1997: 123-124) criticises at length James and Lesley Milroy's reflections on the argument that the standard is superior to any other variety of a language. On the one hand, the Milroys' claim that the choice between two grammatical forms like 'I saw' rather than 'I seen' (or, for the purposes of this dissertation, 'What must I buy?' rather than 'What I must buy?') is ultimately linguistically arbitrary. The fact that the latter constructions are stigmatised has nothing to do with *linguistic* values, but rather *social* values. Honey, on the other hand, argues that:

It is of course true that the 'rule' prescribing *I saw* rather than *I seen* is arbitrary, but then so is all language: I say *dog*, a Frenchman says *chien*. But the 'social' values which make it inappropriate for an Englishman to go round talking of his 'chien' to his British neighbours extend to an assumption that a person speaking in a formal interview will know that it is more appropriate to use 'I saw', *unless they are illiterate or ignorant, in which case their usage will be an efficient marker of that ignorance* [my emphasis]. *The judgment about the extent of their educatedness will indeed be closely associated with an assumption- conscious or unconscious- that the language system of Standard English, with the greater functional efficiency of its wide range of vocabulary, grammar and styles is more appropriate to use in such a context than the informal non-standard variety spoken among friends.* That assumption is not an absurd one - every one of us, including the Milroys, makes it every day of our lives - and there is a case for saying it is part of the language *system* which we call English.

(Honey 1997: 123-124)

The use of non-standard forms of English is not *necessarily* a sign of ignorance, illiteracy or a lack of education in a speaker. Honey's arguments demonstrate symbolic revalorisation in action. Moreover it seems to me to be of very little value to equate the choice between the use of two different languages with the choice between the use of two variations of one structure available to speakers of a single language. It is quite clear that when in France, communicating with French-speakers, French would be the obvious language choice. This kind of linguistic choice would generally have no bearing on an individual's personal and/or cultural identity. It is less clear, however, that the choice

between structures like ‘I saw’ and ‘I seen’, and ‘What must I buy?’ and ‘What I must buy?’ for that matter, is as obvious and as neutral. Choosing to speak the Standard is, as Carter (1999) observes, the choice to speak a socially symbolic variety; it is, therefore, not a neutral choice.

Honey claims of the majority of English speakers in Britain that:

[t]heir ability to use English with confidence is compromised by two different types of linguistic insecurity. One form of insecurity is the fear of making mistakes and being thought incorrect; the other is the lack of any clear guidance about what is considered correct.

(1997: 163)

This argument seems to suggest that L1 speakers of non-standard varieties of English, like SAIE, cannot use their L1 correctly and with confidence. Here Honey is equating ‘Standard English’ with the English language as a whole. L1 speakers of non-standard varieties can speak English fluently, without mistakes, without being incorrect, according to the grammar of their variety. Their English use is being judged and found to be ‘inferior’ on the basis of the ‘Standard’.

Honey goes on to argue that when British schools abandoned the teaching of ‘Standard English’ grammar, many pupils left school with no knowledge of how English, as a language, works. This once again equates ‘Standard English’ with the English language as a whole. It may be true that these pupils were unable to use ‘Standard English’ but, assuming they were cognitively ‘normal’, they would have been by no means unable to use their own varieties of English fluently and confidently.

As evidence to support the position he takes with regard to ‘Standard English’, Honey refers to the results of unnamed studies done in the United States. He asserts that these studies consistently reveal that speakers of the (non-standard) ‘Black American dialect’ “score lower on achievement tests in mathematics, reading and ‘language arts’ than their white counterparts, and need special assistance to make the transition to reading and

writing in Standard English, skills which are an indispensable entrée to the whole curriculum.” (ibid.: 197-198). Honey views this lack of academic success as a consequence purely of non-standard language use. He fails to mention the fact that a large percentage of African American students come from lower income areas. Their schools are therefore likely to be less well funded than schools in more affluent areas and consequently have less educational resources which, in turn, would impact heavily on the quality of teaching. Furthermore, in less affluent areas, education is often seen as secondary to more immediate needs such as employment. All of these factors may contribute importantly to poor school performance. Moreover, if the students in question are being taught by speakers of ‘the Black American dialect’, transmission of ‘Standard English’ may be more difficult. The fact remains that anybody who does not grow up speaking a variety of English that is closely associated with ‘Standard English’ is going to need assistance in making the transition to reading and writing in ‘Standard English’. Moreover, every person, whether s/he speaks ‘Standard English’ or not, needs to be taught to read and to write. The same is true for those speakers of SAIE, who grew up in less affluent areas and went to schools, socialised with, and were taught by, speakers of SAIE.

Honey argues that linguists, such as Trudgill and the Milroys, afford non-standard varieties a ‘phony dignity’ in pointing out the value and importance of non-standard varieties of English. More precisely, he (ibid.: 197) states that:

...to give a phony dignity to non-standard varieties of language which children will come to see is in reality patronizing, is ultimately degrading and insulting – a phony dignity because it can never correspond to the evaluations of any society where there is a general respect for education and competence.

This quote appears to sum up Honey’s position in the ‘Standard English’ debate. I strongly disagree. A variety of a language cannot be given dignity, whether it is a false dignity or not. Honey’s main claim in this publication is that those who are more tolerant of variation in English, like Trudgill (1975, 1983, 1986), J. Milroy (1999), and L. Milroy (1999) are “...effectively disparaging both Standard English and its notions of

correctness” (ibid.:170). However, acknowledging the worth of non-standard varieties *does not* automatically entail the aspersion of the standard.

## Section Two: Language and Power

Power relations and negotiations are manifested in language behaviours and language attitudes; they are highly relevant to the South African context given the local history of inequality and oppression. Therefore, the relationship between language and power form an integral part of any discussion of the ‘Standard English’ debate in South Africa.

### *2.1 Eloquence and Power*

Joseph (1987) argues that the perceptions of languages and/or dialects depend largely on criteria that are not linguistic in nature. Joseph identifies the fact that the awareness of variation in language is inevitably accompanied by value judgments. When there are two variants of one form, one will always be preferred over the other. This creates hierarchies which are instilled in the minds of speakers via language education. Joseph argues that the standard form is *not* native to any L1 English speaker and that English speakers have to be taught ‘Standard English’. Access to the educational institutions that teach the standard can be provided, and in this way, access to the standard and to the benefits that knowing and using the ‘Standard’ gives rise to can be assured. This aspect of language education is fundamentally political and can be seen to have worked in South Africa, where South African Indians, through the education policies of the Apartheid governments, were by-and-large denied access to a good quality of education in English.

Joseph notes that, not only are language variants subject to value judgments, they are also subject to assignment of prestige. He observes that the idea that prestigious dialects have any ‘inherent’ or ‘natural’ superiority or distinctiveness has been proved false by a number of studies (for example, Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill and Lewis (1974) and Giles, Bourhis and Davies (1979)). The participants in these studies were unable to assign prestige to different dialects of languages they did not know (ibid.: 31). Because the prestige of dialects is subject to social value judgments, language is, according to Joseph,

highly susceptible to *prestige transfer*. He claims that prestige is transferred to attributes of prestigious people other than those on which their prestige is founded, such as language. This process can work in the opposite direction. Stigma can be transferred to attributes of people other than those on the basis of which they are stigmatised, such as language. Prestige transfer in both of these senses is a similar process to symbolic revalorisation.

Joseph contends that the assumption that the introduction of reading and writing made the human brain more 'intelligent' because these processes may, in fact, promote specific language-processing and cognitive skills, has led to two fallacies that are important to reveal (Joseph 1987: 39). The first is the '*intellectualisation*' of the standard. Joseph argues that this notion implies the superiority of the standard because it suggests that the standard is a 'vehicle for superior intellectual functioning'. The second of these fallacies is what Joseph refers to as *The Cognitive Fallacy*. This fallacy has arisen out of the equation of standard language use with higher intellectual functioning. Joseph exposes the illusion inherent in this fallacy when he states that "it is wrong to assume that an individual who speaks a standard language is cognitively superior to one who does not...no higher consciousness or cognition is necessarily entailed by the use of the standard language" (ibid.: 41). This implies that the corollary is also true. It is wrong to assume that an individual who does not speak a standard language is cognitively inferior to one who does. Joseph observes that:

The cognitive fallacy is only one of several types of prejudice involved in the use of standard and non-standard dialects. Its associative origins are clear: the standard language is the vehicle of writing, education, culture, all of which are generally assumed to be connected with higher intellectual capacity...But to assume that a person's use of the linguistic vehicle associated with these functions is a measure of his or her intellectual development is to commit a basic deductive flaw. It is to judge a book by its cover.

(ibid.: 41)

The cognitive fallacy seems to be present in the social consciousness of South African society and as such is a formidable type of prejudice against speakers of non-standard

varieties of English in South Africa, including SAIE, Black South African English (Wade 1995), Cape Flats English (Malan 1996), and Afrikaans English (Watermeyer 1996).

The pervasive belief in the inherent superiority of the linguistic structure of the standard (see Honey 1997, above) begs the question of whether the *inherent linguistic structure* of the standard dialect can invest it with a prestige that supports its development as the 'Standard'. Joseph (like the J. Milroy 1999, L. Milroy 1999, Trudgill and Chambers 1980) argues that there is no inherent superiority in the linguistic structure of the standard as opposed to that of non-standard dialects. It is the *prestige of the speakers* that is transferred onto the dialect (ibid.: 59).

Joseph observes that not all dialects encompass the whole range of styles from formal to informal (Joseph 1987: 74). This statement amounts to the acknowledgement of the fact that there are specific functions for which certain varieties may be more appropriate. In informal situations, the use of the standard could come across as arrogant and pretentious. In formal situations, the use of a non-standard dialect would most likely come across as disrespectful, impolite or ignorant. This is, however, largely the result of the social values and attitudes associated with these varieties and their speakers. Situational appropriateness of this nature becomes problematic for speakers who have not had, or do not have, access to the 'standard' and who are discriminated against on the basis of their language use.

## *2.2 Hegemony and Language Standards*

Parakrama (1995) points out that most definitions of a standard language distance the writer from responsibility for the hierarchy of values in evidence through the expression of the apparent naturalness of the ubiquity of the standard. These definitions seem to 'brush aside' the struggles faced by speakers of non-standard varieties of English and serve to conceal the use of the standard language as an instrument of power by the elite. Parakrama challenges, in particular, the representation of language-users as passive and powerless, claiming that it is misleading, particularly when it comes to the characterization of users of the prestige dialect. Representations of this sort allow

speakers of the 'standard' to claim ignorance of the fact that access to the prestige variety is an instrument of power, and of the fact that those who do not have access to it are discriminated against.

Parakrama briefly draws attention to the issue of ownership. He mentions that, in former colonies, where English has been present for a long enough period of time, people begin to feel possessive about the language. When their usage is subject to exonormative standards, speakers of English in former British colonies are implicitly denied possession or ownership of a language that is used as a *lingua franca* in their country or has become their L1 (as is the case for South African Indians). Parakrama refers to Kachru's (1986: 112) concept of *acculturation* as a process "which has rightly made the non-native varieties of English culture-bound" (in Parakrama 1995: 25). On this view, deviations from the exonormative standard are products of acculturation, and are therefore legitimate in the contexts in which they are used. He argues that although these non-standard elements of the grammars of these varieties of English are the result of 'L1-interference' or '-transfer', they are systematic and predictable and therefore should not be dismissed. Furthermore, he points out that these elements are an important reflection of the language conflict situation out of which they arose. SAIE reflects through its grammar, accent and vocabulary, the unique social history of its speakers.

Parakrama (1995: 41) states that:

Standard languages, despite all disclaimers to the contrary discriminate against minorities, marginal groups, women, the underclass, and so on, albeit in different ways, in the subtle manner that our 'enlightened' times call for, since overt elitism is not longer tenable. The 'neutrality' of Standard Language/Appropriate Discourse has thus become a useful way of dissimulating hegemony.

Here, Parakrama's argument is reminiscent of the concept of symbolic revalorisation, and illustrates why study into standard and non-standard languages is of great importance, particularly in areas, like South Africa, where there has been large-scale societal inequality and oppression.

Parakrama argues that the process of standardisation does not simply create a set of syntactic rules that are used as the criteria of acceptable language use; but also creates a system of value-coding that enables social and ideological views to be expressed through language attitudes.

Parakrama further draws attention to the fact that many speakers of non-standard varieties of English translate the difference in their variety of English into a derogation of their own competence in the language (ibid.: 56). The derogation of their own competence seems to be a fairly common practice among speakers of non-standard dialects. While I do not doubt the significance of this in the minds of speakers of non-standard L2 varieties of English, I argue that it is of much more concern with regard to speakers of non-standard L1 varieties of English, particularly in former colonies. To doubt and disparage one's ability to use one's own L1 leads to a linguistic insecurity that may have far reaching negative and damaging effects on one's self-perception. Far from being merely a theoretical problem, this is a 'real' issue in the lives and minds of speakers of non-standard varieties. The participants in my study expressed opinions of a derogatory nature about the way that South African Indians (their own in-group) speak English, saying that it is not 'proper English', it is 'incorrect' and 'bad English' (see, for example, the transcripts of the interviews in Appendix Two, and the discussion of the research results in Chapter Three).

### *2.3 Language and Symbolic Power*

Thus far, all the arguments, observations and opinions discussed have, if not directly, then at least obliquely, referred to issues of power. Much of what has been referred to in a more general way has been succinctly theorised by Bourdieu in (1991).

Bourdieu portrays all linguistic exchanges as taking place within a so-called social market place. He views language as a social-historical phenomenon which encodes social values and hierarchies. According to Bourdieu, a particular language or set of linguistic practices that constitute the dialect of the socially and economically powerful, emerges as the dominant or legitimate language through complex historical processes that often

involve conflict, particularly in a colonial or post-colonial context. This pre-constructed and idealised language or dialect is endowed with the status of the sole legitimate or ‘official’ language of a particular community.

For Bourdieu, the kind of competence that speakers possess is a ‘practical competence’ that allows them to generate utterances that are appropriate to the specific circumstances in which the utterances are being made. This practical competence not only allows speakers to produce utterances that are grammatical, but allows these speakers to make themselves heard, believed, obeyed, etc.

According to Bourdieu, all exchanges take place in the social market place and all bear *capital* of some sort. *Economic Capital* consists of material wealth in the form of money, stocks, shares and properties. *Symbolic Capital* is comprised of accumulated prestige or honour. On this view, linguistic exchanges always take place in particular contexts or marketplaces. The nature of the particular marketplace endows certain varieties or language with a certain value. Differences of accent, grammar and vocabulary are indicators of the social position of speakers and a reflection of the linguistic and other forms of capital which they possess. Linguistic capital is assigned within the ‘linguistic habitus’ – a set of dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak and which govern the linguistic practices of an individual/speaker, and the value that other linguistic products will receive in that and other markets. Speakers within a certain linguistic marketplace ‘adjust’ or ‘adapt’ their speech in anticipation of, or according to how they feel it will be received, and what they feel it will reveal about the linguistic, social and economic capital they possess or are seen to possess.

Bourdieu uses the term *Symbolic power* to refer to the way in which power is transformed into symbolic form as it is exercised in everyday life, rather than exercised in any overt manner. In its symbolic form, language is endowed with a kind of legitimacy that it would not otherwise have. Symbolic power presupposes a kind of *active complicity* on the part of those being subjected to it, it requires that those subjected to it, believe,

whether consciously or unconsciously, in the legitimacy of this power and the legitimacy of those who wield it.

The fact that linguistic exchanges are also relations of power must not be overlooked. It is in relations of communication that power relations between individual speakers and groups of speakers are realised. Within the linguistic habitus in which linguistic exchanges take place, there is both a *propensity* to speak – to express things, and a *capacity* to speak. The capacity to speak involves both the *linguistic capacity* to generate an infinite number of grammatically well-formed utterances; and the *social capacity* to use these utterances in particular, appropriate contexts or situations (Bourdieu 1991: 36). The grammar of a language determines meaning only to a certain extent. It is in its specific context that the meaning of the utterance is fully ascertained. According to Bourdieu (1991: 66-67) “...it is rare in everyday life for language to function as a pure instrument of communication...linguistic practice inevitably...takes on a social value and a symbolic efficacy”. Utterances receive their meaning and value in relation to the social market place and the value with which the linguistic capital of the speaker is endowed. The value of a speaker’s linguistic capital is not determined merely in linguistic terms, but also in terms of the relations of power that are present, and how this power is negotiated through linguistic exchange. Linguistic markets are socially classified. The whole social structure is present in each linguistic interaction. The particular form of a linguistic exchange is derived from the relation between the groups or individuals engaged in it (ibid.: 67). Differences in the form of the linguistic exchange are perceived only in relation to the perception of difference.

Bourdieu observes, as does Milroy (1999), that in speaking of *the* language, linguists (and others) tacitly accept the authority of the language that is imposed on, and imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate language. In the context of this dissertation this legitimate language can be seen as the standard, specifically ‘Standard English’. For Bourdieu, this ‘official language’ (which is determined by the socially, politically and economically powerful) becomes the norm against which all linguistic practices are measured. The imposition of the dominant or legitimate language is,

according to Bourdieu, “the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination” (Bourdieu 1991: 46).

Bourdieu notes that all linguistic practices are measured against what is perceived as the legitimate practices – the linguistic practices of the socially and economically dominant. The value of a speaker’s usage and by association the speaker him- or herself is assigned within a system of competing linguistic variants which is established when- and wherever there is competence in the society as a whole (ibid.: 53). Different forms of language are compared to the legitimate ‘official’ or standard language or variety and are, on this basis, organised into systems of differences. These systems then serve to reproduce and draw attention to these differences and the social differences that they reflect, thereby, creating a hierarchy of social groups. In emphasizing the differences between the legitimate language or variety and other forms of language, the ability to use the legitimate variety is equated with *competence*. The competence that is required to produce utterances that are deemed appropriate becomes socially acceptable. On this basis, speakers who lack competence in the legitimate language are excluded from the social domains where this competence has come to be required. Bourdieu points out, that social acceptability is not reducible to mere grammaticality. It is the result of social inheritance, it reinforces social distinctions, and as a form of symbolic power, it helps to maintain the dominance of certain speakers (ibid.: 54-60). Bourdieu’s arguments echo those of the Milroys and Joseph discussed above.

Bourdieu, like Joseph, notes that “[t]he sense of the value of one’s own linguistic product is a fundamental dimension of the sense of knowing the place which one occupies in the social space” (Bourdieu 1991.: 82). This ‘self-evaluation’ is an interesting manifestation of symbolic power and speakers’ complicity with it. The view of language as an autonomous system entails viewing linguistic communication as a purely intellectual operation of information transfer and leads to the idea that the symbolic power of language is inherent in language itself. This view, and the ideas that it gives rise to, is, according to Boudieu, incorrect. The symbolic power of language is nothing more than

the ‘delegated power’ of the speaker (ibid.: 107), :...authority comes to language from the outside ...language at most...manifests and symbolises it” (ibid.: 109).

Bourdieu claims that the active complicity of the socially less powerful is a prerequisite for the maintenance of unequal power relations. He maintains that

...[t]he symbolic efficacy of words is exercised only in so far as the person subject to it recognises the person who exercises it as authorised to do so, or what amounts to the same thing, only in so far as he fails to realise that, in submitting to it, he himself has contributed, through his recognition, to its establishment.  
(ibid.: 116)

When speakers of SAIE accept the intolerant prescriptivist approach to so-called non-standard varieties, and go on to perpetuate the idea that non-standard varieties, like their own, are incorrect and bad English, they are contributing, albeit unknowingly to the establishment and maintenance of this view of non-standard varieties and speakers thereof; and thus the discrimination that it leads to.

#### *2.4 Linguistic Imperialism*

Phillipson (1992) argues that “the language [English] has accompanied the slave trade round the world” (ibid.: 5). His thesis becomes relevant to this research project when it is born in mind that the standard language ideology, and the issues of power associated therewith, has been transported with English around the world. He points out that English has played an important role in struggles against slavery and colonialism. In South Africa, it has played a particularly vital role in the struggle against apartheid.<sup>11</sup> These struggles, played out to a large degree in the sphere of language, are essentially struggles against unequal power relations.

Phillipson (ibid.: 6) observes that legitimization has become an important aspect of the conception of English, particularly with regard to the notion of *the* legitimate language as the standard variety. Legitimization is intimately linked to *hegemony*. Hegemonic ideas

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<sup>11</sup> English was used as the language of communication by the African National Congress (ANC) and other liberation organisations during the struggle against apartheid (Silva 1998).

tend to be internalised by the dominated, even through they are not objectively in their interest” (ibid.: 8). This is the *active complicity* referred to by Bourdieu (1991). Furthermore, Phillipson draws attention to the fact that the hegemony of English is not separate from forms of social value judgment that involve domination, such as attitudes about ethnicity and racism. As English has spread across the globe, so has the concept of linguistic hegemony. It is thus present in former colonial societies and is a reflection of and reinforces already vastly unequal power relations in these societies (ibid.: 23-24).

*Linguicism* is an important concept to Phillipson’s theory of linguistic imperialism. He defines it as “ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (ibid.: 47). According to Phillipson, the structural and cultural inequalities that are created and maintained through English linguistic imperialism and other forms of linguicism ensure that the allocation of material resources is in favour of English and English speakers, and to extend this idea, in favour of ‘Standard English’ and its speakers. Thus, discrimination against speakers of SAIE is a form of Linguicism.

### Section Three: World Englishes

Due, largely, to British colonialism, English has spread across the globe to an extent that no other language has in recorded history. This has led to the development of both L2 and L1 varieties of English that do not necessarily conform to either the British or the American idea of ‘Standard English’.

McArthur (1998) observes that during the early years of the twentieth century, it was not only English in general that spread across the globe, but also the prestigious ‘standard’ variety. This resulted in the spread of sensitivity to any perceived failure to live up to the ‘standard’. ‘Standard English’ came to represent the language as a whole and gave rise to the development of a monolithic model of English represented by the standard form. The conception of non-standard language use as ‘not English’. McArthur proposes a Pluralist Model encompassing a range of *Englishes*, for example British English,

American English, Indian English, Canadian English, Zimbabwean English, South African English, etc; in effect an *English language complex* or *English language family*. McArthur argues that the pluralist model is at once a more democratic and a more realistic approach to the diversity of English as it is observed around the world (ibid.: xvi). The differences in the lexical items of South African English and US English<sup>12</sup>, for example, provide evidence for the necessity of a pluralist model.

Inherent in the monolithic model is the belief that the standard is the only *legitimate* form of English. McArthur comments on the effects of the monolithic model, and its insistence on the standard: “Millions who have grown up with the belief that they are native speakers of English, have been brought up short by the snap judgments of other native speakers” (McArthur 1998.: 2). This is a very common phenomenon amongst speakers of SAIE. The idea is that if a person does not speak ‘Standard English’ they do not speak English at all, but rather some incorrect form of the language.

An important idea that McArthur calls attention to is the difference between what are perceived to be central and peripheral communities (ibid.: 36). Despite the widespread use of English across the globe, many English-speaking communities outside of Britain and the United States (which are thought to be the central English-speaking communities) are viewed as peripheral regardless of whether English is used in these territories as an L1, L2, or L3, etc and the functions for which it is used. This entails the varieties of English in ‘peripheral’ communities being subject to exonormative standards. This is problematic in that English needs to fulfil the communicative and expressive needs of many diverse peoples and communities across the globe. Furthermore, language change is a natural linguistic phenomenon. In each new environment in which English is established, it is used by different people to express different life experiences, and it comes into contact with different languages. As Pennycook (1994: 7) states: “[t]he central argument here is that English is bound up in a wealth of local, social, cultural,

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<sup>12</sup> Such as ‘gas’ in US English, and ‘petrol’ in South African English; ‘elevator’ in US English, and ‘lift’ in South African English; ‘store’ in US English, and ‘shop’ in South African English.

economic and political complexities... English is embedded in multiple local contexts of use.”

#### Section Four: Ownership

The development of new varieties of English worldwide has led to an enormous increase in the number of speakers of English. To what extent can these speakers be said to ‘own’ their varieties of English? Do they have any right to claim ownership of English at all, or is it still purely the property of English-speakers in Britain, and more recently, the United States of America? Parmegiani (2003, 2006) discusses the ownership of English by speakers of English as an additional language in South Africa.

According to Parmegiani, the question of language ownership is most relevant in inequitable linguistic markets. He points out (as do L. Milroy (1999) and Parakrama (1995) etc.) that while expressing overt racism is no longer acceptable, linguicism (Phillipson (1992), above) continues to be expressed, uncensored and without comment even in democratic societies like South Africa. South Africa’s linguistic market is characterised by power imbalances and glaring inequality (Parmegiani 2006 :1).

Parmegiani (2006) refers to the results of the Census 2001 in which only nine percent of the total population of South Africa declared English as their Home language. A much more substantial number of the population uses English on a regular, if not daily, basis. He affirms that in this context, it becomes important to investigate the assumption that ownership of English is the prerogative only of white native speakers.

Parmegiani argues that there are two implications in the statement that English is not a person’s “own language”. The first implication is that the person cannot identify with English; the second implication is that the person does not have an adequate command of English. According to Parmegiani, the consequences of denying an individual or group ownership of English (particularly in an inequitable linguistic market like South Africa’s) are that those who can claim legitimate ownership of English have significantly more access to the economic marketplace, such as the job market, as access to these market

places is gained through the use of the legitimate 'standard' variety. For Parmegiani, people who can claim ownership of English by *birthright* (i.e. as a result of being born into an L1 English-speaking community, and therefore being a native speaker of English) have, on this basis, an unfair advantage over those who use it as an additional language having learnt English as an L2, L3, etc.

Parmegiani argues that the *Birthright Model* of language ownership is inadequate for the understanding of how identities and power relations are shaped. He suggests that:

[i]f we think of ownership in terms of command of a language, the idea that only native speakers of English really own English in South Africa is even easier to dispute. Structurally, non-native varieties might differ from the standard set by most white South Africans who use English as their first language. This discrepancy, however, is not necessarily symptomatic of a linguistic deficit...

(2006: 4)

Parmegiani advances an alternative model of ownership. According to his *Appropriation Model*, ownership of a language can be broadly divided into *macro* ownership (which language communities own English? Which standards are relevant?); and *micro* ownership (to what extent can an individual see English as his/her own?). There are, in turn, two fundamental aspects of micro ownership. The first is *affiliative* ownership (identification with a language), which comprises of *inheritance* – birth into the group associated with the language; and *loyalty* – personal identification with the language. The second is *semantic* ownership (the ability to create meaning), which consists of *structural* ownership – command of the morphosyntactic features; and *discourse* ownership – the ability to create unique meaning through discourse.

This analysis takes on a new dimension when considering the case of SAIE. South African Indians, for whom English is an L1, should, according to the birthright model, be able to claim ownership of English. This does not, however seem to be the case. Why are South African Indians who speak English natively denied ownership of a legitimate variety of English? It may be the very 'non-standardness' of SAIE that prevents South African Indians from being able to claim legitimate ownership of English, since the

standard is seen as the only legitimate variety of the language, in much the same way that L2 speakers of English in South African are. Recourse to Parmegiani's Appropriation Model provides an interesting perspective on this issue.

Bearing in mind this discussion of the 'Standard English' debate, the next chapter is an account of the history of the South African Indian Community and SAIE. The fact that SAIE is a non-standard variety is due, in a large part, to the very specific circumstances of its development including indenture, apartheid, and a continued legacy of racial and social prejudice in South Africa. A look at South African Indian English and its speakers provides an interesting perspective on the 'Standard English' debate and the standard language ideology in South Africa.

## Chapter Two: South African Indian English

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the sociolinguistic history of the South African Indian community and the variety of English associated therewith, i.e. South African Indian English (henceforth SAIE). This chapter is divided into three sections. Section One is a discussion of the history of the South African Indian community and South African Indian English. The discussion covers the arrival of the indentured labourers, the languages they spoke, the conditions of indenture, education, apartheid, language shift and the present situation of the South African Indian community. Section Two consists of a brief description of SAIE, the lectal continuum, the accent, dialect, lexicon and grammar. Finally, Section Three is a brief discussion of attitudes to SAIE. The socio-historical account of the South African Indian Community and the development of SAIE with which this chapter is concerned, serves to draw attention to the ways in which the social history of the community and SAIE have led to its perception as a non-standard dialect.

### Section One: The History of South African Indian English

#### *1.1 Arrival*

In 1883 the British Parliament passed the Abolition Act according to which slavery was banned throughout the British Empire. Indenture as a system of emigration can be seen as an indirect result of the abolition of slavery, due to the fact that the consequent labour shortage in the colonies led to the need for alternative sources of labour. Indentured labourers from India began migrating to sugar-producing colonies, such as Mauritius, as early as 1834 (John-Naidu 2005). The demands for cheap labour on the sugar plantations<sup>13</sup> in Natal led to the system of indenture being established in South Africa. The first group of indentured labourers arrived in Natal on *The Truro* on the sixteenth of November 1860 (Desai 1996). The period of indenture in South African lasted from 1860 to 1911 during which time approximately 152 185 Indian labourers arrived in Natal (Mesthrie 1992a).

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<sup>13</sup> It should not be assumed, however, that the indentured labourers were only employed in the Sugar Industry. Marie (1986) notes that indentured Indian workers were also an important supply of labour on the railways, in agriculture, as domestic workers, in brickyards, on the harbour, in mines, and as cleaning staff in hospitals and hotels.

From 1875 onwards a different group of emigrants from India started to arrive in Natal (Mesthrie 1992b). Known as *Passenger Indians*, this group of people comprised mainly of traders from India and Mauritius who paid their own passage, with the intention of setting up businesses to trade with the growing Indian population in South Africa. The so-called Passenger Indians eventually comprised roughly ten percent of the Indian immigrant population. During the period of indenture professionals such as doctors, teachers and religious leaders arrived in Natal to provide services for the Indian community (John-Naidu 2005).

Indenture was not involuntary, but it is unlikely that the recruiters in India gave potential labourers a completely truthful account of the conditions in which they would work and live in South Africa. Many migrants saw emigration as an opportunity to escape the caste system, poverty, debt, family disputes and problems with the law (Mesthrie 1992a). Initially labourers were given the option of receiving a free plot of land after the completion of their indenture contract which must have seemed like a very attractive opportunity to a large number of impoverished labourers.

Unhygienic and cramped conditions aboard the ships transporting the newly indentured labourers were breeding grounds for disease which quickly spread. Consequently, twenty-nine passengers died, for instance, on *The Belvedere* (the second ship to arrive in Natal carrying indentured labourers) during the voyage, and ten more died on arrival. Female passengers lived in constant fear of sexual assault from fellow passengers and the ship's crew (Desai 1996). The method by which labourers were assigned work was random. Meer (1969: 10)<sup>14</sup> writes that “[t]ickets were picked and according to the dictates of chance, friends, relatives and members of the same family were parted and assigned to new masters.” The conditions of indenture will be discussed in greater detail below. Suffice it to note at this point that the indentured labourers found themselves in a completely powerless position.

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<sup>14</sup> In John-Naidu (2005: 86)

## 1.2 Languages

Recruitment of indentured labourers took place mainly in two areas: the south<sup>15</sup>- and north<sup>16</sup>-east of India. The most common languages spoken by South Indians were: *Tamil*, *Telugu* and *Dakhini Urdu* (a Southern variety of Urdu). The North Indians were most likely to speak: *Bhojpuri*, *Awadhi* and *Urdu*. The Passenger Indians, mainly from present-day Pakistan, Gujarat and Maharashtra generally spoke: *Gujarati*, *Urdu*, *Meman* or *Konkani* (Mesthrie 1992a, 1992b, 1996).

For some time after their arrival, the indentured labourers used Indian languages such as Bhojpuri or Tamil for communication amongst themselves (Mesthrie 1996). However, none of the Indian languages mentioned above were numerically or socially dominant enough to become a *lingua franca* of the Indian community in South Africa. Furthermore, none of these languages could be used for communication with white plantation owners or supervisors, or black labourers. Other languages that the migrants came into contact with on their arrival and in their daily lives in South Africa were Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Afrikaans, and English. The migrants also came into contact with and participated in the emergence of the pidgin *Fanakalo*<sup>17</sup>. Mesthrie (1996: 80) claims that the 'language' of the colony that the Indian migrants learnt the fastest was Fanakalo; it was used to communicate with Zulu-speaking workers and occasionally between Indians who shared no other common language. Importantly, the vast majority of Indian immigrants had no knowledge of English on their arrival in South Africa.

In summing up the linguistic situation in which the indentured labourers found themselves, Mesthrie (1992a: 8-9) quotes Sankoff (1979: 24):

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<sup>15</sup> present-day Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>16</sup> present-day Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

<sup>17</sup> Fanakalo is a stable, Zulu-based Pidgin that developed in South Africa on sugar plantations and in the mines. It can also be spelled Fanagalo (see, for example, Mesthrie 1996).

It is difficult to conceive of another situation where people arrived with such a variety of native languages; where they were so cut off from their native language groups; where the size of no one language group was large enough to insure its survival; where no second language was shared by enough people to serve as a useful vehicle of intercommunication; and where the legitimate language (English) was inaccessible to almost everyone.

### *1.3 Conditions of Indenture*

The terms of indenture were negotiated and agreed upon by Britain and India, and codified in Natal Law 14 of 1859. The terms were as follows:

- Each labourer would receive free passage from India to South Africa
- Each labourer would receive ten shillings per month, as well as rations of food and accommodation
- The contracted period of indenture (initially three years) was five years
- Labourers were exempt from corporal punishment
- Forty females were to accompany every one hundred male labourers
- Each arriving party would include a portion of 'higher-ranking' immigrants
- Upon the completion of their contracted period of indenture, and ten years residence in the colony, indentured labourers had three options for their future:
  - 1) A free return passage to India
  - 2) Re-indenture for a further five years
  - 3) A free plot of land to the value of the return passage<sup>18</sup>

(John-Naidu 2005: 84-85)

Mesthrie (1992a: 7) states that “[c]onditions surrounding indenture were not far removed from slavery, as the term “*the coolie trade*” used by shippers in the nineteenth century, suggests.” By all accounts, the living conditions of the indentured labourers were atrocious. Forced to work 17-18 hour days with inadequate nutrition and accommodation, the life of an indentured labourer was far from easy (Desai 1996). Plantation bosses and Sirdars (‘overseers’) meted out harsh punishment to those who were seen as being uncooperative or disobedient. Sirdars were often Indian and occasionally black Africans. They were chosen for this position of authority for their knowledge of English, and/or

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<sup>18</sup> Very few people received a free plot of land, and this offer was eventually done away with.

their willingness to submit to higher authority and do what was necessary to ensure the smooth running of the plantation or mill (John-Naidu 2005). The barracks in which the labourers and their families were housed were cramped, derelict, and often fitted with inadequate sanitation. As mentioned earlier the ratio of men to women was exceedingly uneven initially (John-Naidu 2005).

The Indian presence in South Africa was intended to be temporary by the South African government of the time. However, many labourers decided to remain after their term of indenture was complete, preferring to try to make a living in Natal on the mines, hawking, market-gardening and fishing, rather than return to the problems that they had left behind in India. John-Naidu (2005) claims that by 1886 there were already more 'free' Indians than indentured Indians in South Africa. Thus, by the 1890s, Indian immigrants made up three distinct groups: Indentured Indians still under contract, 'Free' Indians who had completed their indenture and Passenger Indians (Desai 1996).

Despite the demands made by the sugar industry for cheap labour, even before the first shipload of indentured Indians arrived in Natal there was a strong anti-Indian sentiment. Many white South Africans were uneasy about the growing Indian population, and a widely held opinion about Indians was that they were 'wicked' and 'diseased', 'parasitic' and 'harmful', and would further corrupt the black population in South Africa (Marie 1986; John-Naidu 2005). Furthermore, the largely Christian British-settler population distrusted the religions, such as Hinduism and Islam, that were transported to South Africa with the indentured labourers, but it was not only on moral or religious grounds that white South Africans objected to the Indian presence in Natal. It was felt that the system of indenture would bring down wages in the colony in general, and that the jobs of white unskilled labour would be under threat due to the fact that indentured labour would be so much cheaper. The Passenger Indians were also resented, partly due to the fact that they were generally able to compete quite successfully with white-owned businesses through hard-work, sacrifice and by providing inexpensive, efficient service (Marie 1986).

The growing Indian population in South Africa, the economic threat they posed to white settlers, and the prevailing anti-Indian sentiment led the government to pass legislation with a view to controlling the lives and movement of Indians in South Africa as strictly as possible. The following is an amended list of anti-Indian legislation passed between 1885 and 1908 (adapted from Naicker 1945: 27-28):

- Law 3 of 1885 amending Act 3 of 1885 (Transvaal)  
According to this law, Indians had no political rights, they could not own property, and segregation was enforced in residential areas, streets, wards and locations.
- Law 25 of 1891 (Natal)  
This law regulated the life and routine of indentured Indians.
- Law 17 of 1895 (Natal)  
This law imposed an annual poll tax of £ 3 on Indians who decided to stay in South Africa after their period of indenture was complete. Failure to pay this tax resulted in re-indenture, imprisonment or deportation.<sup>19</sup>
- The Franchise Act 1896  
The parliamentary franchise was withdrawn from Indians living in South Africa by this Act.
- The Immigration Restriction Act 1897 (Natal)  
This Act prohibited free immigration to Natal.
- The Immigration Restriction Act of 1903 (Natal)  
By this law Indians were only legally allowed to enter the Transvaal if issued with a permit.
- Immigration Act 1906 (Cape Colony)  
Immigrants from India were prohibited from entering the Cape Colony according to this law.
- The Asiatic Registration Amendment Act, no. 36 of 1908 (Transvaal)

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<sup>19</sup> This tax was later abolished by The Immigrants Regulation Act, 1913.

This amendment act made it compulsory for Indians in the Transvaal to register with authorities and carry a 'pass' which drastically limited their movements in the country.

These laws were intended to encourage Indians to return to India after their indenture contracts were complete. Failing repatriation, the above-mentioned legislation was intended to assist the Government in effective management and control of the growing number of Indians in South Africa. This legislation contributed to the poor standard of living in the Indian community. The £3 annual poll tax, for instance, posed a great problem for the majority of indentured labourers given that the average labourer earned only approximately £10 per annum (Marie 1986).

Mesthrie observes that the harsh working and living conditions experienced by indentured labourers in Natal, including poor wages, long working hours, an imbalance in the ratio of males to females, and overzealous Sirdars led to a very high suicide rate – the second highest in the British colonies. He avers that indentured workers were often treated as 'social lepers', and were unwanted after they had completed their term(s) of indenture (Mesthrie 1992a: 8-9).

#### *1.4 Education*

Mesthrie (1995: 251, 1996: 80-81, 1992a: 18-19) lists four possible sources of contact with English available to indentured Indians:

- a) schooling, with native English-speaking teachers;
- b) schooling, with non-native English-speaking teachers;
- c) contact with native speakers of English in Natal, and
- d) contact with non-native speakers of English (typically other Indians).

Of these four sources, two directly involve education. The vast majority of indentured labourers arrived in Natal illiterate in their own L1s, and with no knowledge of English (John-Naidu 2005). The first form of education available to indentured labourers was

offered by missionaries. For example, in 1867 the Roman Catholic Reverend Ralph Scott established a night school for older learners, and in 1868 a day school for the children of indentured labourers in the Durban Corporation Barracks (Mesthrie 1992a).

Despite the efforts of concerned missionaries and teachers, education in the Indian community continued to be beset by difficulties such as poor enrolment, inadequate learning materials, inadequate school buildings and incompetent teachers. Furthermore, parents were reluctant to send their sons to school for more than a few years, and to send their daughters at all. Sons needed to start working as soon as possible in order to help support the family. Daughters were needed in the home to take care of younger children and elderly grandparents. They were also often needed to cultivate any land that their family owned or rented while the men in the family went out to work. The cultivation of land provided extra income as the produce could be sold, or used as a food source for the family (John-Naidu 2005). According to Mesthrie (1992a: 20), the Indian-school inspector reported in 1886 that an estimated ninety percent of Indian children of school-going age did not attend school. An additional hindrance to successful education was the fact that a large number of teachers were non-native speakers of English who were trying to teach through this medium of instruction (Mesthrie 1995). There were few teachers who were able to conduct classes in any of the Indian languages in Natal, few of the teachers were fluent in English, and even fewer were L1 speakers of English. Thus, the quality of education received by the children of the indentured labourers was generally very poor. Importantly, the L2 variety of English to which the children were exposed (both inside and outside of the classroom) left a lot to be desired as a model for perfect second-language acquisition.

By 1950, it had been ninety years since the first indentured labourers arrived in South Africa from India; and by the late 1950s, there had been a dramatic improvement in the standard of education available to South African Indians. The South African Indian community was, to a large extent, established in the country. South African Indian communities often pooled their resources to build schools and cultural centres, and send for educators and spiritual leaders from India. They also received some assistance from the Indian government. Furthermore, by this stage there were a number of teachers who

had been educated in South Africa, who were ready to start teaching in the community. The learning of English had for a long while been one of the most important aspects of education in the community as speaking English was a skill that provided access to tangible material benefits. As many South African Indians became more actively involved in the political struggle against apartheid, making a decent education available to the community became an important means of empowerment (John-Naidu 2005; Mesthrie 1992b, 1995, 1996).

### *1.5 Apartheid*

In 1911, the Indian government vetoed any further indenture of labourers and the Immigration Act of 1913, passed by the South African government, prohibited any further immigration from India. Factors stimulating repatriation were anti-Indian legislation, and periods of economic depression. Despite this, the Indian population in South Africa continued to grow through reproduction (Naicker 1945). Importantly, there was mostly endogamy within the community with very little interracial mixing. Due to legislation restricting the lawful migration of Indians to other provinces within South Africa, a vast majority of the Indian population remained living in Natal. The 2001/2002 South African population survey<sup>20</sup> reported that the vast majority of South African Indians still reside in what is now called *KwaZulu-Natal*.

Anti-Indian legislation which formalised discriminatory practices against South African Indians, and restricted their rights and freedoms, continued to be passed between 1919 and 1962.<sup>21</sup> In 1948 the National Party came to power in South Africa introducing the system of Apartheid. The policies and ideologies of Apartheid had a significant impact on the development of the South African Indian community and thereby South African Indian English. Prabhakaran (1997) points out that between 1860 and 1950, the different ethnolinguistic Indian communities in South Africa established themselves; with families choosing to settle near other members of the same linguistic group. During this time the community set up homes, businesses, schools and religious centres. These institutions

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<sup>20</sup> The survey was conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations, [www.sairr.org.za](http://www.sairr.org.za), the exact figure was 827 148 Indian residents in KZN.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix Three for examples of this legislation.

were usually funded by the community, and often used the Indian language that was most prevalent in that particular community as the medium of instruction (Prabhakaran 1997; John-Naidu 2005). The Group Areas Act of 1950 effectively dismantled these close-knit communities. Relocation to demarcated 'Indian areas' was completely involuntary and no effort was made to resettle people and communities according to their linguistic group. Extended families and groups of friends were separated and surrounded by speakers of different Indian languages. As a result, many people felt linguistically isolated and there arose an urgent need for a *lingua franca*. Furthermore, there was no, or very little, compensation for the businesses, homes, schools and religious centres that were lost through the relocation. A lack of funds meant that re-establishing these lost resources was, for many people, impossible (John-Naidu 2005; Prabhakaran 1997).

Another consequence of the Group Areas Act was the breakdown of the joint family system<sup>22</sup> (Prabhakaran 1997). This system was instrumental in the maintenance of religious, cultural and linguistic traditions. The loss of income and the size of the dwellings to which families were relocated made it virtually impossible for large families to live together for any extended period of time. Thus, upon marriage, instead of returning to live in the husband's parents' house as had been the tradition in the Indian family structure, newly-weds were often forced to establish their own, independent homes. This meant that the opportunities for the older generation to pass down their particular Indian cultural traditions and languages to their children and grandchildren were severely limited at this point.

Up until approximately 1947, there had been a relatively free flow of trade between India and South Africa which had allowed South African Indians access to religious, traditional and educational materials important to the maintenance of their *Indian culture*, although not imperative as a *South African Indian culture* has, to a large extent, been maintained. Unlike the culture, however, the Indian languages were not maintained in South Africa; and have been lost to a majority of the South African Indian population. In 1948, as a

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<sup>22</sup> The 'joint family system' involved at least two or three generations of the same family living under one roof.

sign of their objection to the apartheid system, the Indian government imposed political, economic and cultural sanctions on South Africa, which made Indian material goods unavailable to South African Indians, and many people lost contact with friends and family in India, and teachers and religious leaders no longer arrived in South Africa. This form of protest against an unjust political system, while intended to pressure the South African government into amending its discriminatory laws, served to completely isolate South African Indians from India, which was still thought of by many as the 'motherland' (Prabhakaran 1997).

By 1948 there had been an established Indian presence in South Africa for eighty-eight years, and at least two generations of children had been born to Indian parents on South African soil. It is no surprise, then, that by this point in history, a large number (if not the majority) of Indians in South Africa felt themselves to be South African. Many South African Indians also became active in the resistance movement against Apartheid.<sup>23</sup> In collaboration with the African National Congress (ANC), the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) launched The Defiance Campaign – a joint passive resistance movement. In 1955 The Freedom Charter, proclaiming that South Africa belongs to everyone that lives in it, both black<sup>24</sup> and white, was signed and endorsed by black, Indian, coloured and liberal white South Africans. Indian anti-Apartheid activists were arrested for their activities, detained and jailed for the "cause" (John-Naidu 2005).

The South African Government naturally feared the possibility of a strong, united front that any major collaboration between Black and Indian South Africans would entail. Thus, part of the divide-and-rule ideology of Apartheid was fostering animosity and distrust between Indian and Black South Africans, as well as among black South Africans of different ethnolinguistic groups. There were a number of different ways in which the

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<sup>23</sup> Indians in South Africa had, in fact, been protesting against discrimination as early as the mid 1890s, when under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi the passive resistance movement was started. The Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) were formed, not only to defend the political and human rights of Indians in South Africa, but all victims of the Apartheid system (John-Naidu 2005).

<sup>24</sup> The term 'black' is used here in the sense in which it was defined by Stephen Biko to mean 'not white' (Biko 1979).

government fostered bitterness and resentment between the black and Indian communities. Essentially, the government focused on and highlighted the juxtaposition between the relative wealth and political power of the Indian community and the poverty and powerlessness of the black community. For example, Indian areas usually had slightly better housing and sanitation than black areas, the Indian community was generally more affluent than the black community, Indians were granted the status of permanent residents in 1962, and were granted their own (albeit purely symbolic) chamber in the Tricameral Parliament in 1982. It seems that the government's efforts were successful to a degree; the resulting hostility between Black and Indian South Africans led to the Cato Manor Riots in 1949, and the Inanda Riots in 1985 (John-Naidu 2005). As a further consequence of the enmity existing between Black and Indian South Africans, in the period leading up to and during South Africa's first general election in 1994 (when the ANC was elected into government), many South African Indians felt nervous about their status as a minority in South Africa (John-Naidu 2005). Many South African Indians still feel this way today, which shall be addressed in greater detail below.

### *1.6 Language Shift*

The language shift within the South African Indian Community was influenced by a number of interrelated circumstances and factors including the conditions of indenture, the plantation system, and Apartheid. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the indentured labourers were illiterate upon arrival, and no single Indian language was known to a large enough majority of the Indian community to become a *neutral* lingua franca (Prabhakaran 1997).

From 1860 until the early fifties the process of learning English in the Indian community remained more or less the same: it was learnt (with poor quality) as a second or third language at school or work, or it was not learnt at all. By the late 1950s, however, as previously mentioned, there had been a dramatic improvement in the quality of education available to South African Indians. The result was that at this time English was introduced into Indian homes and neighbourhoods by school children to an extent greater

than at any previous time.<sup>25</sup> Mesthrie (1995: 252, 1996: 81) claims that in some homes an extremely rapid shift took place: the first- or second-eldest child may have started school with little or no knowledge of English, but as a consequence of their influence in the home, their younger siblings may have started school with English as their dominant language. In the 1960s and 1970s English became the first language for the majority of Indian school children. The process of language shift can, thus, be thought of as starting in the 1960s (Mesthrie 1995, 1996). Given that 1960 was exactly one hundred years since the first indentured Indians arrived in South Africa, but less than fifty years since the last immigrants arrived, the process of language shift in the South African Indian community can be seen as either gradual or rapid depending on the perspective from which it is viewed.

Mesthrie (1995: 252; 1996: 81) describes a process which he calls a 'closed cycle of reinforcement' by which the parents and grandparents of school-going children learnt English. This cycle is remarkable in the context of language shift as in the process of learning English from the child, the parent/grandparent reinforces the child's 'child-language'<sup>26</sup>. The closed cycle of reinforcement, substratum interference, imperfect learning conditions, attitudinal factors and the question of whether transmission was normal or not, are all immediate circumstances that influenced the variety of English that emerged as a result of the shift.

Substratum Interference (in this case, Hindi, Tamil, etc.) in the target language (TL – in this case English) is the result of imperfect group learning during the period of language shift. Imperfect learning<sup>27</sup> does not imply an inability to learn on the part of those wishing

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<sup>25</sup> Of course, the process of language shift was not only a result of the introduction of English into Indian homes and neighbourhoods by school children, though this played an incredibly important role in the advancement of the process. Before the late 1950s English was learnt as a second or third language outside of the home and neighbourhood, at school, and work, or not at all.

<sup>26</sup> I.e. the language use characteristic of a child acquiring a language. Children make typical errors during the language acquisition process as they gradually acquire the systematic rules of the grammar (McLaughlin 1984).

<sup>27</sup> I.e. language learning or acquisition that takes place in conditions that are not 'perfect' or particularly conducive to the acquisition of a 'perfect' grammar. Imperfect learning conditions include those which are characterised by limited exposure to L1-speaker data and opportunities to make use of the target language (Lightbown and Spada 1993, Mesthrie 1996).

to acquire the TL. Rather, it occurs as a result of a lack of sufficient exposure to the standard variety of the TL, or as consequence of attitudinal factors affording the language shift variety covert prestige within the shifting community. Mesthrie (1996) argues (following Thomason & Kaufman 1988), that imperfect learning starts with phonology and syntax rather than vocabulary. This may explain the distinctive syntactic features of SAIE, and why many 'Indian' lexical items<sup>28</sup> are still used by speakers of this variety. Shift without 'normal' transmission<sup>29</sup> is typical of Creoles. Speakers do not acquire the lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic structures of the TL as an interrelated set. Shift through normal transmission on the other hand, as was the case for SAIE, involves shifting speakers acquiring the bulk of the TL grammatical structures with the TL vocabulary (Mesthrie 1996). Thus, the TL of the shifting speakers reflects its genetic background on the whole, but may contain syntactic changes as a result of substratum influence.

Mesthrie (1996: 87) maintains that the distinctive character of SAIE is a result of the fact that in the early phase of TL acquisition, opportunities to learn the TL were limited. Opportunities for contact with L1 speakers of English were further diminished by Apartheid policy which resulted in the stabilization of a second language into a first. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, during the first half of the twentieth century the Indian presence in South Africa was intended to be temporary, thus the level of motivation to learn the TL to a degree greater than that necessary for basic communication may have been limited. Moreover, as mentioned above, social and educational opportunities were few and far between, and the quality of these opportunities questionable.

The conditions under which language shift occurred in the case of SAIE are similar in many ways to the conditions under which Pidgins or Creoles develop. Indeed, in other areas, such as Mauritius, where the system of indenture was in place, a Creole (Mauritian

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<sup>28</sup> Such as *dhania*, *biryani*, and *masāla*. It is noteworthy that these and other 'Indian' terms have entered into general 'South African English' usage.

<sup>29</sup> 'Normal' transmission would be when a language is passed down from one generation of L1-speakers to the next in 'perfect' learning conditions.

Creole) did develop in the indentured Indian population. According to Mesthrie (1996: 86-87), there are three conditions prevailing in nineteenth century South Africa that led language shift to occur, rather than a Creole to develop. They were:

- a) the fact that there were enough speakers of Indian languages to make Indians comfortable speaking with them within their homes and communities;
- b) the fact that only some members of the younger generation used English as a *lingua franca* within the Indian community. The majority of the population used an Indian language or Fanakalo; and
- c) the fact that it was not always necessary to use English to communicate with English or Zulu speakers due to the existence of Fanakalo.

Mesthrie (1996) concludes that language shift in the South African Indian community is a case of gradual shift involving several languages over three or four generations.

### *1.7 The Present*

According to the South African Government Census (2001), the South African Indian community is a minority, forming approximately 2% of the total population of South Africa. As mentioned above, the majority of South African Indians reside in KwaZulu-Natal, with the second largest population located in Gauteng. The vast majority of South African Indians are L1 English-speakers. The figure in 1996, more than 10 years ago, stood at 94% of the South African Indian population being L1 English speakers (John-Naidu 2005: 95, 1996 Government Census Data).

The social class and income spectrum of the South African Indian population include: high, medium and low incomes, and upper, middle and lower class. John-Naidu (2005: 95) states that “[i]nequalities between the racial groups exist as well as within them, as a result of the...past.” As a minority, South African Indians voted along class lines in democratic elections, rather than as a “racial group”, which draws attention to the fact that the so-called ‘South African Indian Community’ is no more homogenous than any other community that one might attempt to discuss or describe. It is, perhaps, more

heterogeneous than other communities, such as the Zulu L1 speaking community, due to vast religious and class differences.

Many South African Indians still reside in former 'Indian group areas', such as Chatsworth or Phoenix<sup>30</sup>. In these areas, residents are generally closer to cultural and religious centres, family and friends. John-Naidu (2005: 18), however, observes that Indians have moved to other areas like Westville, Umhlanga, and the Berea<sup>31</sup>.

The existence and nature of a South African Indian identity has been discussed recently with relative frequency (see, for example, John-Naidu 2005, Singh 2005, and Desai 1996). The difficulty seems to lie in deciding to what degree an individual is South African and to what degree s/he is Indian. Duphelia-Mesthrie (2000)<sup>32</sup>, quotes Ela Gandhi, the granddaughter of Mohandas Gandhi, and a Member of Parliament for the ANC, as making this comment about her identity:

I am a South African; a very proud South African. The Indian-ness comes in at the level of culture, the way we eat, the kind of things we eat, the kind of things we appreciate – like music, drama, the language we speak. We only enrich our country by having all these different tastes and habits. What I am basically saying is that this is where the Indian-ness stops.

During a Radio Lotus talk show with Dr. Ashwin Desai and Professor Thomas Hanson (which took place on the 24 June 1999), Desai said the following about his position regarding the 'South African Indian Identity'<sup>33</sup>:

...we find ourselves in a very serious identity crisis because, from my interactions with people, they like to see themselves as Indian and, of course, people from Europe, you call them Europeans, people from Italy, you call them Italians, people from India, you call them Indians born from there, and we are not born from India, we were born in South Africa so we are very much South Africans. I would like to believe that the only relationship that Indians, that we have with India is the fact that our forefathers were born there. Our motherland is not India,

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<sup>30</sup> Refer to Appendix 8 for a map showing these areas

<sup>31</sup> Refer to footnote 30

<sup>32</sup> In John-Naidu (2005: 97-98)

<sup>33</sup> This extract of the transcript of the interview is taken from John-Naidu (2005: 155).

it is South Africa. It is important that while we pride ourselves in our rich cultural, religious and linguistic heritage, we remain South African. As part of her interview schedule, John-Naidu (2005) asked her South African Indian participants the question: *How do you best describe yourself?* In the results, she reported that 44% of her participants chose to describe themselves as *South African Indian*, 13% as *South African of Indian Origin*, 7% as *Indian South African*, and 0% as *Indian of South African Origin*.<sup>34</sup> Questions of this kind are significant in this dissertation due to the relationship between language and identity.

## Section Two: A Brief Description of SAIE

Before launching into the description of this dialect, it is necessary to note once again that there is nothing inherently ‘wrong’ with any of the features of SAIE. The differences between SAIE and other varieties of English should not be regarded as examples of ‘bad’ English. The component forms and constructions of SAIE are perfectly acceptable within the contexts in which they occur.

Mesthrie (1992b: i) states that:

SAIE is firmly rooted in, and appropriate to, the areas of experience of its speakers, both past and present, as any other variety of English. The great differences from formal English are attributable partly to the genesis of the dialect under very different conditions from those which nurtured formal English. In addition many items which are traditionally touted as being ‘incorrect’ are actually alive and well, existing as regionalisms in England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States.

### *2.1 The Lectal Continuum*

In his analyses of SAIE, Mesthrie (1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1996), makes use of a theoretical continuum borrowed from Creole studies which charts the varying styles and strategies that characterise SAIE. This continuum distinguishes between five ‘lects’: The *pre-basilect*, the *basilect*, the *mesolect*, the *acrolect*, and the *post-acrolect*.

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<sup>34</sup> The rest of the results were as follows: South African Hindu: 4%; South African Muslim: 2%; South African Christian: 2%; Other: 4%. The remaining 24% were non-respondents, i.e. chose not to respond to this question.

*Figure 1. The Lectal Continuum*

Pre-basilect – Basilect – Mesolect – Acrolect – Post-acrolect

It is unlikely that there are, at the present time, many speakers of the *pre-basilect* as it was spoken by second- or third-generation South African Indians. According to Mesthrie (1995), for speakers of the *pre-basilect*, English is a second language (L2) or even a third language (L3), and expression in English is very limited. Furthermore, understanding *pre-basilectal* speech is difficult even for those who are familiar with the *basilect*.

The *basilect*, to a greater extent than any of the other lects, is characterised by substratum influence and L2-communication strategies to a larger extent than the other lects. Mesthrie (1995) claims that the *basilect* was spoken by older speakers with little education. As this generation of speakers is lost, the number of speakers of this lect is diminished. The *basilect* was usually acquired by its speakers as an L2, but is spoken with the fluency of an L1. The *acrolect* tends to follow quite closely the model of English spoken by white English-speakers in Natal<sup>35</sup> with the exception of certain syntactic and phonological features. According to Mesthrie (1995: 257) the very few speakers who are genuinely bidialectal in SAIE and South African English (SAE) tend to be young professionals. The *mesolect* mediates between the *basilect* and the *acrolect*; its speakers lie somewhere between the two extremes on the continuum. The *post-acrolect* is essentially a non-SAIE system. Its speakers draw heavily on South African English. It does, however, encompass certain idioms and lexical items characteristic of SAIE.

These lects are essentially interlanguage varieties of English that have fossilised at different points along the interlanguage continuum and are used as first languages (with the exception of the *pre-basilect*) (Mesthrie 1995: 255).

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<sup>35</sup> Mesthrie refers to this variety of English later on in the same paper simply as 'South African English'. It should be noted that, at this point, the labels used to describe the varieties under discussion are oversimplified, in the sense that they cannot be accurately classified and labelled on the basis of race and/or ethnicity.

Mesthrie (1995) claims that SAIE, in general, tends more towards the mesolect than the basilect or acrolect. In informal situations speakers generally have to strike a balance between sounding too basilectal (and thus uneducated and unsophisticated) and sounding too acrolectal (with its connotations of being cold, distant and superior). Young educated speakers of SAIE, such as the participants in this study, are generally able to switch styles; most often between a more acrolectal style in formal situations and a more mesolectal style in informal situations (Mesthrie 1995). While a full analysis of the present status of the lectal continuum is beyond the scope of this study, the description of SAIE that follows will comprise of features characteristic of the mesolect and acrolect.

## 2.2 Accent

The accent associated with SAIE is probably the most salient feature of this variety to both its speakers and speakers of other varieties of English. As such, the accent is often used as an acceptable instrument of humour by speakers of SAIE. It is also used as an instrument of humour by speakers of other varieties of English, though this is considerably more problematic.<sup>36</sup>

While the accent can generally be easily identified, there seems to be a phonological continuum which follows the lectal continuum quite closely. The accent of basilectal speakers diverges rather drastically from what can be referred to as a general South African accent<sup>37</sup>; the mesolect less so. The acrolect converges quite closely with the general South African accent. However, this lect is still distinctly different. It is often spoken with at least a slight South African Indian accent, and furthermore, still retains the use of certain grammatical features characteristic of SAIE, such as the use of *y'all* as a plural pronoun and the partitive genitive construction *so much of* (Mesthrie 1995, 1996). The grammatical features characteristic of SAIE are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.4 below.

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<sup>36</sup> with the exception of Michael Naicker, the stage-name of white comedian Kevin Perkins [www.michealnaicker.co.za](http://www.michealnaicker.co.za). Also see [www.chilliboy.co.za](http://www.chilliboy.co.za) for information on the play *The Chilli Boy* written by Geraldine Naidoo and performed by Matthew Ribnick.

<sup>37</sup> Once again, the use of this label is an oversimplification.

The style shift mentioned above seems to involve accent as well as syntax. Speakers are easily observed switching from a more general SAE system of pronunciation and intonation when speaking to, for example, a lecturer in a formal context, to a system of pronunciation and intonation more typically associated with SAIE, when interacting with their SAIE-speaking friends or family. This kind of shift is typical of younger speakers who went to former model C schools<sup>38</sup> and have a tertiary qualification or are working towards one. Often, however, there is a noticeable desire to distance oneself from the accent (and other characteristics) of SAIE. This has a lot to do with attitudes toward language variation, and ideas about standard languages.

The SAIE accent shows significant influence from the Indian substrate languages. However, it differs considerably from the accent associated with Indian English (IE). Given the increased level of contact with speakers of other varieties of English in post-Apartheid South Africa, there is the possibility of accent-leveling. Mesthrie (1995: 253) claims that there are two characteristics that SAIE shared with IE that are now receding in the local variety. These are: aspiration of consonants and retroflexion of consonants like /t/ and /d/. A characteristic that these two varieties of English still share, according to Mesthrie, is a syllable-timed rather than stress-timed rhythm in colloquial styles. Some other features of the SAIE accent (associated more with the mesolect than the acrolect) are: the dropping of word-initial /h/ in words like ‘home’ – ‘ome’, ‘hello’ – ‘ello’, and ‘horrible’ – ‘orrible’; pronouncing word-initial /t/ as a dental fricative /θ/<sup>39</sup>, for example ‘tooth’ – ‘thooth’ and ‘tongue’ – ‘thongue’; and a ‘rolling’ /r/ (i.e. a dental trill /r/).

### 2.3 *Lexicon*

There are a number of lexical items still current in SAIE today that have been borrowed or transferred from the various Indian substrate languages.<sup>40</sup> The SAIE lexis typically consists of items associated with all varieties of South African English, and items

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<sup>38</sup> Model C Schools were Government Schools (i.e. not private schools) that were run by an elected governing body which was able to set the rules of the school. The governing body was able to set the fees at whatever level they wished and deny admission to certain applicants. The result was that these schools often charged exorbitant school-fees, and only accepted pupils from wealthy families.

<sup>39</sup> The ‘th’ sound at the beginning of the word ‘though’, ð

<sup>40</sup> See Mesthrie’s (1992b) *Lexicon of South African Indian English*.

associated only with the South African Indian community.<sup>41</sup> Within the set of items associated with the Indian community there exist two major sub-sets. The first set includes words that are commonly used by most speakers of SAIE in informal situations irrespective of the speakers' ancestral language; the second set is comprised of words that are restricted to use by various sub-groups of speakers depending on their ancestral language (Mesthrie 1992b).<sup>42</sup> Examples of items that have entered in to the general lexicon of South African English are: *dhania* (coriander), *masāla* (curry spices) and *biryani* (a dish of rice, vegetables and/or meat cooked together) (ibid.: xix). Examples of items specific to ancestral background are: for pungent or hot food, *kāro* in Tamil, *kārum* in Telugu, *thittha* in Hindi, *thikku* in Gujarati, and *thikka* in Uru (ibid.: xx). Terms that are borrowed or transferred from Indian languages most often relate to religion, food or family relations.

#### 2.4 Grammar

As mentioned above, the grammar of SAIE differs from that of SAE more or less depending on the speaker, and the context in which communication is taking place. It is possible to identify and describe these differences. One such difference concerns the way in which wh-questions are formed in SAIE. In contrast to SAE, subject-auxiliary inversion does not occur in subject wh-questions in SAIE. This syntactic difference between the grammars of these two varieties of English are discussed in Chapter Four. In this section, I outline some other characteristic features of SAIE.

Mesthrie (1995: 257; 1996: 88-89) claims that the following three syntactic features are shared by mesolect and acrolect of South African Indian English:<sup>43</sup>

(1) *y'all* as plural pronoun form

E.g. Are y'all coming?

(Are you (pl.) coming?)

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<sup>41</sup> South Africans, in general, employ some Indian borrowings, such as *biryani*, *dhania* and *masāla*.

<sup>42</sup> The ancestral Indian languages include Tamil, Telugu, Dakhini Urdu, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Gujarati, Mema and Konkani.

<sup>43</sup> 'Standard English' glosses appear in brackets beneath each example.

Is that y'all's dog? (genitive form)

(Is that your (pl.) dog?)

This form appears not only in speech, but also in informal writing, usually *you'll*.

(2) Copula attraction to the wh-word in indirect questions

E.g. Do you know what's roti<sup>44</sup>?

(Do you know what roti is?)

I don't know when's the plane going to land.

(I don't know when the plane is going to land.)

What's the hell wrong with you?

(What the hell is wrong with you?)

(3) The use of *of* in partitive genitive constructions

E.g. He has too much of money.

(He has too much money.)

I have too much of work to do.

(I have too much work to do.)

Examples of topicalisation phenomena occurring in SAIE are:

Banana, you want?

(Do you want a banana?)

Must be, they coming now.

(They must be coming now.)

For a long time I haven't had barfi.

(I haven't had barfi for a long time.)

Another feature of SAIE is the use of *finish* as a perfective aspect marker.

E.g. I finish eat.

(I've finished eating.)

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<sup>44</sup> Roti is Indian hand-made bread made with flour, oil, hot water and butter. It is round, flat, and similar in appearance to a pancake, though it is savoury.

I finish play.  
(I've finished playing.)

The use of *should* as a past habitual marker occurs with relative frequency.

E.g. I should study hard when I was at school, but at University I don't.  
(When I was at school I used to study very hard but now, at University, I don't.)

My mom should always phone me, like, three times a day.  
(My mom used to phone me, like, three times a day.)

SAIE speakers' frequent use of intonation to mark the distinction between declarative and interrogative is also a feature of SAIE.<sup>45</sup>

E.g. You bought cheese, Farouk?  
(Did you buy cheese, Farouk?)

You want coffee?  
(Do you want coffee?)

The following are features or characteristics that Mesthrie (1995: 262) calls 'near-misses'. They are close to standard forms, but differ in minor details:

The use of different prepositions

E.g. I was good *in* maths. (at)  
(I was good *at* maths.)

The use of unusual adverbials, adjectives and quantifiers

E.g. 'What's wrong with the both of you?'  
(What's wrong with you two?)

The use of *mines* as a possessive marker:

E.g. That's mines.  
(That is mine.)

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<sup>45</sup> Speakers of other varieties of English use this construction, though with less frequency.

The use of the word *paining*:

E.g. My leg is *paining*.

(My leg is sore/in pain.)

While all of the features of SAIE grammar introduced above occur more frequently in mesolectal speech, they do slip into acrolectal speech when the speaker's concentration wanes, or where they are conversing comfortably with an in-group member.

### Section Three: Attitudes Towards SAIE

Mesthrie (1992b) observes that SAIE is becoming the second major variety of English as a first language in South Africa (Mesthrie 1992b: i). He maintains that there is nothing 'wrong' with any of the characteristic features of SAIE that differ from the corresponding features in 'Standard English'; and that these features should not be seen as "bad" in comparison to "good" 'Standard English'. Mesthrie (1992b) argues that the features of SAIE discussed *A Lexicon of South African Indian English* (and discussed in examples (1), (2) and (3) above) are perfectly acceptable in the contexts in which they occur. The use of these features is, in fact, more acceptable in these contexts than the use of formal 'Standard English' would be.

The low social and economic status that has been, and often still is, associated with the South African Indian community, and a persistent racism that gives rise to the idea of the inferiority of non-white South Africans (but also exists among non-white South Africans), has led, through the process of symbolic revalorisation, to a negative perception of the variety of English associated with the South African Indian community. The perception of SAIE as a non-standard, incorrect, inferior variety of English is not a neutral idea about language, but is rather a manifestation and reflection of perceptions and opinions about speakers of this variety. At times, however, the negative attitudes towards South African Indians are less subtly expressed as is evidenced by the hate speech in Appendix Four.

The description of SAIE presented in Section Two shows that SAIE is characterised by a different accent, unique lexical items and distinctive grammatical constructions. In Chapter Four, I will argue, that this variety differs in *systematic* and *rule-governed* ways from ‘Standard English’ by using evidence from the grammar of SAIE as exemplified above. Furthermore, this introduction to SAIE and its speakers shows that the socio-historical conditions in which SAIE developed are unique, and have contributed in a significant way to the present form of SAIE.

Having discussed socio-historical as well as specific grammatical properties of SAIE in this chapter, in the chapter that follows I explain the research methods that I used to investigate SAIE wh-questions and attitudes towards these constructions in particular and SAIE in general. I then present and discuss the results of the research.

## Chapter Three: Research Methods and Research Methodology

Sociolinguistic methods of research differ vastly from those employed in syntactic research. As this thesis is a combination of a sociolinguistic and a syntactic investigation into the ‘Standard English’ debate in South Africa, the research methods employed in this research project needed to encompass and satisfy the demands of both sub-fields of linguistics. The need to bridge the gap between these two approaches heavily influenced the research design as outlined in Section One. Section Two comprises of the presentation of the results of the empirical research in the form of tables in Section 2.1, and a discussion of the data in Section 2.2. Section Three contains concluding remarks.

### Section One: Research Methods

#### *1.1 The Corpus*

The corpus of SAIE wh-question data that I have collected and compiled reveals that non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion occur regularly in the speech of South African Indians. I have collected 111 examples of this particular construction by noting down instances of it in conversations occurring around me, and in conversations with friends and acquaintances. In addition, friends and family who were aware of the nature of my research noted down examples of this construction to add to my corpus.

One of the benefits of this method of data collection is that it provided me with authentic examples of the syntactic phenomenon to be analysed in Chapter Four. A second benefit is that all of the people from whom I have collected data will remain anonymous. Furthermore, being so easily able to collect data assured me that the wh-construction being studied occurs frequently enough in the speech of members of the South African Indian community to be a valid object of study.

The interview schedule (see Appendix Seven for an example) was designed specifically to satisfy the demands of both sociolinguistic and syntactic research. Interviews were conducted with twenty participants. Since this research is qualitative, rather than

quantitative in nature, twenty is an adequate number of participants for the purpose of this study.

In the formal interview situation it is important to control as many sociolinguistic variables as possible. Variables such as *age*, *level of education* and the *speakers' L1*<sup>46</sup> that need to be controlled in the interview situation are considered, but are not in themselves part of the analysis in this research project. It is not the aim of this research to provide a detailed sociolinguistic description of speakers of SAIE. Rather, the aim is to provide formal data that verify or refute the data in the corpus, and to investigate attitudes towards SAIE; in particular non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion movement.

In an attempt to control the variables mentioned above, participants were chosen from the South African Indian population on the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu- Natal (UKZN). Therefore, all of the participants are of approximately the same age (between 17 and 24) and have achieved the same minimal level of education (at least a matric); thus age and level of education were stable variables. English is the L1 of all twenty participants, thus the speakers' L1 was also a stable variable. While selecting all of the participants from within the same context effectively controls the sociolinguistic variables, there is a drawback to this approach, namely that the results of the research are context-specific. Had I chosen participants from a different context, who embodied a different set of sociolinguistic variables, the results of the research would, most likely, have been different.

Given that I am white and a Masters student, I took into account the fact that the participants may have been less comfortable with me and consequently less likely to provide me with completely open responses in the interviews on the basis of my 'outsider' status. It is for this reason that I conducted the interviews with the help of an Indian research assistant with whom I had already been working prior to this research.

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<sup>46</sup>English is the L1 of the majority of South African Indians few of whom speak an Indian language (Census 2001).

Participants thus had the option of directing their responses to either the research assistant or to me.<sup>47</sup>

The interviews were recorded for later revision and transcription, and also allowing for the freedom to discuss issues of interest and relevance to the topic, without having to interrupt the interaction in order to take down notes. Ten of the participants were presented with written data and ten were presented with spoken data in order to establish whether or not these two modes of presentation made any difference to the responses provided by the participants (Schütze 1996, Johnstone 2000). The written data was printed on the response sheet that was handed to the participants. In the interviews with the spoken data, the research assistant simply said the sentences that were being used as spoken data. I decided to have my research assistant say the sentences, rather than play back a recording of the data, in an effort to keep the interviews as informal as possible. Interviews were conducted with participants one at a time to ensure that the recording quality was good and to allow for more flexible discussions in the interviews. The interviews were kept as short and as informal as possible to prevent the participants from being less open and from becoming bored or frustrated (Schütze 1996, Johnstone 2000).

At the beginning of each interview, I explained to the participant what I would be asking them to do and answered any of their questions (Schütze 1996). In accordance with the ethical requirements of UKZN, each participant signed a consent form before proceeding with the interview.<sup>48</sup> During the interviews, participants performed a type of grammatical judgment task, which provided syntactic data. Thereafter the participants were asked to explain the reasons for their responses in the grammatical judgment tasks, which provided sociolinguistic data, as subjective perceptions of the participant regarding the status of SAIE were elicited (Schütze 1996). In this way I tested whether or not the wh-questions that I noticed and recorded in my corpus were consciously accepted by the participants. A grammatical judgment task is one which involves the researcher presenting a native speaker (the participant) of the language or linguistic variety being

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<sup>47</sup> The presence of the research assistant did not completely solve the problem, as I was still present.

<sup>48</sup> (see Appendix Five for an example)

studied with a number of sentences, including sentences involving the grammatical phenomenon being studied, and ‘control’ sentences which, despite being similar, do not contain the phenomenon being studied. The researcher then asks the participant to make a judgment as to whether or not each sentence is grammatical. On the basis of these judgments, the researcher is able to determine what are and what are not grammatical constructions in the language or linguistic variety concerned (Schütze 1996).

The grammatical judgment tasks that the participants were asked to complete during the interviews were slightly different to those ‘traditionally’ used in syntactic research in order to elicit both syntactic and sociolinguistic data and proceeded as follows: each participant was presented with one set of data, which consisted of two examples of the phenomenon to be studied, and one ‘control’ sentence. The control sentence was a *wh*-construction similar to those being studied; however, it conformed to the grammatical rules of ‘Standard English’. For example, 1) *Where you are?* 2) *When you did that?* 3) *Why didn’t you tell me?*. The participants were then asked to choose a response from A-D for each sentence:

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself.
- B I don’t use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do.
- C I’ve never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it.
- D Nobody would say this.

(based on Trudgill 1983: 15)

The choice of response provided information on the syntactic data. Once the participants had provided their responses, they were asked to state the reasons for each response. Questions A-D and the potential responses of the participants left room for extensive interpretation. The written data was presented as seen in the example of the interview schedule in Appendix Seven. The spoken data was also presented one at a time giving the participant time to respond to each sentence. In accordance with suggestions made by Schütze (1996), I took particular care to ensure that the sentences presented to

participants were easy to parse and unambiguous. Any contexts in which sentences could be grammatical were considered. Every effort was made to reduce the amount of influence over decisions made by participants due to the presence or behaviour of the research assistant or myself. Finally, participants were asked to respond to the data as quickly as possible in an effort to gather ‘first instinct’ responses to the data (Schütze 1996; Johnstone 2000).

After the grammatical judgement task was completed, participants were asked to state their reasons for each response, and were asked some or all of the following questions, as well as others that arose in the interview situation:

- i) What type of person uses this kind of grammatical construction?
- ii) Why do/don’t you use this kind of construction yourself?
- iii) Do you think that Indian people in South Africa speak English differently to anybody else in South Africa?
- iv) Have you ever heard of South African Indian English?
- v) Do you know what a dialect is?
- vi) What is ‘good’ English?
- vii) Who decides what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’ English?
- viii) Do you know what ‘Standard English’ is?
- ix) Do you think that Standard English is different to South African Indian English? If so, how?
- x) Do you think people should learn Standard English? If so, why?

### Section Two: Research Results

For the purpose of the analysis, participants were numbered one to twenty. Participants One to Ten were presented with written data. Participants Eleven to Twenty were presented with spoken data. It needs to be considered that the first two sentences were non-subject wh-questions with no subject-auxiliary inversion of the kind that are possible in SAIE; the third sentence was a non-subject wh-question with subject-auxiliary

inversion as is typical of ‘Standard English’ constructions of this kind. This sentence acted as a ‘control’.

### *2.1 Tables*

Before proceeding with the discussion, consider again the list of responses that was available to the participants on their response sheet:

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself.
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do.
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it.
- D Nobody would say this

The first two questions that were presented as data were SAIE non-subject wh-questions. The third sentence was a ‘control’ sentence – a ‘Standard English’ non-subject wh-question.

**Table one: Responses of Participants Presented With Written Data**

PARTICIPANT	SENTENCE 1	SENTENCE 2	SENTENCE 3
1	B	C	A
2	B	B	A
3	B	B	B
4	B	A	B
5	B	B	A
6	B	B	A
7	B	A	A
8	B	B	A
9	A	A	A
10	B	B	A
Total:	A - 1 B - 9 C - 0 D - 0	A - 3 B - 6 C - 1 D - 0	A - 8 B - 2 C - 0 D - 0

**Table two: Responses of Participants Presented With Spoken Data**

PARTICIPANT	SENTENCE 1	SENTENCE 2	SENTENCE 3
11	A	A	A
12	A	A	A
13	A	A	A
14	A	A	A
15	D	D	A
16	B	B	A
17	B	B	A
18	B	B	A
19	D	C	A
20	A	A	A
Total:	A - 5 B - 3 C - 0 D - 2	A - 5 B - 3 C - 1 D - 1	A - 10 B - 0 C - 0 D - 0

**Table three: Totals**

RESPONSE	SENTENCE 1	SENTENCE 2	SENTENCE 3
A	6	8	18
B	12	9	2
C	0	2	0
D	2	1	0
Total	20	20	20

**Table four: Patterns of response**

SENTENCE 1	SENTENCE 2	SENTENCE 3	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS WHO CHOSE THIS PATTERN
B	B	A	8
A	A	A	6
B	C	A	1
B	B	B	1
B	A	B	1
B	A	A	1
D	D	A	1
D	C	A	1

## *2.2 Discussion*

As can be seen from table four, there were eight patterns of response to the grammatical judgment task. Eight out of the twenty participants chose B for sentences 1) and 2) (non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion), and A for the control sentence 3) (non-subject wh-questions with subject-auxiliary inversion). Six out of the twenty participants chose A for all three sentences. These were the only two significant patterns that appeared. The remaining patterns of response each occurred only once.

It is not surprising that the most significant pattern of response was B for the first two sentences and A for the last sentence. As discussed in detail in Chapter One, South African Indian English is not generally considered to be a prestigious variety in South Africa. I had, in fact, anticipated that a larger majority of the participants would choose this pattern of response because it allowed them to acknowledge that wh-constructions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion do occur in the speech of South African Indians, without them having to identify themselves as users of this kind of construction. Interestingly, five out of ten of the participants who were presented with written data chose this pattern of response. Only three of the participants who were presented with

spoken data chose this pattern of response. This is not surprising as ‘non-standard’ constructions are much more conspicuous in their written form.

Only one participant who was presented with written data chose A for all three sentences. Five out of ten participants who were presented with spoken data chose this pattern of response. Again, it is likely that this is due to the fact that, in speech, ‘non-standard’ constructions are less conspicuous because they occur more frequently in this medium. Furthermore, speech is often subject to less strict standards of correctness. Perhaps the participants who were presented with spoken data felt more at ease because the interviews seemed more informal with the research assistant saying the three sentences used as data. I had anticipated fewer participants choosing this pattern of response because this choice would involve them admitting to using a construction, or even a variety of English, that is not usually regarded as prestigious, and is even, at times, associated with a lack of education. However, the use of SAIE, and admitting to the use of this variety, may be a means of identifying oneself with an attractive or positively viewed in-group or culture.

It is worth noting that those participants who chose the BBA pattern of response gave much longer responses to questions and seemed generally to be more willing to discuss the constructions they were presented with and SAIE in general. The participants who chose the AAA pattern of response seemed to be less comfortable with discussing SAIE, their responses were shorter, as were their interviews. I assume that this is because those participants who chose BBA were not identifying themselves as users of the construction being discussed and the variety of English associated with it, whereas those participants who chose AAA were associating themselves with a non-standard variety of English and any negative connotations attached thereto. An exception was Participant Nine, who was presented with written data, chose AAA, and seemed quite comfortable discussing SAIE at length.

The fact that BBA and AAA were the most popular response patterns is not surprising, because both of these response patterns acknowledge the existence of the type of wh-

question that I am investigating which confirms the authenticity of the corpus. Bearing this in mind, the response pattern of Participant Fifteen (DDA), and Participant Nineteen (DCA) are interesting. Participant Fifteen denied the existence of South African Indian English as a variety, claiming that the label was racist and did not reflect the reality of the linguistic situation in South Africa in that English in South Africa varies according to the area in which people live rather than according to race. She said: “I think that there’s a lot of different groups of people... You know, I don’t know if its really specific, maybe...you can sort of locate it within a specific racial structure. But...you just get people that live in certain areas and just speak a certain way”. The reason why Participant Nineteen chose D for the first sentence and C for the second sentence remains unclear. However, it was clear that this participant felt that wh-questions of this kind do not occur in the speech of anyone in his acquaintance.<sup>49</sup>

The response patterns of Participant One (BCA), Participant Three (BBB), Participant Four (BAB), and Participant Seven (BAA) are difficult to account for. My choice of the three sentences that these participants were presented with as data may have been the cause of these results. All of these participants were presented with written data, so it is likely that certain sentences looked more unusual in writing than others.

Participants Four and Seven chose B for sentence 1), and A for sentence 2) acknowledging that they recognise and even use this kind of wh-question. It is possible that they use constructions of this kind less frequently than those participants who chose A for both 1) and 2), or were more undecided about what they thought about the construction than those who chose B for both sentences 1) and 2). It is also important to take into account the fact that some participants may have felt as though there was a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answer to the questions they were being asked. The pressure to provide the ‘right’ answer may be the reason for the fact that Participants One, Three, Four, Seven, and Nineteen chose different responses for sentences one and two.

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<sup>49</sup> I tend to think that he was either unaware of the fact that this construction occurs in the speech of at least one of his friends, or he felt unwilling to admit it to me. Ironically, it is clear that at least one of his friends uses non-subject wh-questions without subject-auxiliary inversion, because this friend was participant 20, and chose the response pattern AAA. Both participant fifteen and participant nineteen were presented with spoken data.

It is worth noting that there were twelve B's for sentence 1), and six A's. For sentence 2) there were nine B's and eight A's. Both sentences 1) and 2) were examples of the same kind of construction, i.e. non-subject wh-questions with no subject-auxiliary inversion. For sentence three there were eighteen A's and two B's. The two participants who chose B for sentence 3) may have felt that the last sentence was a 'trick question', or they may have felt that they had picked up the pattern and failed to read the sentence properly.

There were a total of just three D's and two C's for both sentences 1) and 2). This once again confirms the authenticity of my corpus and indicates that the majority of the participants are, at the very least, aware of people around them using non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion, even if they claim that they do not use them themselves.

Before launching into a discussion of the interviews, I would like to draw attention to the fact that none of the participants interacted very much with the research assistant. There are a number of tenable reasons for why this was not the case. It is possible that the participants simply did not feel uncomfortable speaking with me about SAIE. Another possibility is that since I was obviously the person conducting the interviews and asking most of the questions, it is highly likely that it seemed to the participants that I was the person who had greater 'authority' and to whom they should respond.<sup>50</sup>

### *2.2.1 Interviews*

The data collected in the interviews is presented and discussed in this section. This section is divided into two subsections: a discussion of the participants' statements about 'Standard English' in Subsection a), and a discussion of the participants' comments on SAIE in Subsection b). For the full transcriptions of all twenty interviews see Appendix Two.

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<sup>50</sup> The research results may have been different had my research assistant conducted the interviews alone.

a) 'Standard English'

There seemed to be a fairly clear consensus among the participants in my research as to what 'Standard English' is. The idea that 'Standard English' is a *universal variety* of English spoken by *everybody* or *the majority* arose in a number of interviews. Participant Four, for example said that 'Standard English' is "what society dictates as staple, as what we all conform to. It's what everybody does". In Participant Six's opinion, 'Standard English' is "something that is universally accepted in every country as understandable to, you know, a normal person who knows English." When asked what 'Standard English' is, Participant Thirteen said: "that's like English like a universal language". Participant Fourteen claimed that: "they all speak [unclear] standards, like, everyone speaks English". These participants are all aware of the existence of a 'Standard'. The fact that these participants refer to 'Standard English' as *universal* is evidence supporting the claim (See, for example, Trudgill 1975, Milroy 1999) that 'Standard English' is considered to be *the* English language, rather than just one variety of it. Universality also entails superiority, so the very fact that 'Standard English' is believed to be universal contributes to the notion of its superiority.

A similar response that was also relatively common was that 'Standard English' is the way that English is *supposed* to be spoken, that it is *proper*, *good* and *grammatically* correct English. For instance, Participant Three said that 'Standard English' is: "probably like the way it's [English] meant to be spoken. Like you know grammatically correct English is the good English". This comment indicates that Participant Three feels that there is 'good' English and 'bad' 'grammatically incorrect' English. Participant Seven said that "we don't speak it [English] the way it should be spoken". When I asked her how it should be spoken, she responded that it "should be spoken the way it's taught to be spoken". It is clear from these comments that, like Participant Three, for Participant Seven, there is a 'right' way to speak English, and a 'wrong' way. When asked what 'Standard English' is, Participant Twelve seemed to agree with Participants Three and Seven, saying that 'Standard English' is: "maybe just the way people are supposed to speak English, like how the English language is supposed to be spoken". These

comments show clearly that the participants feel that there is such a thing as ‘correct English’ as opposed to ‘incorrect English’.

Participants One, Five and Nineteen all associated ‘Standard English’ with the type of English taught and learnt at school. Participant Five, for example, said that ‘Standard English’ is: “those rigid norms they use at school, where they try to teach you how to talk English”. The use of ‘Standard English’ is often associated with formal education. Joseph (1987) argues that ‘Standard English’ is not native to any speaker; it is learned in the classroom (see the discussion in Section 2.1 of Chapter One).

Participant Five made a particularly interesting comment about ‘Standard English’. He said: “it’s acceptable English in the social sphere because some, some grammatical mistakes are allowed to some point, while some are, sort of, like, frowned upon and others are not frowned upon. So good English means the English that’s sort of around you in the category of people you like to spend time with”. This statement echoes the main argument in this work; Participant Five has identified and clearly explained an important point, namely that what is acceptable in SAIE may not be acceptable in ‘Standard English’, and what is acceptable in ‘Standard English’ may not be acceptable in SAIE. In Chapter Four, I argue that non-subject wh-questions that lack subject auxiliary inversion are a grammatical feature of SAIE, and are, therefore, perfectly acceptable in this variety of English, rather than just being wrong because they are different from the corresponding constructions in ‘Standard English’.

It was made clear in the Literature Review (Chapter One) that ‘Standard English’ is the variety of English that is most often associated with positive social attributes, such as prestige and status. J. Milroy (1999: 37) writes that: “the idea of prestige is still used rather routinely, and there are many instances in the literature where it is assumed that a scale of prestige parallel to a scale of social status is the same thing as a scale from non-standard to standard.” Participant Five made a comment that reflects this assumption:

...society is sort of judged upon how well I can speak English, so I'd like to consider myself in that top half. And that, that grammatical construction represents sort of like a ...almost like a ...not a corruption of the language, but some sort of laziness... And...I don't like to, I...I like to show myself, show myself as proficient in English, so I wouldn't use a construction like that.

Participant Fourteen explained that judgments on the basis of language seem to operate on this assumption: "... if people don't speak proper English they think they are lower class or even have a low status but if you speak really proper English it goes with a higher status or they're rich".

Two participants made interesting comments to the effect that 'Standard English' does not exist, as there are so many different varieties of English in South Africa in particular, and the world in general. Participant One, for example said: "there can't be a standard English over...so many cultures as stands in South Africa". Participant Eight claimed that there is "no such term as 'Standard English'". She said that there are so many different types of English around the world that there is no "standard" type of English. What is important, in this participant's opinion, is the fact that people can make themselves understood. As McArthur (1998) suggests, it is worth exploring local standards and varieties of English and how they reflect the social context in which they are used.

#### b) South African Indian English

In contrast to the generally positive response to the notion of 'Standard English', SAIE received mixed responses.

In order to further validate the data in my corpus, I asked the participants to identify who, in their opinion, uses constructions (like the non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion with which they were presented as data, i.e. SAIE wh-questions). Six participants candidly identified these constructions as a feature of the speech of South African Indians. Participant Two, for instance, said: "...in most of my interaction, Indian people in using that particular sentence". Participant Three said that "most Indian people" use non-subject wh-questions with no subject-auxiliary inversion, and specified that family members and friends use these constructions. Participant Five said that he thinks

that: "...mostly South African Indians use it". It is interesting that Participant Two mentioned that other "people" use these constructions as well as South African Indians. Participant Ten mentioned that he thinks that most South Africans use this type of wh-question.

Before the interview began with Participant Four, he was talking to a friend of his and asked him "Where I must meet you?". This in itself is not remarkable, except for the fact that in the interview he said "for me, my group of friends or any people I associate with don't usually talk like that, so the only time I've ever seen that is like people who are not native to this country". This participant is either unaware of the fact that he uses SAIE wh-questions; or he is aware of it, but was unwilling to admit as much to me. Again, this may be due to the fact that the participant did not want to admit to using a non-standard variety of English, a variety of English not associated with prestige, or alternatively, he did not want to admit it to me because I am a speaker of 'Standard English'.

In contrast to Participant Four's response, Participant Eleven said: "...I think it's mostly the Indian race that speaks like that... I'm not sure why though, but I know that I do use these kinds of constructions".

Participant Three said that older Indian people use non-subject wh-questions much more often than younger people do. This stands to reason since more and more young people are being educated in a multi-racial, multi-cultural environment, and are therefore exposed to varieties of English that may be closer to the Standard (Mesthrie 1992b). The older generation – the parents and grandparents of the participants – may have had less contact with other varieties of English due to the restrictions and segregation of the apartheid era. Participant Seven also said that older people, like her grandmother, use SAIE wh-questions more often than younger people. She said that younger people "are more prone to speaking English because we don't speak our native language all the time. Some people don't even know what it is." The idea that the *native* language of South African Indians may not be English is addressed below in the discussion of ownership. It may be true that older South African Indians use SAIE wh-questions more often than

younger South African Indians as Participants Three and Seven suggest. However, this may just be an attempt on the part of the participants to distance themselves from the use of what is considered to be a non-standard variety of English due to the fact that they were in a formal interview situation, or because they are university students who are expected (by themselves and others) to speak educated (i.e. 'standard') English because they are educated.

As previously mentioned, the association of the use of SAIE with a lack of education is strong. It is, however, not generally an accurate association. There are many well-educated speakers who make use of non-standard varieties of English. Nevertheless, Participant One suggested that "there's a lot of grammatical errors in the way...Indian South Africans speak and it's usually things like that "Where you are?"". She maintained that constructions like *Where you are?* are incorrect and went on to say that this kind of language use is not common and is often used in communities where people "aren't fully educated". In contrast, Participant Two suggested that using constructions like *How you did that?* is not related to education because she knows doctors who speak "wrong English".

Participants Four, Sixteen, Eighteen and Nineteen all mention that SAIE is 'improper' English. The use of the word 'improper' is, naturally, the opposite of, and an interesting contrast with, the use of the word 'proper' in relation to 'Standard English'. Participant Four said that SAIE: "...is not proper English." Participant Sixteen said: "...it's just improper English". Participant Eighteen was rather more vehement in her comment that: "...it's [SAIE is] not proper English, I can handle proper English, I don't have a problem with that". Participant Sixteen's comment implies that she has a 'problem' with English that she considers 'improper'. Participant Nineteen said that SAIE is: "...improper like compared to what English people speak. I think it's like more, more Indian, like... mixed with other...Indian languages you use. Sometimes we mix our English with...Hindi or Tamil or whatever and speak". The mention of Hindi and Tamil is similar to that discussed above, and is addressed in greater detail below, as is the suggestion that the use of Indian languages has an effect on SAIE. Participant Nineteen's comparison with "what

English people speak” again suggests a recourse to exonormative standards of correctness.

Participant Three said: “...my first opinion [of the data that he was presented with in the interview] would be bad English...especially when it’s like grammatically wrong”. Like the comments of Participants Sixteen, Eighteen and Nineteen, this comment reveals a certain level of prescription in the participants’ language attitude. The contrast between this comment and the comments made about ‘Standard English’ being ‘grammatically correct’ reveals fact that SAIE is considered non-standard and is not thought of favourably by the participants.

The participants in my research expressed the opinion that SAIE is a casual, quick, efficient way of speaking or expressing oneself. Participant Two, for example said that wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion are “casual” and “easy to use”. She argued that people do not generally think about how they are constructing their sentences while they are talking. It does not follow, however, that because they are not thinking about how they are constructing their sentences, people make mistakes. Performance errors<sup>51</sup> may occur, but people do not consistently make errors that violate the rules of the internal grammar of their language or variety. It is unlikely that SAIE wh-questions are merely performance errors as they occur consistently and frequently in the speech of speakers of SAIE.

The idea that SAIE wh-questions are a ‘shortened version’ of the same construction was mentioned by Participant Four who said that there are a lot of “abbreviations...instead of saying the full sentence. You get the same amount of words”. It is interesting that he used the term abbreviation because in the sentence ‘When you stopped smoking?’ it does, in fact, appear that the word ‘did’ has simply been ‘left out’ for the sake of shortening the sentence. Coming back to Participant Nine’s comment, it may ‘take a lot of energy’, or at least more energy or concentration to focus on one’s grammar if one is attempting to

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<sup>51</sup> Performance errors include such mistakes as ‘the biddle of the med’ instead of ‘the middle of the bed’, and ‘I put the bin in the apple’ instead of ‘I put the apple in the bin’.

speak a variety of English that is different to the variety that one grew up speaking, or is more accustomed to speaking. Participant Fourteen said that SAIE is: "...a combination of English broken down into simpler forms of English...I'm sure Indians break down language and don't use the full extent of the word". While it is inaccurate to say that SAIE is a simpler form of English, it is an interesting observation that probably reflects the standard language ideology. Because certain words are thought to be 'left out' when compared to the corresponding 'Standard English' construction, SAIE is perceived as being a 'broken down' version of the 'correct' 'Standard English' construction.

On the subject of the use of SAIE, Participant Nine said: "...there's that whole thing about, like, um, having some kind of language that is exclusive to, like, your posse<sup>52</sup>. And you know, like, people always appreciate that, and its nice to feel like you belong in that certain kind of, you know, sector...". This comment is an expression of the covert prestige of SAIE as a means of in-group identification.

For Participant Two non-standard language use is also about exposure to different varieties of English. She says: "Someone who speaks that way is not exposed to people who speak proper English and if you're gonna look at races I would say mostly white people. I don't think I've heard a white person say 'How you did that?' because they're more exposed to the proper way to speak English as opposed to any person growing up in Chatsworth – they're exposed to the incorrect pronunciation of words and sentences and stuff". It is true that if speakers of SAIE had been exposed to a different variety of English during the period during which they were acquiring language, they would have acquired this different variety, rather than SAIE. It is clear from this comment, that Participant Two feels that white South African L1-English speakers speak 'proper' English, as opposed to people who grow up in Chatsworth who do not speak proper English. Participants Two and Three associate the English of white South Africans with 'proper' English as this variety has been associated with prestige and education since the

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<sup>52</sup> A 'posse' is a group of people that spend time together, identify with each other, and have things in common with.

colonial period, but has not been associated with the oppression of the apartheid era as Afrikaans has (Silver 1998).

Like Participant Two, Participant Six felt that the variety of English an individual speaks depends on the variety of English they were exposed to in their homes, schools and area of residence: “That’s the way they were taught and that’s the way their parents spoke at home and that’s what they were exposed to. What I was exposed to was something different so I feel that what I’m saying is grammatically correct”. Given that speakers of SAIE are supposed to have been exposed to ‘improper’ English, it seems that as speakers of SAIE they are disadvantaged because they are exposed to and therefore acquire and use, ‘improper’ English.

When I asked Participant Six who uses constructions like 1) and 2) on his response sheet he said that the sort of education that he has received led him to decide not to “speak like that”, but there are other people, people from different backgrounds who do. Participant Six said that people speak SAIE because to them it is right, “that’s the way they were taught and that’s the way their parents spoke at home and that’s what they were exposed to. What I was exposed to was something different so I feel that what I’m saying is grammatically correct”. For this participant the variety of English an individual speaks depends on what they are exposed to. What this implies is that if an individual grows up in an ‘Indian’ area, for example Chatsworth, and goes to school in an Indian area, they would be more likely to hear wh-question constructions like those being discussed in the interviews, therefore they would probably use these constructions. If an individual went to a former Model C school, or a private school, the situation might be different. As Participant Five said, these individuals would be exposed to other varieties of English, and may be influenced by the behaviour of their peers and by a desire to fit-in to change the way they speak, i.e. to switch from SAIE to a variety that more closely resembles ‘Standard English’.

The results of my research show that the area an individual comes from and the school that s/he went to correlates with the variety of English s/he speaks. It is noteworthy that I

did not ask the participants about school, they volunteered the information of their own accord. In the process of analysing the data from the interviews, my research assistant pointed out that wealthier South African Indians tend to send their children to former Model C schools outside of Indian areas, rather than to Indian schools where, often, many of the teachers speak SAIE themselves. Attending former Model C schools, students from diverse racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds come into contact with 'Standard English' on a daily basis. Children of less wealthy parents, who go to Indian schools, where they interact largely with other Indian children, have less contact with speakers of 'Standard English' in South Africa. Of course, contact with speakers of 'Standard English' is not the only, or even the primary, reason for parents choosing to send their children to former Model C schools; it is the opportunity for a higher quality of education that is attached to being educated in 'Standard English' and having access to significantly greater resources.

The connection Participant Nineteen makes between attending a former Model C School and speaking 'Standard English' is blatant: "...Standard English? I don't know. I guess it's what you learn in school. How I speak 'cause I went to an ex-Model C school maybe". Participant Eight spoke about the "luck of going to better schools", by which she meant Former Model C rather than 'Indian' Schools.

For Participant Eighteen, it is noteworthy that a person who has gone to a Former Model C School still has 'putrid' language use. She says that she knows: "...people who have gone to former Model C schools or gone to private schools whose language use, I mean their language use is putrid, it's the only way to describe it". This is very strong language, and is indicative of the strong feelings that language attitude can inspire in an individual.

I asked Participant Five if people should be corrected for using SAIE wh-questions in a school or university context. His response was intriguing:

“Nah, I’d giggle and accept it because they have obviously some cultural background to it and...they haven’t had any influence otherwise. I mean I probably used to speak like that, then I went to a Model C high school, and then I was, not corrected but I heard it being spoken around me, and people would giggle if I were to speak in that sort of grammatical sentence and I had to influence myself to change it, so I don’t really look upon them as, like, inferior or, or as if like I should correct them...”

Participant Five identifies his going to a Former Model C School as a catalyst for him ‘influencing himself’ to change from speaking SAIE to speaking ‘Standard English’. He mentions that people would ‘giggle’ if he were to use SAIE wh-questions. This indicates that the opinion of ones peers is a strong motivation to start using the standard rather than a non-standard variety. The fact that Participant Five mentions that people would giggle, means that he must have been concerned that he would be mocked, made fun of and laughed at because of the variety of English that he spoke. In this way language attitudes can affect a speaker both socially and educationally. Of course, it is possible that this participant may still use SAIE with family and friends in and around his home in Chatsworth.

As discussed in the introduction, Mesthrie (1992a) argues that the label ‘SAIE’ might be misleading because it is an ethnic label that does not necessarily reflect the linguistic behaviour of South African Indians across the country. Mesthrie’s argument is supported by the observations of a number of my participants. Participant Three, for instance, noted that: “... the difference between the way English is spoken by Indian people in Durban as opposed to Johannesburg or Cape Town is totally different too”. Participant Eight said that she thinks that: “...everybody speaks English differently...Indians in Pretoria have a different like err [unclear] to their language, they’re more like sophisticated...in their English”. When I asked Participant Seventeen what the term SAIE means to her, she responded: “I think when people use it, they use it to refer to a certain group of Indian people depending on where they come from. I don’t think you can just say South African Indian English because you get South African Indians in Jo’burg who don’t use that English really”.

There is an interesting distinction between the use of the pronouns *I* and *we* as opposed to *they*, *their* and *them* in the responses of the participants. For instance, Participant Eleven said that SAIE is: "...the way we speak", thereby identifying herself as a speaker of SAIE. In contrast, Participant Three said that the use of SAIE wh-questions is: "just like part of their, you know, culture, their way of speaking English". By using the pronoun *their* Participant Three effectively distances himself from the use of SAIE and the negative connotations associated therewith. Participant Thirteen seemed to change her mind mid-sentence. She said that SAIE is: "...the type of English that *we you* learn as you growing up or something...". Perhaps Participant Thirteen realised that by using the pronoun *we*, she was identifying herself as a speaker of a non-standard, socially stigmatised variety and therefore corrected herself. Alternatively, she could have simply been attempting to keep her response both more general and more formal since the interview situation is relatively formal.

Participant Five said that SAIE is: "... a language adaptation going from the native tongue to English and it just sort of stuck". It is striking that the participant refers to the 'Indian' languages as "the native tongue". South African Indians often still identify in some way with their linguistic heritage, and often label themselves by their ancestral language, (for example Tamil, Hindi, Gujarati, etc.). The point that the participant makes about the adaptation from the native tongue that "just sort of stuck" is interesting because it has been suggested that SAIE contains fossilised forms of the L2 variety (Mesthrie 1995: 251). This is due to the specific circumstances of the development of SAIE through language shift where a lack of contact with L1-English speakers, a closed cycle of reinforcement and the fairly rapid pace of Language Shift led to certain features of the L2 variety, spoken by South African Indians, becoming fossilised features of the L1 variety of South African Indian English. Like Participant Five, Participant Seven said that: "we [South African Indians] don't speak our native language all the time. Some people don't even know what it is."

During the discussion of SAIE in the interview, Participant Three observed that:

“It’s sort of like the English language has become their own that, like it’s become their own language. You know they’ve taken it and like you know done things to it that makes it theirs...you know, grammar, like, you know might as well add in that accent and stuff like that. They’ve, like, changed English to become, like, you now, like, South African Indian English”.

This comment is reminiscent of a well-known quote by Chinua Achebe (1975:62) “...I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings”. The comment of this participant as well as others (e.g. Participants Three, Five and Seven) on the subject of ownership, suggests that there may be a sense that in some important way, speakers of SAIE (or at least the small subgroup of participants considered here) have laid claim to the ownership of their own variety of English, whether or not they consider it to be, or it is considered by speakers of other varieties of English to be, a legitimate variety of English.

Although Participant One admits to being an “academic snob”, she claims that she does not judge a person on the basis of their language use. Her comments seem to be somewhat contradictory, as the term ‘academic snob’ was said with some measure of pride and despite her claim not to judge people according to speech, she labelled SAIE the speech of the ‘uneducated’. She assumes superiority for herself because she is educated and does not use this wh-question construction in particular, or the variety in general, while simultaneously distancing herself from the use of SAIE and its negative connotations of a lack of education. She says that people who speak “proper English” think less of those that don’t. She does not want to identify with speakers of SAIE, nor does she want to come across as though she too engages in negative value judgments on the basis of language. Participant One went on to say that: “...it’s kind of...a snobbish kind of thing but people who...speak proper English...do think less of people who don’t”. As this participant has already identified herself as an ‘academic snob’, it seems that she has unintentionally implicated herself in negative language judgments.

Participant Two said that people who use SAIE do so because: "...they really don't consider the fact that they're using the wrong type of English". The use of the term the "wrong type of English" is similar to the use of the term "proper English" by Participant One in terms of its loadedness regarding value judgements. These are probably unintentional and unconscious value judgments that nevertheless confirm that there is obviously an underlying assumption that there is "proper", "right" English which has more value and is, therefore, judged more favourably than non-standard varieties of English.

As previously mentioned, Participant Three said that: "my first opinion [of the data that he was presented with in the interview] would be bad English...especially when it's like grammatically wrong". Like the previous two participants this comment reveals a certain amount of prescription in the participants' language attitude. What is striking is that he goes on to say that this kind of language use is "just like part of their, you know, culture, their way of speaking English. You know, so it can't be bad or it can't be wrong". There seems to be a strange sort of tension between knowing, on the one hand, that it is perhaps not socially acceptable to judge people on the basis of their language use, and that everyone should have the right to use language to express themselves in whichever way they like provided they can be understood; and, on the other hand the belief that there is a 'good', 'proper' and 'correct' English.

Participant Four felt that people do not discriminate on the basis of language. In his opinion "it's more an issue of identification". A striking comment that he made is that "we are tolerated. There's no, there's no really big issue about it".

Of speakers of SAIE, Participant Nine says: "Indian speakers don't particularly care about their English, I mean half the time you really don't know what they're saying unless you're actually from the same area as them". The tone of this response seems to be quite scathing. There is the sense that the participant wants to distance himself from 'them', i.e. speakers of SAIE. Moreover, there is a definite sense of judgment in this comment.

Similarly, Participant Five said that he would only use non-subject wh-questions in a “jokey manner” because:

“...society is, sort of, judged upon how well I can speak English, so I’d like to consider myself in that top half. And that, that grammatical construction represents sort of like a ...almost like a ...not a corruption of the language but some sort of laziness... And...I don’t like to...I like to show myself...as proficient in English, so I wouldn’t use a construction like that”.

The idea that the use of non-standard constructions is a manifestation of laziness is quite common, the idea being that people do not bother to correct themselves because they’re too lazy. Participant Five summarises quite succinctly one of the main issues in the ‘Standard English’ debate in this quote. He would like to identify himself with the “top half”, and he would do this by showing himself as “proficient in English” and would not, therefore, use a non-subject wh-question with no subject-auxiliary inversion. What this statement implies is that those who do use these constructions are not proficient in English and are therefore not considered to be in that ‘top half’.

Participant Seventeen observed that the judgements about using SAIE work both ways, she said: “...people will perhaps judge them [people who speak SAIE] or look down on them if you come from a different school or you know a different upbringing and also those people- I know I take a lot of flak because you can get told ‘oh, you talk like a white’ or you talk a certain way because I don’t use those constructions so it works both ways”. The position in which young South African Indians may find themselves linguistically can be quite difficult and they may feel the need to be wary of speaking ‘too Indian’ or ‘too white’.

Participant Twenty felt that people are judged on the basis of the variety of English that they speak, but that this judgment is not necessarily bad: “...I don’t think that it’s always in a bad way; I think it’s more about putting into groups. Like if you speak like these people you fit in or you don’t fit in”. This comment is similar to Participant Four’s comment about ‘identification’. The use of non-standard varieties as a means of in-group

identification, and the covert prestige that it lends to the varieties, is an important contributing factor to the maintenance of non-standard varieties.

Although racism has been referred to by a number of participants, at least obliquely, Participant Fifteen referred to it directly in a rather surprising response to the question of what the term SAIE meant to her. She said: "...it's pretty racist, it's pretty segregated. It's pretty, like, Indians speak differently...". When I asked Participant Fifteen if she thought that people judge other people on the basis of how they speak, she responded: "Of course! That's why you're doing something called South African Indian English 'cause you think there is a difference". For Participant Fifteen the recognition of difference between two varieties of English, one 'Standard' and the other not, is tantamount to judgement.

### Section Three: Concluding Remarks

The participants' responses show that non-subject wh-questions that lack subject-auxiliary inversion can be identified as a feature of SAIE. 'Standard English' is perceived fairly positively. It is thought to be the way that English is 'supposed' to be spoken, to be 'good', 'proper' and 'grammatically correct' English. It is the variety of English associated, by the participants, with education. In contrast, opinions about SAIE are much more varied. On the one hand it is associated with some measure of covert prestige, as something clearly identifiable as belonging to the South African Indian in-group. On the other hand the participants also felt that it is 'bad', 'incorrect', 'improper' English.

The overall consensus seems to be that people are, in fact, judged on the basis of the variety of English that they speak. This judgment is often negative in the case of speakers of non-standard varieties of English, but is shown to work 'both ways' – an individual can be judged for speaking 'bad' English, i.e. a non-standard variety, or for speaking 'good' English, i.e. 'Standard English'.

I would like to end this chapter with a quote from Participant Fifteen's interview, her response to the question of whether or not she feels that there is a difference between

SAIE and 'Standard English': "Not really...I really think that... it goes deeper than that...and how do you decide which one's the standard and which one isn't, because I'm...an English speaker who's defined as...Indian and I'm a first language English speaker". For me, this statement sums up the paradox of the position of SAIE in the 'Standard English' debate in South Africa. Unlike other non-standard varieties of English in South African, SAIE is the *L1* of a diverse community of speakers.

In the chapter that follows, Chapter Four, I present my analysis of SAIE wh-questions and discuss how this analysis indicates that from a purely structural, linguistic point of view, SAIE is no less complex and correct than 'Standard English' and that it operates along the same universal principles and parameters.

## Chapter Four: South African Indian wh-Questions

In this chapter I present a theoretical analysis of wh-questions in SAIE based on the minimalist analysis of subject-auxiliary inversion presented by Pesetsky and Torrego (2001) (henceforth P&T 2001). I argue that the lack of subject-auxiliary inversion in SAIE wh-questions is not an incorrect attempt at forming ‘Standard English’ wh-questions, but, rather, results from a parametric difference between the grammar of ‘Standard English’ and SAIE.

The chapter is organised as follows. I begin, in Section One, by introducing key concepts and theoretical tools of the Minimalist Program (MP). In Section Two, I discuss wh-questions in ‘Standard English’. In Section Three, I consider wh-questions in SAIE. I discuss the parametric variation between ‘Standard English’ and SAIE in Section Four. Section Five contains concluding remarks.

### Section One: Principles and Parameters in the Minimalist Program

#### *1.1 The Cognitive Approach to Grammar*

Radford (2004: 1) draws attention to the difference between *traditional grammar* and a *cognitive approach* to the study of grammar. In traditional grammar, the syntax of a language is described in terms of a taxonomy of the range of different types of syntactic structures found in whichever language is being studied. Phrases and sentences are built from a series of syntactic units called constituents. Each constituent belongs to a grammatical category and fulfils a grammatical function. The goal of traditional grammar is to identify constituents in a syntactic construction, to determine which grammatical category they belong to, and what grammatical function they serve. Traditional grammar, then, offers descriptions of syntactic structures, rather than an explanation for how and why they occur.

In contrast, the cognitive approach to the study of grammar, suggested by Chomsky in the MP (1995a, 1995b, 2000), and in the frameworks that preceded it (Chomsky 1957, 1965, 1981), is part of the wider study of cognition (Radford 2004: 6). Chomsky (and others

who have adopted the cognitive approach to the study of language) suggests that native speakers of any language have a *tacit* knowledge of the grammar of that language that allows them to form and interpret linguistic expressions in that language.

Chomsky (1965) draws a distinction between *competence* and *performance*. The native speaker's tacit knowledge of his/her language, as described above, is the speaker's competence. A speaker's performance is what the speaker actually says and how s/he understands what is said to her/him in real-time linguistic exchanges (i.e. how competence is put to use). Competence is, on this view, inherently perfect in a speaker-hearer's native language(s). Any speech errors or errors in understanding made by speaker-hearers are related to factors external to the linguistic system, such as tiredness, boredom, alcohol, drugs, distraction and a variety of other extra-linguistic phenomena that hinder speech or understanding. The cognitive approach to the study of grammar is concerned with competence rather than performance. Grammatical competence is a cognitive system internal to the brain of the native speaker. This system is also referred to as an I-language (i.e. internal language).

One of the main goals of the cognitive approach to the study of language is the development of a theory of language acquisition that explains how and why children acquire language as uniformly and rapidly as they have been observed to do. According to Radford (2004: 11) the most plausible explanation is the existence of an innate, biologically endowed Faculty of Language (FL). The FL is the "blueprint" of the fundamental *principles* of all human I-languages. On the basis of their linguistic experience interacting with the FL, children acquire the grammar of their native language.

The FL incorporates Universal Grammar (UG). The theory of UG is an attempt to generalise the grammar of particular languages into a grammar of all possible natural languages; it is a theory about the nature of the grammar of all human language. Any theory of UG needs to be universal – it must supply all the tools necessary to adequately describe human language. It must also explain adequately the reasons why human

grammar is designed the way that it is. Finally, any theory of UG must be constrained. It must describe and explain all and only the properties of natural languages, but not those of other systems of communication (Radford 2004: 8).

UG allows a child to develop the grammar of any natural human language on the basis of linguistic experience. Radford (2004: 14) observes that:

[I]f the acquisition of grammatical competence is controlled by a genetically endowed language faculty incorporating a theory of UG, then it follows that certain aspects of child (and adult) competence are known without experience, and hence must be part of the genetic information about language with which we are biologically endowed at birth.

Those aspects of human language that are innately determined are universal. These *universal principles* determine the nature of all human language therefore greatly reducing the burden of acquisition imposed on children.

Obviously, not all languages are the same. For instance, vocabulary is clearly different between languages. Along with universal principles of human grammar, there are parameters that are responsible for grammatical differences. Parameters are thought to be binary in nature, i.e. they can be set, either one way or the other, depending on the linguistic input received from the environment. It is as a result of the different choice of the setting for parameters that grammars vary. I argue in this chapter that the difference observed between wh-questions in SAIE and ‘Standard English’ is the result of a parametric difference in the grammars of these two varieties.

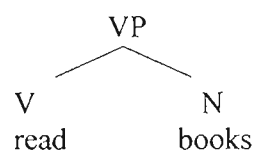
Chomsky (1995a: 168) argues that language (in the narrow sense defined above) is comprised of two basic components: a lexicon and a computational system. In the course of a derivation, words or lexical items (along with information about their specific properties) are chosen from the lexicon and are combined into phrases or constituents to form a syntactic structure. Phrases are combined with other lexical items or other phrases to form larger phrases and so on. Phrases are formed via the computational operation *merge*.

Let me discuss the derivation of sentence (1) in a stepwise fashion:

(1) Students read books

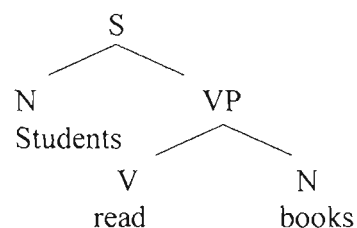
The verb *read* which is stored in the mental lexicon merges with the noun *books*, to form a Verb Phrase (VP):

Figure 1



The VP *read books* now merges with another noun or Noun Phrase, in this case the noun *students*, to form a sentence:

Figure 2<sup>53</sup>



In figure 2, the verb *read* is the *head* of the VP. The head of a phrase gives the phrase its name and determines the grammatical and semantic properties of the phrase as a whole. A phrase is said to be a *projection* of its head. The head is also known as the *minimal projection*. The phrase is the *maximal projection*. Any projection ‘in between’ the minimal and maximal projections is known as an *intermediate projection*. The noun *book* is the *complement* of the verb *read*. The complement merges directly with the head of the phrase.

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<sup>53</sup> This structure is simplified and is elaborated upon below.

In sentence (1), *students* is the *subject*, *read* is the *predicate*, and *books* is the *direct object*. The subject and object of a verb are *arguments* of the verb. The same holds for sentence (2):

(2) Students read books in the library

Again, the NP *students* is the subject, the NP *book* is the object and both are arguments of the verb *read*. However, there is another constituent in (2), the Prepositional Phrase (PP) *in the library*. This PP is an *adjunct*. Adjuncts provide additional information about the time, place, manner or purpose of an activity or event (Radford 2004: 4).

Tree diagrams provide a means of representing *structural*, rather than *linear*, relations between elements. The structural relation of *c-command* is particularly important as it underlies many fundamental principles of UG, such as *Agree* (which is introduced below). Chomsky (1986: 8) defines c-command as:

(3) *c-command*

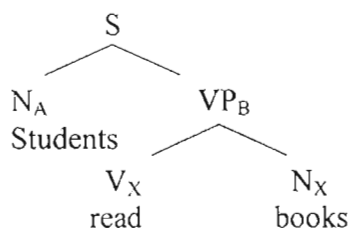
$\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$  if and only if  $\alpha$  does not dominate  $\beta$  and every  $\gamma$  that dominates  $\alpha$  dominates  $\beta$ .

This definition implies that a constituent A c-commands its sister constituent B and any other constituent X which is contained in B (Radford 2004: 19). To illustrate consider again sentence (1):

(1) Students read books

and the corresponding tree diagram in figure 2:

Figure 2



In this structure, the node marked with the subscript A c-commands the node marked with the subscript B, and the node marked with subscript B c-commands the node marked with subscript A because they are sisters. This is a symmetrical c-command relationship. Node A also c-commands the constituents marked with X because they are contained in the node marked B. This is an asymmetrical c-command relationship because none of the nodes marked X c-command the node marked A.

As can be seen from figure 2, above, English is a *head-first language*, i.e. in English, all heads precede their complements. There are, however, languages in which the head follows its complement. These languages are known as *head-last languages*. Korean is one such language.

Consider the following examples from Radford (2004: 19):

- (4) a. Close the door (English)
- b. Muneul dadara (Korean)
- (door close)
- (5) a. desire for change
- b. byunhwa – edaehan galmag
- (change – for desire)

The difference between this aspect of English grammar and Korean grammar is the result of a different parameter setting in these two grammars. The general principle is the same – via the operation Merge, the verb merges with its complement. However, in English the head precedes its complement whereas in Korean, the head follows its complement. It is clear, then, that the position of the head in relation to its complement is determined by a parameter.

## 1.2 Grammatical Features and Functional Categories

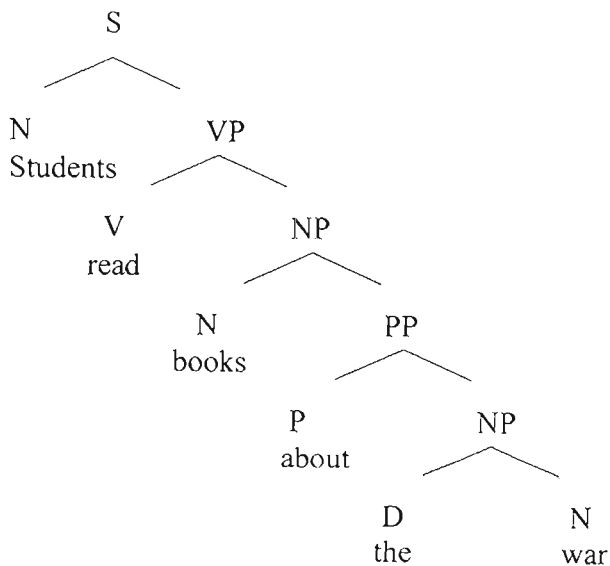
Lexical items can be divided into two categories: *substantive* and *functional*. Substantive categories have independent semantic content, i.e. meaning. Functional categories do not, but rather fulfil grammatical functions. Importantly, functional categories, like substantive categories, enter the derivation via the operation Merge and can project phrases.

Consider sentence (6):

(6) Students read books about the war

and the corresponding tree diagram in figure 3:

Figure 3



Substantive categories are those categories that are familiar from the study of traditional grammar, such as the nouns *students*, *books* and *war*, the verb *read* and the preposition *about*.

However, *the* in figure 3 is a functional category which, when merged with the noun *library*, projects a phrase. The word *the* is an example of a realisation of the category *determiner* (D). Instead of referring simply to NPs, in the MP it is assumed that phrases like *the war* are projections of the determiner rather than of the noun. These phrases are therefore referred to as Determiner Phrases or DPs. Pronouns, such as *he* (and wh-pronouns) are also analysed as realisations of the category D (Radford 2004: 143).

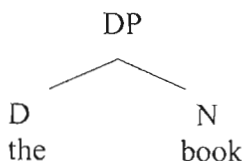
Tensed auxiliary verbs, such as *will*, realise the functional category T (tense), which projects a TP. Complementisers like *that* which introduce embedded sentences, are realisations of the C head, which projects a CP.

Consider the derivation of the subordinate sentence (7), which shows all of the functional categories and projections discussed above:

(7) that he will read the book

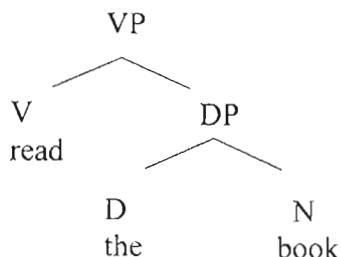
The determiner *the* is merged with the noun *book* to form the DP *the book*:

Figure 4 (a)



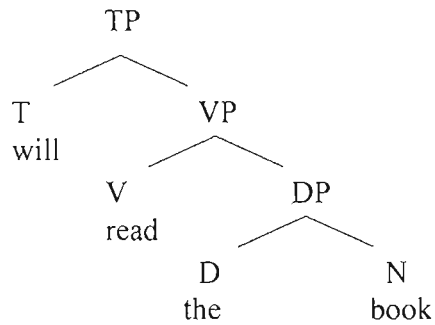
The DP *the book* is then merged with the verb *read* to form the VP *read the book*:

Figure 4 (b)



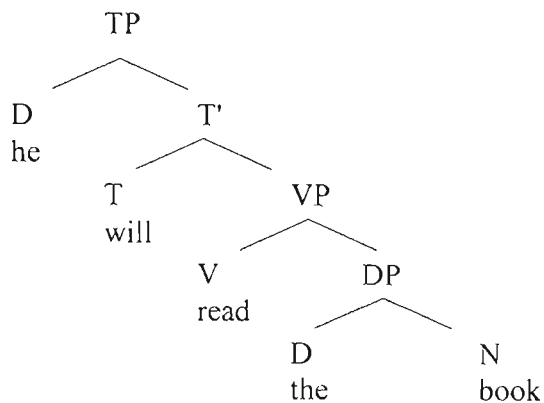
At this point in the derivation, the VP is merged with the auxiliary *will* to form the TP *will read the book*:

Figure 4 (c)



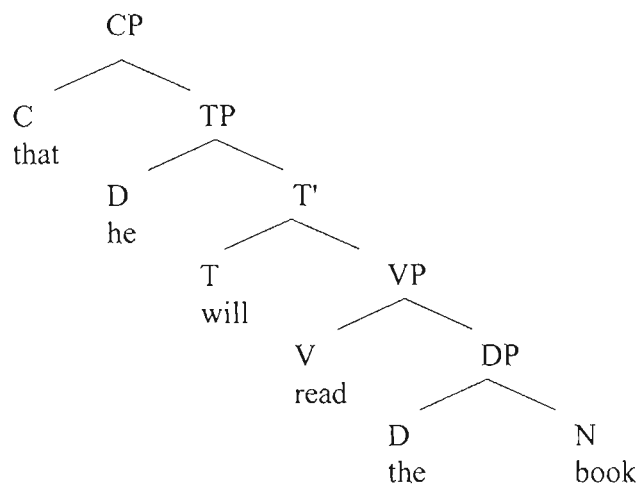
The pronoun *he* is then merged with the specifier position of T, i.e. SpecTP. Specifiers precede the head of their containing phrase in the linear order of the sentence. The TP node in figure 4 (c) has now become a T', an intermediate projection of the head T. With the merging of the pronoun *he*, the TP *he will read the book* is formed:

Figure 4 (d)



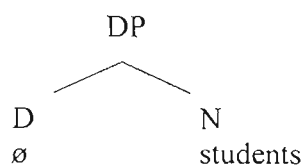
The TP *he will read the book* is now merged with *that*, a realization of the category C, to form the CP *that he will read the book*:

Figure 4 (e)



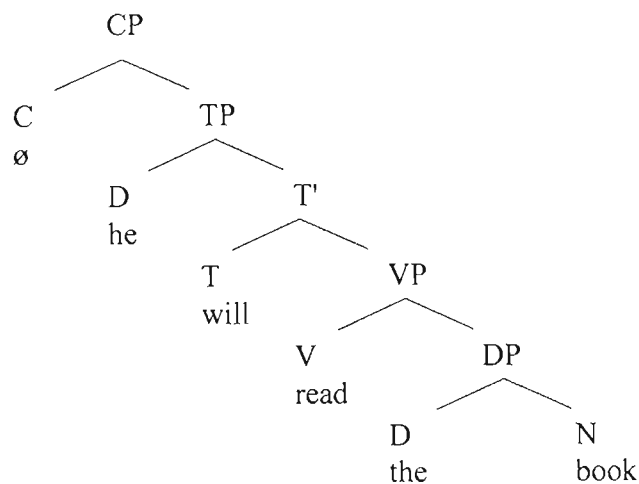
An idea that plays a prominent role in the MP is that functional items are bundles of grammatical features, for example person, number, tense, etc. Importantly, even if there is no particular lexical element or word that realises or spells-out a particular set of grammatical features, these features, and the functional category they represent, can project a phrase. The result of this is “null” categories that exist in the structure of certain phrases, for example the “null” D-head present in bare plural DPs, such as the one shown in figure 5:

Figure 5



or the “empty” C in main-clause CPs, shown in figure 6:

Figure 6



These “null” or “empty” categories can simply be regarded as sets of formal features (such as definiteness, tense, agreement, or force) which happen to lack phonological form in a particular instance.

### 1.3 The Minimalist Program

The Minimalist Program (MP) is the most recent version of the Principles-and-Parameters theory.

Radford (2004: 9) notes that in the MP “syntactic structures are used as input to two levels of representation that interface with the thought and speech systems of the human brain, allowing their semantic and phonological structure to be determined so that they can be pronounced by the articulatory organs”. The semantic level of representation is called *Logical Form* (LF). The phonological level of representation is called *Phonological Form* (PF). When a word or phrase is silent or inaudible when the rest of the phrase is pronounced, when it has been deleted, or is null, it is said to receive null spell out at PF. In order for a derivation to converge (i.e. be possible or grammatical) it must converge at both of these levels, otherwise the derivation will crash (i.e. be impossible, ungrammatical).

A fundamental assumption in the MP is that lexical items bear features (see my remarks above about functional categories being bundles of features). *Interpretable features* are, those that make a semantic contribution to the derivation. *Uninterpretable features* make no semantic contribution to the derivation. The person and number features on a pronoun (its so-called  $\phi$ -features) are interpretable because, for example, a third-person-plural pronoun differs in meaning from a first-person-singular pronoun. In contrast,  $\phi$ -features on a verb are uninterpretable as they function purely to mark subject-verb agreement with a noun or pronoun. Tense features on a verb are interpretable because a present tense form like *am* and a past tense form like *was* differ in meaning. Uninterpretable features are illegible at LF and PF. In addition, Chomsky (1995a, 2000) claims that functional categories, along with their grammatical features, also bear what he calls an EPP property or feature.<sup>54</sup> Importantly, the EPP property is uninterpretable.

One of the most important hypotheses of the MP is that movement operations that change the order of constituents in the syntactic structure are triggered by grammatical features of functional categories like T and C. The version of this hypothesis that Pesetsky & Torrego (P&T) use is based on the proposal made by Chomsky (1995a) that uninterpretable features must delete and disappear by the end of the derivation. Otherwise, the derivation will crash.

Suppose that there is an uninterpretable feature (uF) on a lexical item L. To prevent the derivation from crashing, this feature needs to delete. By virtue of the fact that it bears an uninterpretable feature, L is rendered an active *Probe*. It searches for a c-commanded *Goal* with a matching interpretable feature. It locates a suitable Goal and the syntactic operation of *Agree* is established. uF on L is valued by the matching interpretable feature on the Goal. To say that an uninterpretable feature is valued by an interpretable feature means that the uninterpretable feature is given the same value as the interpretable feature with which it agrees. To illustrate this Agree operation, consider subject-verb agreement. The subject and the verb in a sentence agree in terms of person and number in English.

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<sup>54</sup> Chomsky uses the terms 'property' and 'feature' interchangeably. I refer to the EPP property, because, as will become clear below, the EPP is regarded as a *property of a feature* in P&T (2001, 2004).

The uninterpretable person and number features that are visible as inflectional morphology on the verb are grammatical features of the functional head T. They enter into an agree operation with the interpretable person and number features on the subject DP. The uninterpretable person and number features of T are valued by the interpretable features on the subject, i.e. they are assigned the same value, for example:

- (8) a. I am happy.  
b. He is happy.  
c. They are happy.

As well as Merge and Agree, there is a third syntactic operation relevant to this discussion – *Move*. This operation is discussed in greater detail in Section Two, below. Briefly, when there is no suitable lexical item that can be merged into a derivation, an item or phrase that has already been merged into the structure is copied and re-merged into the new position. The copy that remains in the original position is then deleted, i.e. given null spell-out at PF. Importantly, according to Chomsky (1999, 2000) *Move* is *triggered* by the EPP property on uninterpretable features. The uninterpretable features on the Probe can delete through the agree operation. It is the EPP property that requires a copy of the Goal to be re-merged into the new position.

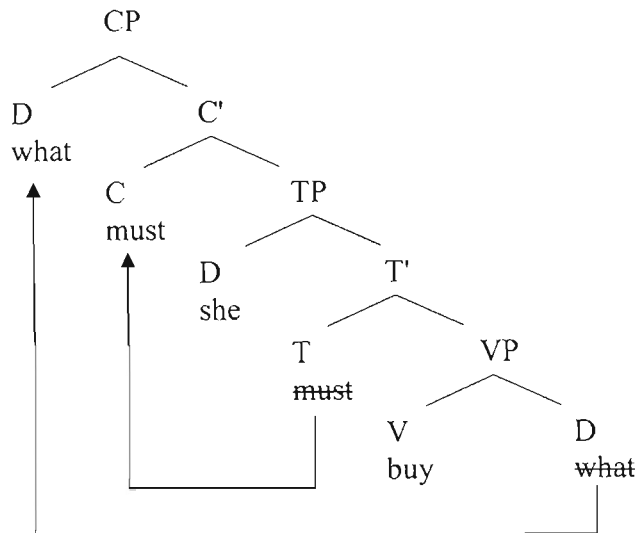
## Section Two: wh-Questions in ‘Standard English’

### *2.1 Non-subject wh-questions*

In non-subject wh-questions in ‘Standard English’, two movement operations take place. The object wh-phrase is fronted via *wh-movement*, and subject auxiliary-inversion takes place via *T-to-C movement*. Consider, for example, sentence (9):

- (9) What must she buy?

Figure 7



As can be observed in figure 7, *what* is the object argument of the verb *buy*. It is therefore first merged as the complement of the verb.

In non-subject wh-questions in ‘Standard English’, a lack of T-to-C movement results in ungrammaticality, for example:

(10) \*What she must buy?<sup>55</sup>

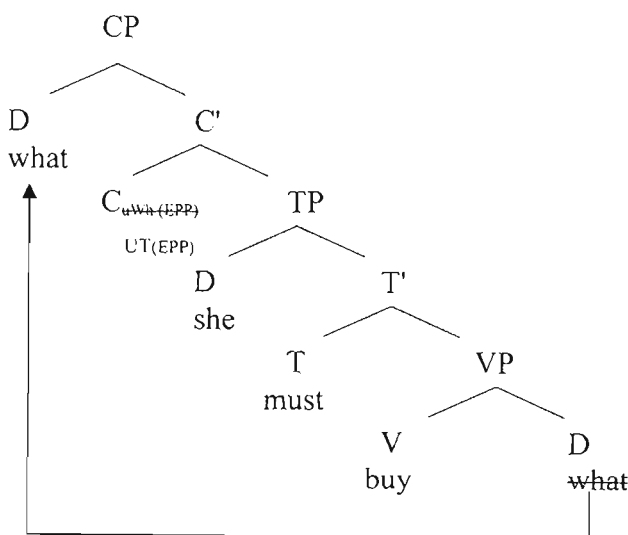
According to P&T (2001), the two movement operations illustrated in figure 7, are triggered by the presence of uninterpretable features on C in wh-questions. The first is an uninterpretable wh-feature (henceforth uWh). The presence of this uninterpretable feature on C is a standard assumption in theories of wh-movement (Sabel 1998). The second is an uninterpretable T-feature (henceforth uT). The presence of this uT feature on C is a new claim by P&T (2001). P&T assume that both uWh and uT bear an EPP property. P&T’s (2001: 359) analysis of the EPP property as a feature of a feature is important for their treatment of T-to-C movement. Consider again the non-subject wh-question in (9):

<sup>55</sup> The asterisk is a convention used in linguistics to indicate that a sentence is ungrammatical.

(9) What must she buy?

By virtue of the uninterpretable wh-feature (uWh) that it bears, C is a Probe which searches its c-command domain for a Goal with a matching interpretable wh-feature. C locates the object wh-phrase *what*. The operation of Agree is established, and uWh on C is *valued* and *marked for deletion*. The idea that features are marked for deletion once the agree operation has been established, but in fact only delete at a later stage in the derivation, is an important one in P&T's analysis (ibid.: 360). Importantly, the EPP property on uWh requires a copy of *what* to appear in the local domain of C. The object wh-phrase is therefore copied and re-merged with C into SpecCP to satisfy the EPP property. The original copy of *what* is then deleted, i.e. given null spell-out at PF. The wh-phrase has moved from its position as complement of the verb to SpecCP.

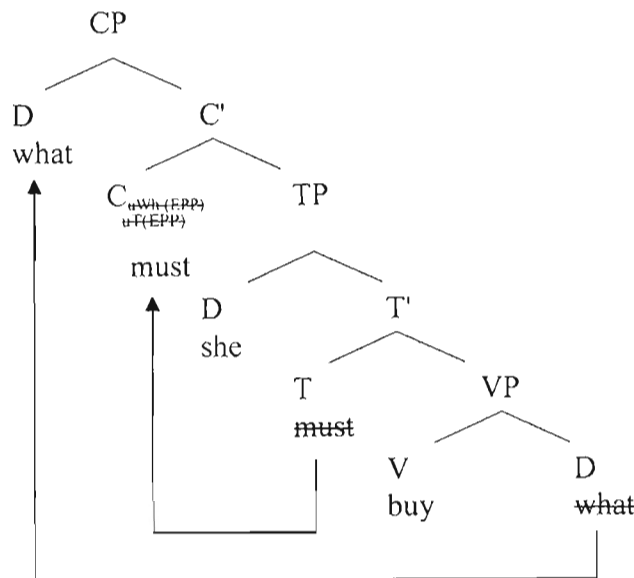
Figure 8



Although at this stage of the derivation, uWh and its EPP property have been deleted from C, uT on C has not yet been deleted. It is this feature which, according to P&T (2001), triggers T-to-C movement. By virtue of the fact that it bears an uninterpretable T-feature, uT, C is a Probe which searches for a c-commanded Goal which bears a matching interpretable feature, and locates T. The Agree-operation is established and uT on C is valued and marked for deletion. uT bears an EPP property which requires a copy

of *must* to be merged into the local domain of C. *must* is therefore copied and re-merged into C to satisfy the EPP property. The original copy of *must* in T is deleted, i.e. given null spell-out at PF. The modal verb *must* has moved from T into C.

Figure 9



The T-to-C movement analysis of subject-auxiliary inversion presented above also explains the phenomenon of *do*-support. Consider sentences 11 (a) and (b):

- (11) a. What did she buy?  
 b. \*What she bought?

The non-subject wh-question in 11 (a) shows *do*-support, while (b) does not, and is therefore ungrammatical. Why is *do*-support necessary? The uT feature or its EPP property on C in wh-questions in ‘Standard English’ requires an *overt* element, like the modal auxiliary verb *must* in (9) above, to be copied and remerged in C. In the absence of such an overt element, a ‘dummy’ (i.e. meaningless) auxiliary (i.e. *do*) is merged in T. When *do* moves to C, it satisfies the EPP-property of C without changing the tense-interpretation of the sentence.

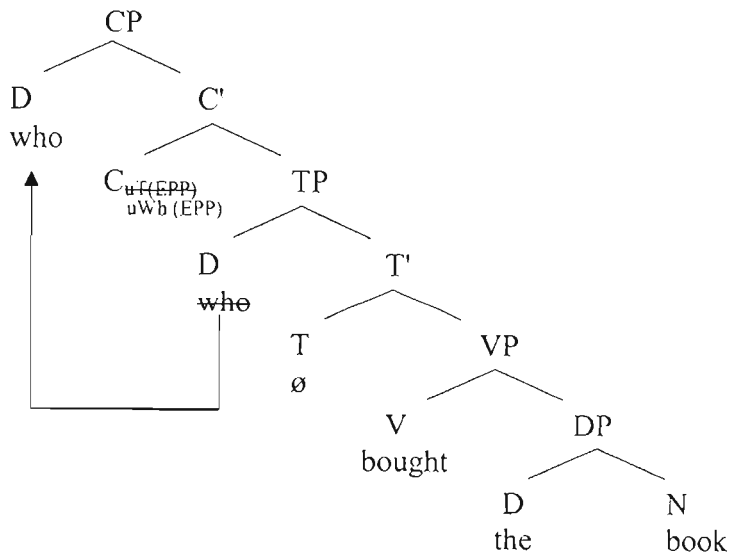
## 2.2 Subject Questions

Consider the derivation of the subject wh-question (12):

(12) Who bought the book?

C bears a *uWh* and a *uT* feature. Both of these uninterpretable features bear an EPP property. By virtue of the fact that it bears a *uWh* feature, C is a Probe which searches for a c-commanded Goal that bears a matching interpretable feature and locates the subject wh-phrase *who*. The Agree-operation is established and *uWh* is marked for deletion. The EPP property of *uWh* requires a copy of *who* to appear in the local domain of C. *Who* is therefore copied and re-merged with C to form SpecCP, thereby satisfying the EPP property. The original copy of *who* is then deleted, i.e. given null spell-out at PF. In this process *uWh* on C and its EPP property are deleted.

Figure 10



At this point the derivation is complete. *uWh* and its EPP property have been deleted via wh-movement of the subject wh-pronoun *who* into SpecCP. Tense is realised on the verb which is spelled out in its past tense form *bought*. However, it seems that *uT* on C and its EPP property remain undeleted as no T-to-C movement has occurred. In fact, T-to-C movement occurring in this example would result in the ungrammatical (13):

(13) \*Who did buy the book?

Since uT on C and its EPP property seem to remain undeleted, this derivation should crash. Why, then, is it grammatical? If C has a uT feature with an EPP property, why is there no T-to-C movement in subject wh-questions?

P&T's answer to this question is provided by the following stipulation:

(14) *The Nature of Nominative Case*

Nominative case is uT on D

(P&T 2001: 361, 2004: 495)

(14) implies that what is traditionally thought of as a nominative case feature on DPs is in fact an uninterpretable instance of a T-feature on D, i.e. a feature whose interpretable counterpart is realised as tense on T. Importantly, P&T (2001) argue that as a result of (14), movement of a nominative DP to SpecCP can delete uT on C and its EPP property.

P&T (2001: 364) observe:

We are used to the idea that T (and its projections) bears features that are uninterpretable on it but would be interpretable were they found on D (e.g. person and number). Hypothesis (8) [(14) in this chapter] is simply the proposal that the reverse is also true. D and its projections bear features that are uninterpretable on it, but would be interpretable were they found on T. The features proper to D are traditionally called “agreement” when borne by T, and the features proper to T are traditional called “nominative” when borne by D; but hypothesis (8) [(14)] suggests that the traditional terminology is misleading. “Agreement” is the name for the D-properties present on T, and “nominative” is the name for the T-properties on D.

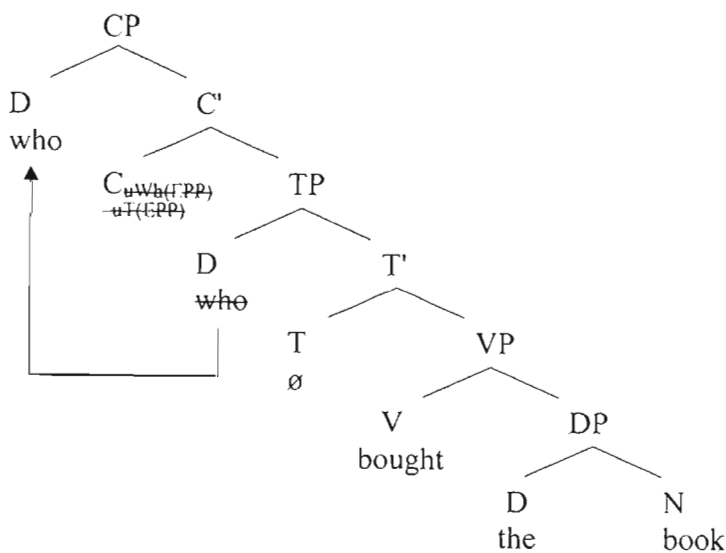
When C acts as a Probe and attracts the subject wh-phrase *who* into SpecCP, both uWh and uT on C and their EPP properties are deleted. Since this movement operation can simultaneously delete both the uT and uWh features of C and their EPP properties, no T-to-C movement is required. Furthermore, according to P&T (2001: 359), movement is subject to the following economy condition:

(15) *The Economy Condition*

A head X triggers the minimum number of operations necessary to satisfy the properties (including the EPP property) of its uninterpretable features.

The significance of this economy condition is that it implies that the properties of the uninterpretable features of C are satisfied by the fewest number of operations. Thus, two movement operations will not occur when one will satisfy all of the properties of the uninterpretable features of a given head. Since wh-movement of the subject wh-phrase is sufficient to satisfy the properties of the C-head, T-to-C movement is not required and, according to (15), also not possible in subject wh-questions.

Figure 11



To sum up the discussion in this section, since only subjects bear nominative case, P&T explain the T-to-C movement asymmetry in wh-questions (illustrated in (16), below) by linking nominative case to the T-feature of D.

- (16) a. What did Mary buy? (non-subject)  
b. \*What Mary bought?  
c. Who bought the book? (subject)  
d. \*Who did buy the book?

(P&T 2001: 357)

### Section Three: SAIE wh-Questions

The T-to-C movement asymmetry observed between subject wh-questions and non-subject wh-questions in ‘Standard English’ does not exist in SAIE.

In neither ‘Standard English’ nor SAIE does T-to-C movement ever take place in subject-questions. According to P&T (2001, 2004), the uT feature on C is deleted by wh-movement of the subject because nominative case is a uT feature on D. However, non-subject questions in SAIE also do not display T-to-C movement. While the ‘Standard English’ example (16) b. *What Mary bought?* is ungrammatical, the same construction is acceptable in SAIE. Consider the following examples from my corpus (Appendix One)<sup>56</sup>:

- (17) a. When you did that?  
(When did you do that?)  
b. What I said?  
(What did I say?)  
c. How long I must wait?  
(How long must I wait?)  
d. Where you are?  
(Where are you?)  
e. Who you spoke to?

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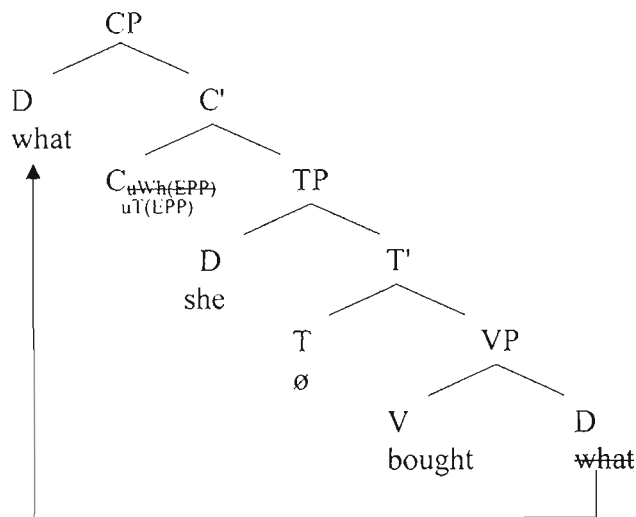
<sup>56</sup> As in Chapter Two, ‘Standard English’ glosses appear in brackets beneath the SAIE examples.

- (Who did you speak to?)
- f. Why you didn't come to me?  
(Why didn't you come to me?)
- g. Which one you want?  
(Which one do you want?)

Consider the tree diagram for the following SAIE sentence:

(18) What she bought?

Figure 12



By virtue of the presence of *uWh* of *C* with its EPP property, *C* is an active Probe which locates the *wh*-phrase *what* as a Goal. The Agree operation is established, and *uWh* is valued and marked for deletion. In order to satisfy the EPP property a copy of *what* is re-merged into SpecCP. The original occurrence of *what* is deleted. *Do*-support does not occur. The tense is realised on the verb which is spelled out in its past tense form *bought*. The *uWh* feature on *C* and its EPP property have been deleted via agreement and *wh*-movement. However, the *uT* feature and its EPP property remain undeleted on *C*. These undeleted, uninterpretable features should cause this derivation to crash. But the derivation in ((18) and figure 12) does not create ungrammaticality in SAIE. Where

‘Standard English’ would require *do*-support, SAIE does not. The fact that the derivations of these non-subject *wh*-questions that lack T-to-C movement do not crash and are, in fact, acceptable in SAIE indicates that the grammatical properties of *wh*-questions in SAIE differ in a significant way from those of *wh*-questions in ‘Standard English’.

Additional evidence in support of this analysis is found in an examination of Yes/No questions in SAIE. T-to-C movement does not occur in Yes/No questions either. Consider the following example from Mesthrie (1995: 257):

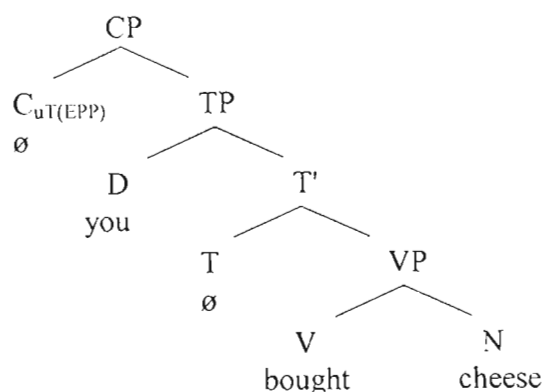
- (19) a. You bought cheese, Farouk?  
(Did you buy cheese, Farouk?)

and others taken from Section Two of my corpus:

- b. You landed on time?  
(Did you land on time?)
- c. You heard what he said about you?  
(Did you hear what he said about you?)
- d. You ate all the rice?  
(Did you eat all the rice?)
- e. You can play tennis?  
(Can you play tennis?)

Once again, in these examples ((19) a. – e.), T-to-C movement does not occur. There is also no *do*-support. The tense is realised on the verb which is spelled out in its past tense form.

Figure 13



If we accept Chomsky's (1995a.) suggestion that all uninterpretable features and properties of those features (including the EPP property) must delete by the end of the derivation, the fact that structures such as (18) above, are grammatical in SAIE is surprising. Therefore, an account of the phenomenon observed in non-subject wh-questions in SAIE (i.e. a lack of T-to-C movement) must be proffered that entails the deletion of uT on C and its EPP property without T-to-C movement being necessary or triggered.

#### Section Four: A Parametric Difference Between 'Standard English' and SAIE

All natural languages display variation. The different dialects of English spoken in England, for example, are well documented in the literature. But why do some people pronounce *duck* to rhyme with 'hook'; and some people say *there ain't no more bread* where others say *there is no more bread*? Using the theory of Universal Grammar (UG), variation in natural language can be explained by appealing to the idea of parameters (see the discussion of parameters in Section One). On this view it is "parameters that ultimately underlie cross-linguistic differences in syntax" (Kayne 2003: 1). The difference between the grammar of SAIE wh-questions and the grammar of 'Standard English' wh-questions can be accounted for in terms of parametric variation.

Kayne (2003: 2) observes that: "...a widespread idea about syntactic parameters is that they are limited to being features or properties of functional elements." This claim was

made by Chomsky (1995a, 1995b, 2000), and has also been adopted by P&T (2001, 2004). It would be ideal to find an account for the difference between wh-questions in ‘Standard English’ and SAIE in which this difference is shown to be the result of a different parameter setting, limited to features or properties of a functional element.

In this section, I present four possible ways in which such an account for SAIE non-subject wh-question phenomena can be developed.

#### *4.1 Accusative Case as uT on D*

A vital stipulation in P&T’s (2001) analysis of the asymmetry between subject and non-subject wh-questions in ‘Standard English’ with regard to T-to-C movement is their claim that nominative case is uT on D (see (14) above). A nominative wh-phrase (i.e. the subject) moving to SpecCP (triggered by the EPP property of uWh on C) can therefore delete the uT feature on C and its EPP property, thereby rendering T-to-C movement unnecessary.

Given that T-to-C movement occurs in neither subject nor non-subject wh-questions in SAIE, it might be the case in SAIE that accusative case as well as nominative case is an instance of uT on D. This suggestion correctly predicts that in SAIE, by moving an accusative object wh-phrase which receives accusative case, uT on C and its EPP property can be deleted in much the same way as uT and its EPP property are deleted by moving the nominative subject wh-phrase.

Pesetsky and Torrego (2004: 496) make this very suggestion:

#### *(20) The Nature of Accusative Case*

Accusative case (like nominative) is an instance of uT on D.

Briefly, they argue that all structural case features are actually T-features. All DP arguments, by virtue of the fact that they receive structural case, must, then, bear a T-feature (e.g. uT) (ibid.: 501). On this view, since both subjects and objects are arguments

of the verb, they both get assigned structural case, and both, therefore, bear T-features. If accusative case is uT on D in SAIE, then the accusative object wh-phrase can delete both the uWh feature on C and its EPP property, and uT on C with its EPP property in one movement operation. T-to-C movement would not be necessary.

One obvious question arising from this proposal is the following: if accusative case is uT on D, as P&T (2004) suggest, why is

(21) \*What you read?

ungrammatical in ‘Standard English’? P&T do not address this in their paper, but it may have to do with *locality*. uT on C attracts the closest uT, which in subject questions is uT on the subject. In object questions, however, the closest uT is that of T. There is, therefore, a competition between locality, which favours a combination of both T-to-C movement and wh-movement of the object wh-phrase, and *economy*, which rules out T-to-C movement if the object wh-phrase can check both uT and uWh on C and their EPP properties. It seems that in the case of object wh-questions, locality wins out in ‘Standard English’ requiring both wh-movement and T-to-C movement to occur for the sentence to be grammatical, for example, *What did you read?*. In SAIE, if the proposal considered here were to be adopted, it seems that economy wins out, with movement of the object wh-phrase being able to delete both uT and uWh on C in one movement operation.

However, the suggestion that accusative Case features are also T-features makes a prediction. We now expect to find that T-to-C movement, although absent in DP-argument questions, still occurs in adjunct questions because adjuncts are not arguments of the verb and therefore do not receive structural case (in fact PPs and adverbials receive no case at all). Therefore, moving an adjunct wh-phrase to SpecCP would only delete uWh and its EPP property on C. T-to-C movement would still be triggered by uT on C and its EPP property. This prediction, however, is not realised. T-to-C movement does not occur in adjunct questions in SAIE either (see my corpus in Appendix One):

- (22) a. Where you bought your shoes?  
b. When you stopped smoking?

An analysis of the lack of T-to-C movement in SAIE based on (20) is, therefore unsuitable because of the behaviour of adjuncts.

#### 4.2 *uT and uWh in SAIE*

Subject, object and adjunct *wh*-phrases in SAIE all have at least two things in common: they all display *wh*-movement but lack T-to-C movement. This observation leads to another possible explanation for there being no T-to-C movement in SAIE. What if, for some reason, all *wh*-phrases in SAIE bear both a *wh*-feature and a T-feature? Then, moving any *wh*-phrase to SpecCP would delete both the *uWh* and the *uT* feature on C in one movement operation.

This seems an unlikely solution to the problem posed by SAIE data as there is no obvious connection between T-features and *wh*-features aside from the fact that they both appear on C in *wh*-questions. Certainly, the idea of T as a case-feature would have to be given up. This is an unwelcome consequence of this account. The proposal in this section is nothing more than a stipulation that accounts for what is observed. Since it is *ad hoc* and lacks explanatory value, it should also be rejected.

#### 4.3 *No uT on C*

In P&T's (2001) analysis the *uT* feature on C plays an important role in motivating T-to-C movement. Could the lack of T-to-C movement in SAIE be convincingly explained by simply suggesting that there is no *uT* on C in SAIE?

Since movement of T to C is triggered by an EPP property of *uT*, the absence of such a feature would imply that there is no EPP property. This explanation predicts correctly that T-to-C movement will occur in neither *wh*-questions nor Yes/No questions in SAIE. Furthermore, if there is no *uT* feature on C, the possibility of an agreement operation being established between C and T is excluded. This consequence is not ideal, as the

assumed presence of uT on C may be necessary for reasons other than an explanation of T-to-C movement in wh-questions. For example, P&T (2001: 356) appeal to the presence of a uT feature on C to explain the so-called “*That-trace Effect*” observed by Perlmutter (1971):

(23) *That-trace Effect*

- a. Who do you think (that) Sue met \_\_\_\_\_?
- b. Who do you think (\*that) met Sue?

Furthermore, the idea that C bears uT also explains (ibid.: 357) the “*That-omission Asymmetry*” pointed out by Stowell (1981):

(24) *That-omission Asymmetry*

- a. Mary thinks [that Sue will buy the book].
- b. Mary thinks [Sue will buy the book].
- c. [That Sue will buy the book] was expected by everyone.
- d. \*[Sue will buy the book] was expected by everyone.

A thorough examination of these phenomena is beyond the scope of this study. The reader is referred to P&T (2001) for a detailed discussion of these phenomena. What is important here is that P&T’s analysis predicts that a language without uT on C does not exhibit the contrasts in (23) and (24). Therefore, in order to show that the properties of SAIE wh-questions are really due to the absence of uT on C, it would be necessary to determine whether or not SAIE has the “*That-trace Effect*” or the “*That-omission asymmetry*”. A full exploration of the consequences of this suggestion goes beyond the scope of this study.

#### 4.4 No EPP property on uT

My final proposal to be discussed is the idea that C in SAIE has the uT feature, but uT does not have an EPP property. If the uT feature on C in SAIE does not bear an EPP property, T-to-C movement is not triggered, while the possibility of an agreement

operation being established between T and C is preserved. This explanation is attractive for a number of reasons. Firstly, it correctly predicts that T-to-C movement will occur in neither wh-questions, nor Yes/No questions in SAIE. Secondly, the fact that uT remains a feature on C in this explanation leaves the feature-specification of both varieties of English identical in terms of C while still accounting for the difference observed between them. Thirdly, Chomsky (2000) argues that the presence the EPP property on functional heads varies parametrically among languages. Analysing the difference between wh-questions in SAIE and ‘Standard English’ as the result of the absence of an EPP property on uT on C in SAIE, and its presence on uT on C in ‘Standard English’ is appealing because it allows for the view that the difference observed is due to a different parameter setting.

This parametric variation account is attractive because it views variation as systematic; not wrong, but different. Therefore, this is the approach that I adopt.

#### Section Five: Concluding Remarks

I have presented a syntactic analysis of wh-question formation in SAIE and ‘Standard English’ which reduces the relevant difference between these two varieties to a simple parameter associated with the functional head C – the EPP property on uT.

What this analysis shows is that it is possible to account for the difference between SAIE, a non-standard variety, and ‘Standard English’ by postulating a simple parameter associated with grammatical features of a functional head in the syntactic structure. It shows that there are valid grounds for the claim that no language or variety is linguistically more complex and correct than, or superior to, any other language or variety. It shows that differences between varieties of English can be explained or accounted for without recourse to negative value judgments.

In the chapter that follows, I discuss the findings from the different strands of my research – the literature review, the interviews, corpus and syntactic analysis.

## Chapter Five: Findings – South African Indian English and the ‘Standard English’ Debate in South Africa

This chapter consolidates the findings of the discussion of the ‘Standard English’ debate in South Africa, using SAIE as a case study. In the first section, I consider perspectives from syntax. I look at perspectives from sociolinguistics in Section Two.

### Section One: Perspectives from Syntax

The corpus of data that I collected proves that SAIE non-subject wh-questions that lack T-to-C movement occur regularly. The data from the interviews further confirms that this construction is, in fact, a feature of South African Indian English. The formation of SAIE non-subject wh-questions is predictable. An infinite number of these constructions can be generated because their formation is governed by systematic rules that conform to the universal principles and parameters of all natural languages according to the theory of Universal Grammar. If the formation of this kind of construction occurs regularly, is predictable, and is governed by systematic grammatical rules that entail that an infinite number of constructions of this nature can be generated, it cannot be a ‘mistake’, it cannot be ‘wrong’. It is a grammatical feature of a different linguistic variety.

I adopted the treatment of the T-to-C movement asymmetry observed between subject and non-subject wh-questions in ‘Standard English’ proffered by P&T (2001). By making a novel claim about the nature of nominative case, P&T were able to account for this asymmetry. I offered four possible explanations for why non-subject wh-questions in SAIE lack T-to-C movement. The explanation that I found to be the most plausible (i.e. the suggestion that uT on C in SAIE lacks the EPP property found on uT on C in ‘Standard English’) shows that it is possible to account for the difference between SAIE wh-questions and ‘Standard English’ wh-questions in terms of parametric differences between these two varieties.

Suggesting that non-subject wh-questions in SAIE are different from the corresponding constructions in ‘Standard English’ due to a systematic difference in the grammars of these two varieties has a further consequence. As previously mentioned, it

is not possible for a cognitively ‘normal’ individual to acquire the grammar of their L1 incorrectly. Simply put, the human brain is genetically endowed with the Faculty of Language (FL) – the “blueprint” of the fundamental principles of natural language. On the basis of the linguistic input received from the linguistic environment, parameters are set. During the course of the period of acquisition, language change does occur due to changes in the linguistic input from generation to generation (Lightfoot 1991, 1999), but these changes are not ‘wrong’ because they become part of the internal grammar of the next generation. Lightfoot (1999: 53) claims that children acquire a productive system, a grammar, in accordance with the requirements of UG. Language change occurs

[o]nce the linguistic environment has shifted in such a way as to trigger a new property in some children. The very fact that some people have a new grammatical property changes the linguistic environment yet further in the direction of setting the parameter in the new fashion. That is, the first people with the new parameter setting produce different linguistic forms, which in turn are part of the linguistic environment for younger people, thereby contributing to the spread of the new setting.

(Lightfoot 1999: 106)

The differences between the grammar of SAIE and ‘Standard English’ can be accounted for in a similar way. The conditions that prevailed during the period of language shift were far from ideal for standard language acquisition. English began to be introduced into Indian homes and neighbourhoods in the late 1950s. As explained in Chapter Two, older children may have started school with little or no knowledge of English, but by the time their younger siblings started school, English may have been their dominant language. Mesthrie (1995) describes the process of ‘closed-cycle reinforcement’ (as discussed in Chapter Two). This process entailed the parents or grandparents learning English from the child, thereby reinforcing the child’s ‘child-language’. The linguistic input received by children acquiring English as their L1 in these circumstances was very different to the kind of linguistic input received by children acquiring English under less constrained circumstances. In addition, there was the influence of the Indian languages in the home, school and neighbourhood. As a result of the different linguistic environment, South African Indian children received different linguistic input (from, for example, children

acquiring English from L1-English speaking parents in predominantly L1-English speaking environments) and consequently acquired a different, but not deficient, grammar.

### Section Two: Sociolinguistic Perspectives

The 'Standard English' debate should not be glossed over as a superficial debate about good or bad English. It is a debate about ideologies, power, prejudice and social inequality. It is in this capacity that the 'Standard English' debate is so relevant to the South African context. Language attitudes are not harmless, they reflect prejudice and are used as a vehicle through which this prejudice can be expressed and transformed into discriminatory practices.

SAIE is an interesting variety through which to investigate the 'Standard English' debate in South Africa. The community and, thus, the variety have a unique social history. Unlike most non-standard varieties of English that emerged in former British colonies, SAIE is an L1 variety. It developed on South African soil through the process of Language Shift (Mesthrie 1992b).

L2 varieties of English that have emerged in former British colonies, such as India, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, etc., have been widely studied. Kachru (1982), for instance, discusses models of 'New Englishes', and the consequences of persistent negative attitudes towards speakers of these non-standard L2 varieties. Wade (1995, 1998) investigates Black South African English, considering the possibility of 're-standardising' South African English taking into account this emerging variety and the potential for L2 varieties to become important markers of identity. Webb (2002) explores the role of English in post-apartheid South Africa, referring specifically to L2 varieties and their potential as markers of identity, and for the potential for discrimination to which their use gives rise. Görlach (1995, 1997, 2002) and Hickey (2004) examine L2 varieties of English in Africa and farther afield, concentrating on their development, characteristics and status.

Linguicism (Phillipson 1992) does not only operate on the level of language, but also on the level of language varieties, as Webb's discussion of Black South African English shows. As a form of discrimination, linguicism should be avoided because it encourages the manipulation and exploitation of the less powerful members in society. Furthermore, it perpetuates conflict and cultivates a division that should not be tolerated in a democratic society (Webb 2002). Given that the 'Standard English' debate is not a neutral debate about language, but is a debate about ideology, about people rather than the languages or varieties that they speak; that it involves the expression of language attitudes that are a manifestation of attitudes towards people and cultures, prejudice and inequality, it is an example of language as a site of struggle. The 'Standard English' debate in South Africa is characterised by the active complicity of those involved in it. Many people are unaware of the significance or even the existence of language attitudes per se, and those who are, are usually unaware of the fact that language attitudes are often attitudes towards the people who speak the languages or varieties being targeted.

The standard language ideology engages the participation of the speakers of the targeted varieties themselves. This results, broadly, in two levels of judgment: one being levelled from outside the community and one from within the community. From outside of the South African Indian community, other groups of English-speakers in South Africa believe that Indian people speak 'bad' English. From within the community there are speakers, such as a number of my participants, who distance themselves from SAIE, and judge those who speak it negatively. This internal division is the result of the permeation of the standard language ideology, and the values that it represents, into the social consciousness of the South African Indian community. In an attempt to distance themselves from racial prejudice and connotations of a lack of education, low social class and a lack of prestige, many South African Indians engage in the negative value judgments perpetuated by the standard language ideology. According to Andersson & Trudgill (1990: 187): "Everyone, every single person has an ideology of language, although not everyone is aware of it". As my research assistant once said: "Variety is the spice of life; the dialect is what pisses me off!". This comment succinctly expresses an opinion about SAIE that is not uncommon amongst young, educated South African

Indians. The use of SAIE annoys this particular individual because it reflects badly on her and her identity as an Indian female. It is associated with a lack of education, a lack of prestige, a lack of power, and, via the cognitive fallacy, a lack of intelligence – all things with which she does not wish to be associated. Furthermore, the use of a non-standard variety, or even an association with it, leaves the speaker vulnerable to discrimination and disrespect on a purely superficial basis. Whether an individual is intelligent or not, successful or not, wealthy or not, if they speak a non-standard variety, there is always something on the basis of which they can be judged as inferior. Trudgill (1975: 70) claims that: “If groups of people are prejudiced against other groups, they will probably always be able to find linguistic differences to support their prejudices”.

It seems that there is a self-perpetuating cycle that emerges through the language attitudes and value judgments associated with the standard language ideology: because an individual speaks a non-standard variety, they are thought to be uneducated or unintelligent; because they are uneducated or unintelligent, people speak non-standard varieties; because they speak non-standard varieties, people are thought to be uneducated or unintelligent, and so forth. This cycle of negative value judgment is awkward because, while it is not necessarily accurate, it is nevertheless powerfully present in the minds of many people including speakers of non-standard varieties. If the ‘Standard English’ debate is not taken seriously; if it is simply regarded as a matter of determining standards of good usage rather than a debate about social and political power relations and inequalities, this cycle of negative value judgment is unlikely to be broken. This would be unfortunate because the negative value judgments that are encoded in language attitudes have tangible repercussions for speakers of non-standard varieties in terms of employment opportunities, educational success, politics and personal relationships (Chambers 2004; Webb 2002).

Importantly while class may be the most significant variable in the standard – non-standard dichotomy in Britain and the United States, in South Africa, race is at least as important a variable, if not more so. Historically, prestige and power in South Africa have been assigned first according to race and then according to class. The two levels of

value judgment mentioned above seem to operate according to this pattern. From outside the South African Indian community, their variety of English receives a negative value judgment based on race. From within the community, SAIE and its speakers are judged negatively on the basis of social class and education.

Cheshire and Milroy (1993) observe that speakers of non-standard varieties often use both the non-standard and the 'standard' forms of constructions, but that more often than not this goes unnoticed. My corpus includes data that confirms this claim. In examples (2), (35) and (60), the speaker uses a non-subject wh-question with no T-to-C movement and directly afterwards, for emphasis, uses the corresponding wh-question with T-to-C movement:

(2) When you did that?... When did you do that?

(35) What I must say?...HELLO?...What must I say?

(60) Where you are?...no seriously, where are you?<sup>57</sup>

Thus, it seems that speakers of SAIE are not ignorant of the 'Standard' usage as suggested by Honey (1997). They have access to both the 'Standard' and the SAIE constructions and use both, though in different contexts and for different reasons.

The conflation of *grammaticality* and *acceptability* (J. Milroy 1999) results in a particular construction or entire variety of English being labelled grammatically incorrect simply because it is not deemed acceptable by those who believe in the inherent grammatical correctness of 'Standard English'. My participants said that SAIE in general, and SAIE wh-questions in particular are 'grammatically wrong', 'incorrect' and 'improper'. I have argued and provided evidence for the fact that the formation of non-subject wh-questions in SAIE is subject to systematic and predictable syntactic rules that follow from the principles and parameters of natural language. These constructions are therefore grammatical in SAIE, though different from the corresponding constructions in 'Standard English'. Carter (1999) makes a similar distinction between *standard* and *grammatically*

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<sup>57</sup> Each of these examples were collected from different speakers.

*correct*. The standard is assumed to be the only grammatically correct form of English. On this view, any variety that is different from the ‘Standard’ must be grammatically incorrect. However, I need to stress once more that merely because the linguistic construction of non-standard varieties of English is different to the ‘Standard’, does not necessarily mean that these varieties are ungrammatical.

The cognitive fallacy (Joseph 1987) is a particularly destructive consequence of the standard language ideology and the conception of ‘Standard English’ as *the* language, and its association with education. It follows that the use of non-standard varieties of English is perceived as an expression of ignorance or even a lack of intelligence. This perception can result in observable disadvantages for speakers of non-standard varieties given that “language norms determine the content of language teaching programmes, can determine career appointments, can act as basis for discrimination, and can affect the degree to which people are taken seriously in public debate” (Webb 2002: 31).

In terms of Bourdieu’s (1991) concepts of linguistic and social capacity, the analysis in Chapter Four indicates that speakers of SAIE have the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically well-formed non-subject wh-questions based on grammatical rules that differ to those of ‘Standard English’ in terms of T-to-C movement. Social capacity, i.e. the capacity to use these constructions in appropriate contexts, is determined in the specific context of the utterance. Obviously, this does not imply that speakers of SAIE do not have access to ‘Standard English’. As mentioned above, many speakers have access to both SAIE and ‘Standard English’, and choose to use one or the other depending on their interlocutor, the setting in which the conversation takes place, or the topic of conversation. Notions of correctness associated with ‘Standard English’ and determined by the standard language ideology determine whether or not it is appropriate to use SAIE in a particular context. For example, SAIE may be deemed inappropriate for use in formal contexts because it is non-standard and therefore incorrect, even evidence of carelessness and disrespect.

Bourdieu (1991) further argues that symbolic power can be maintained and perpetuated through education. In South Africa, access to former Model C schools, where there is access to models of 'Standard English', is available to the wealthy who then acquire 'Standard English', through the use of which they can gain access to cultural and economic market places that allow them to maintain their wealth (Watts 1999). In this way access to 'Standard English' is a means of maintaining economic power and dominance. During apartheid, access to education in 'Standard English' was reserved almost exclusively for white students, who acquired 'Standard South African English' and the benefits that could be derived from its use. Non-white students, however, generally did not have access to education in 'Standard English', and did not acquire this variety and the benefits that could be derived from its use. Through education, access to 'Standard English' as a form of symbolic power can be maintained (Bourdieu 1991). Self-evaluation is a manifestation of symbolic power and speakers' complicity in its maintenance. The negative evaluation of SAIE by speakers of the variety themselves, and attempts or desires to 'switch' to using 'Standard English' are symptoms of the tacit acceptance of the authority of 'Standard English' by South African Indians.

Parmegiani (2003, 2006) argues that, implied in the claim that a group of speakers does not "own" English, is the idea that they do not have an adequate grasp of English and that they cannot identify with it. The reverse is also true. Implied in the claim that a group of speakers do not have an adequate command of English and cannot identify with it is the idea that they do not "own" English. This is the case for speakers of SAIE. They are considered to have an inadequate command of English due specifically to those features of the variety that allow its speakers to identify with the language as part of their individual and cultural identity. In being denied ownership of English, SAIE speakers are denied legitimate ownership of the language that can give them access to upward social mobility. They are also made vulnerable to negative attitudes towards their language variety as a medium through which negative attitudes towards the community can be expressed. Importantly, however, there does exist some positive identification with SAIE. It is often used to signal in-group membership and in comfortable, intimate situations, as a signal of familiarity, acceptance and belonging. My research assistant, for example,

almost always uses ‘Standard English’ at work and at university, but uses SAIE in conversations with family and friends.

According to the ‘Birthright Model’ of ownership as outlined in Parmegiani (2006) (see Chapter One) only those who acquire English by ‘birth’, i.e. as their mother tongue or L1 should be entitled to claim ownership of English. According to the ‘Birthright Model’, then, speakers of SAIE should be able to claim ownership of English on the basis that English is their L1, their mother-tongue, the language that they acquired from birth. In terms of Parmegiani’s Appropriation Model, South African Indians should clearly be able to claim ownership of English as speakers of SAIE can claim to have both affiliative and semantic ownership of English. Despite the fact that in terms of both of the aforementioned models of English ownership South African Indians should be able to claim ownership of their variety of English, negative value judgments of South African Indian English that encode racist ideologies and unequal power relations are used as an instrument of power to set SAIE up as a deficient, rather than merely different variety. As a result, speakers of SAIE are denied ownership of a legitimate variety of English. Through this denial of ownership, unequal power relations are maintained.

The terms *native* and *non-native* are often used when discussing the ‘Standard English’ debate in former British colonies (see McArthur 1998, Parmegiani 2003, Kachru 1982). The native-speaker is often represented as speaking the ‘Standard’, while the non-native speaker speaks a non-standard variety. The term ‘native’ becomes a standard of sorts. SAIE is simultaneously native to its speakers, and a non-standard variety of English, similar to non-standard varieties of English in Britain and the United States. As discussed in Chapter Two, it emerged in a former colony, out of a language contact situation characterised by oppression and inequality. In this way it is similar to non-native varieties like Black and Coloured South African English. The problem is that SAIE shares many of the negative connotations associated with non-native varieties of English, despite being an L1. This may be because it became an L1 for this community fairly recently in terms of when the first indentured Indians arrived in South Africa and the relative speed with which language shift took place within the community. Furthermore, English is not,

historically, the language of the Indian community. As shown in Chapter Three, some of my participants consider the Indian languages to be the ‘native’ languages of the South African Indian Community, despite the fact that English is the L1 of the overwhelming majority of South African Indians, few of whom speak an Indian language (Census 2001). This may be a contributing factor to the sense that in terms of its status, SAIE seems to occupy a position somewhere between native and non-native.

## Conclusion

There are three interconnecting parts to this study: a discussion of the 'Standard English' debate, the case study of South African Indian English and a syntactic analysis of SAIE non-subject wh-questions that lack T-to-C movement. The research involved two lines of inquiry: one sociolinguistic and the other syntactic. The combination of these two lines of inquiry made possible a more exhaustive examination of the topic.

The use of 'Standard English' has long been associated with hierarchies of social class, not because it is superior so the upper classes use it; but rather, because the upper classes use it, it is superior. There is nothing inherently superior in the linguistic structure of 'Standard English'. It is not a *linguistically* remarkable variety; it is a *socially* remarkable variety due to the prestige associated with those who speak it. The success and perceived superiority of 'Standard English' is due entirely to the success and perceived superiority of those who have access to it and use it. As a result, language attitudes are not neutral ideas about language use. It is in their perception as innocent and neutral that language attitudes can become covert expressions of prejudice that are used to maintain power imbalances and justify inequality.

On the surface it seems that the 'Standard English' debate is a debate about standards of correctness and good use of English. This widely held view masks the more serious nature of the debate. The 'Standard English' debate is a debate about ideologies, power and inequality. Through the process of symbolic revalorisation, negative attitudes towards speakers of a particular variety of English, such as SAIE, are manifested in negative attitudes towards their variety of English. Disregarding this aspect of the 'Standard English' debate and the standard language ideology, allows this expression of prejudice and its use as a basis for discrimination to go unnoticed and uncriticised because people are, for the most part, unaware of this characteristic of language attitudes.

The standard language ideology creates and perpetuates the idea that there is one, and only one, correct form of English, i.e. the 'Standard'. All other varieties are, in comparison, non-standard and incorrect. So, the 'Standard' is perceived as 'good'

because it is associated with positive social attributes such as prestige, power, and education. Non-standard varieties are perceived as ‘bad’ because they are associated with negative social attributes such as a lack of prestige, a lack of power and a lack of education.

The standard language debate, and the language attitudes that it gives rise to, are a form of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991). Prejudice and negative attitudes towards a group of speakers are encoded in negative attitudes towards their variety. These prejudices are thereby endowed with a legitimacy that they would not have had, had they been expressed in another way. Negative attitudes towards South African Indians cannot be explicitly expressed in terms of racial prejudice<sup>58</sup>. SAIE, however, can be openly declared to be ‘wrong’, ‘inaccurate’, ‘incorrect’ and ‘bad’ English. The active complicity that is involved in the perpetuation of symbolic power is evident in the negative opinion towards SAIE as expressed by a number of my participants. Negative opinions and attitudes towards SAIE are ascribed from within the South African Indian community, as well as from outside of this community.

Bourdieu (1991) argues that the language or variety of the socially and economically powerful group emerges as the dominant and ‘standard’ language. The language or variety of the socially and economically powerless is, in contrast, relegated to an inferior position. The linguistic habitus of South Africans has been affected by the ideologies of racism that prevailed before, and during apartheid, and in post-apartheid South Africa. In South Africa speakers often react negatively to varieties of English spoken by Black, Indian and Coloured South Africans in a way that is not consistent with the way that they react to non-standard varieties of English spoken in Britain and the United States, for example. The symbolic capital assigned to SAIE in South Africa’s linguistic marketplace is low in value. Bourdieu argues that within a certain marketplace a speaker will adjust his/her speech in anticipation of how it will be received, and what it will reveal about the

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<sup>58</sup> The graffiti that I collected from the female lavatory in the E.G. Malherbe Library may be an exception, although, importantly, the writers of the graffiti remain anonymous, so their expression of racism is still, for the most part, covert.

linguistic, social and economic capital they possess. This may be why some of the participants in my research tried to distance themselves from the use of SAIE.

An interesting consequence of the social history of the South African Indian community and SAIE is the active complicity of South African Indians in the maintenance and perpetuation of the standard language ideology and the power inequalities that it symbolises. Self-evaluation is a symptom of this. Some speakers of non-standard varieties like SAIE claim that their own language use is bad or incorrect. South African Indians who do not identify themselves as speakers of SAIE, assert that SAIE is ungrammatical and incorrect (see Chapter Three). The belief that ‘Standard English’ is superior and that it is *the* English language relegates SAIE to the status of a deviant non-standard variety.

The existence of non-subject *wh*-questions that lack T-to-C movement is proven on the basis of my corpus and the data from the interviews to occur regularly in the speech of South African Indians. Their formation is predictable and systematic. It was shown in the analysis in Chapter Four that this construction is governed by rules that follow from the principles and parameters of UG. On this basis it can be concluded that non-subject *wh*-questions that lack T-to-C movement are the result of a feature of the grammar of SAIE. Since these constructions are predictable, systematic, rule-governed and occur regularly, they are a feature of the grammar of SAIE. They cannot, therefore, be mistakes in SAIE. Furthermore, SAIE is an L1, and it is not possible for any cognitively normal individual to acquire the internal grammar of their L1 ‘wrong’. The analysis in Chapter Four shows that non-subject *wh*-questions that lack T-to-C movement are not an inaccurate approximation of the ‘Standard’ construction. They are subject to the rules of a different grammar. They are not wrong, but different. It shows that SAIE is, in no structural sense, inferior to ‘Standard English’. The perceived superiority of ‘Standard English’ must, therefore, be based entirely on social factors and characteristics.

There is, as always, much potential for further research. A syntactic analysis of the characteristic features of SAIE would provide interesting insight into this unique variety

of English such as the nature of negative non-subject wh-questions that lack T-to-C movement, for example *Why you didn't ask me?* Further research could include an investigation into and an analysis of a tag question phenomenon that I have observed involving the use of 'isn't' as a generic tag question. For example, 'The deadline is at 12, isn't?', 'They're coming this afternoon, isn't?', 'You got that email, isn't?'.

The study of the grammar of SAIE would draw attention to the fact that it is a legitimate variety of English in its own right. Furthermore, it would establish SAIE as a legitimate object of study, which could potentially lead to this variety being accepted as a legitimate L1 variety of English. Further study could be conducted into other non-standard L1 (rather than non-standard L2) varieties of English that arose in former British colonies to establish if any patterns – whether sociolinguistic or syntactic – emerge that provide insight into the relationship between language and society, or insight into the internal structure and functioning of natural language.

Considering variation within the grammar of one variety may have interesting implications for syntactic theory. For example, attempting to account for the phenomena observed in sentences (2), (35) and (60)<sup>59</sup> in terms of internal variation within the grammar of SAIE, rather than in terms of switching between SAIE grammar and 'Standard English' grammar may provide insight into the possibility that variation within one grammar exists. Expanding on the examination of the grammar of SAIE presented in this dissertation, it would be fruitful to investigate Yes/No questions that lack T-to-C movement in SAIE, such as 'You bought cheese, Farouk?' (Mesthrie 1995: 257) in terms of the T-system in SAIE. Further potential for additional research is the possibility of examining the process of standardisation of English in South Africa, taking into consideration all the varieties of English in South Africa. Research of this nature may lead to a relatively comprehensive description of South African English and establish whether or not a 'Standard' South African English exists in some form. The examples of hate speech that I collected also present an opportunity for further research into continued

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<sup>59</sup> (2) When you did that?...When did you do that?  
(35) What I must say?...Hello? What must I say?  
(60) Where you are?...no seriously, where are you?

expressions of racial prejudice in South Africa that undermine efforts at creating unity and harmony in a relatively new democracy.

It would be worthwhile to conduct similar research to that on which this dissertation is based with a broader spectrum of participants. The participants in this research were all university students, and therefore more likely to be aware of language issues than many people engaged in other kinds of employment. Moreover, having reached a certain level of education, it is highly likely that the participants' language attitudes have been influenced by an education system that favours the 'Standard'.

Having noted the mention of 'slang' in a number of interviews, I feel that it would be expedient to investigate the phenomenon of slang among speakers of SAIE, particularly as it pertains to in-group identification and the covert prestige associated with non-standard varieties of English.

Language attitudes are a medium through which negative attitudes towards groups of people can be openly expressed. They encode negative value judgments about the speakers of the language or variety being targeted, and can lead to discrimination. The 'Standard English' debate should not be disregarded as an inconsequential debate about 'good' and 'bad' grammar, but should be taken seriously in order to create awareness of the ideological nature of the debate, and its use as a means through which prejudice and negative value judgments can be expressed, maintained and perpetuated, and thereby prevent discrimination.

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## **APPENDIXES**

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## APPENDIX ONE: CORPUS

### Section one: wh-questions

#### WHEN

1. When y'all got back?
2. ~When you did that?...when did you do that?
3. When you found out?
4. When she left?
5. When they got engaged?
6. When I can fetch it?
7. When I must come?
8. When you went there last time?
9. When she said that?
10. When it was?
11. When you finished your degree?
12. When you got your license?
13. When you got together?
14. When you stopped smoking?
15. When she's coming back?
16. When she fixed it?
17. When you phoned me?
18. When you'll be finished?
19. When I talk like that?

#### WHAT

20. What time you close today?
21. What I said?
22. What time I should get there?
23. What you want?
24. What you bought?
25. What she said to you?
26. What I must do now?
27. What you did?
28. What games they played?
29. What time you finished?
30. What you did that for?
31. What time we must be there?
32. What you want it for?
33. What you saved it under?
34. What I must do with this page?
35. ~What I must say?...HELLO... What must I say?
36. What else I want?
37. What time you came?
38. What time you were there?
39. What I'm doing?

40. What you want them to do?
41. What he doing?
42. What they was doing?
43. What they did?
44. What you told him?
45. What colour you saw?

### HOW

46. How long I must wait?
47. How you got here?
48. How much it cost?
49. How long y'all have been together?
50. How you did that?
51. How you made it?
52. How it went?
53. How long it took you?
54. How long you lived there?
55. How you didn't see that?
56. How you know that?
57. How he knew?
58. How I must know what to do?

### WHERE

59. Where you are?
60. ~Where you are?...no seriously, where are you?
61. Where you found it?
62. Where you were yesterday?
63. Where you left your phone?
64. Where you bought that skirt?
65. Where you went to school?
66. Where you went?
67. Where you saw him?
68. Where you learnt that?
69. Where she's living?
70. Where it is?
71. Where I must go now?
72. Where I must meet you?
73. Where you think they're making the money?
74. Where I was?

### WHO

75. Who you waiting for?
76. Who you spoke to?
77. Who you saw?
78. Who you were speaking to?

79. Who you talking to?
80. Who you saw last night?
81. Who I must speak to?
82. Who you gave the book to?

### WHY

83. Why you were late?
84. Why you didn't come to me?
85. Why you left it so late?
86. Why you don't wear them?
87. Why you don't like him?
88. Why you did that?
89. Why you didn't fix it?
90. Why you said that to him?
91. Why you slept late?
92. Why they ran away?
93. Why you didn't tell me?
94. Why you don't eat pork?
95. Why you never called me back?
96. Why you going so far?
97. Why you didn't close the door?
98. Why so long you took?
99. Why you left it there?
100. Why you didn't wait for me?
101. Why you don't read the paper?
102. Why you didn't phone me?

### WHICH

103. Which one you want?
104. Which book she said she likes?
105. Which one you chose?
106. Which way I must go?
107. Which line I must stand in?
108. Which one I should choose?
109. Which one he said I must take?
110. Which one you going to have?
111. Which bag you left it in?

**Total: 111**

*~second sentence more emphatic*

## Section Two: Yes/No Questions

1. You bought cheese, Farouk?  
(Did you buy Cheese, Farouk?)
2. You bought the car?  
(Did you buy the car?)
3. You want to start trouble?  
(Did you want to start trouble?)
4. You arrived on time?  
(Did you arrive on time?)
5. You told him when to come?  
(Did you tell him when to come?)
6. You ate all the rice?  
(Did you eat all the rice?)
7. You know where to go?  
(Do you know where to go?)
8. You`re hungry?  
(Are you hungry?)
9. You went to the doctor?  
(Did you go to the doctor?)
10. You left it behind?  
(Did you leave it behind?)
11. You`re not finished yet?  
(Aren`t you finished yet?)
12. She said something?  
(Did she say something?)
13. She told anyone?  
(Did she tell anyone?)
14. You booked tickets?  
(Did you book tickets?)
15. You`re on a diet?  
(Are you on a diet?)
16. He left you any?  
(Did he leave you any?)
17. He bought you something?  
(Did he buy you something?)
18. You typed it all out?  
(Did you type it all out?)
19. You heard what he said about you?  
(Did you hear what he said about you?)
20. You saw it yesterday?  
(Did you see it yesterday?)

## **APPENDIX TWO: TRANSCRIPTIONS**

It is important to note that the transcriptions do not appear in full. I have included only those sections of the interviews that are relevant to this research. I have not included the sections of the transcriptions where the discussion has gone off topic, or where the participant has simply said 'I don't know'. Some of the transcriptions are longer than others because some of the participants had more to say than others, or said more that was relevant to the topic. No statement, answer or comment that could change the meaning of the Participants' responses has been omitted.

In the transcriptions 'R' stands for *researcher*, i.e. myself, 'P' stands for *participant*, and 'RA' for *research assistant*.

### **Section One: Written Data**

#### **Interview One**

R: Ok, so if you don't use this kind of grammatical construction, like 'where you are?' Who does?

P: Umm, I have heard umm, many, of...I'm used to Indian South African language construction. So there's a lot of grammatical errors in the way, umm, Indian South Africans speak and it's usually things like that. 'Where you are?'. Umm... [unclear] because some people can say it but err...it's not very common. It's usually in communities where people haven't really been fully educated.

R: ...Because in my thesis what I'm actually arguing is that it's not incorrect. It's a feature of a particular dialect of English that is spoken in South Africa. Ummm, so it's, like, a feature of their specific grammar. So I'm arguing that it's not incorrect. But in your opinion, like, if you were to hear somebody say *that* you'd think it was incorrect.

P: I would.

R: Ok. Alright so and you don't use these kinds of constructions yourself?

P: No.

R: And that's because, and you think people who do are, ummm...less educated?

P: Well, ah. I would say that I'm a kind of an academic snob in that sense, but I will never judge a person on their, their language use. Ummm...I know on campus we

ummm...pick a lot on Indian dialect, because it's just something we do because we can 'cause of being Indian and knowing the situation, we can make humour out of it. But I would think that a person who actually uses that kind of language would be offended if we had to pick on them in front of them. But ummm it is kind if ummm a snobbish kind of thing but people who speak proper English, ummm do think less of people who don't.

R: So do you think that if I were to ask some people about this particular sort of construction, they would be offended?

P: People who use it would be offended. Like, an example would be, I think in my second year class, we were talking about the Raj and Raj tu adverts. A lot of Indians were offended by the fact that these two white men who are picking on err...Indian accents and that no one speaks like that but people actually do and err...people who do speak like that refuse to acknowledge the humour in it.

R: So if I were to...like, explain the arguments to you about it not being ungrammatical in English it's just grammatical in a particular dialect, what would you think?

P: ...well people understand what you're saying even if it's grammatically incorrect so I don't think it's a problem as such but ummm...but as for it being ungrammatical I don't think it's speech that matters, I mean obviously if you're gonna use it in research it would err, be an error and if you use language like that over and over again then obviously there would be red marks all over your work. But in speech it's quite fine because people actually get it.

R: So ummm...what kind of, what would you describe as, like, proper English?

P: Oh...that's a difficult one. Umm...well in my view I think that people outside England actually speak better English than they adhere to. So ummm it's really hard to define. 'cause ummm...within a specific location people understand different types of English and to umm just say...a white person who says ummm...fith instead of fifth. Ummm...it's something that is correct to them. You can't really define proper English because it's been lost in translation so to speak over so many years.

R: So ummm...what do you understand by the phrase 'Standard English'?

P: Standard English would be ummm...basic school English. Ummm...there can't be a Standard English over err...so many cultures as stands in South Africa because um, South African English is littered with err, so many words from the other languages of that specific culture that are just thrown in, like, we can say that something's lekker and it'll still be seen as speaking English. Umm but in actual fact it's Afrikaans. So there's no such thing as Standard English apart from I think apart from writing exams or ja.

- R: And do you think that if somebody were to write, like, these sorts of things write them down, like, submit them in a school test or in a university assignment or something, do you think that they should, be penalized for that? Do you think that people should learn as close to 'Standard English' as they can?
- P: I think as much as humanly possible really taking into consideration your culture. I think at university level they should be penalized but at school level I think they should be corrected.

### **Interview Two**

- R: Umm... so now, who, if you don't use that construction but other people do, who is it that uses it?
- P: Oh, in most of my interaction, Indian people. In using that particular sentence. I'm sure other people do, but mostly Indian people.
- R: Alright. So ummm people who use that sentence, like, what kind of people are they? Does it, ah, have anything to do with education or where people live, or something?
- P: I don't know if they're not educated because I know people who are, have their, their doctor's certificates and they are doctors but they speak wrong English. I think it's also casual, it's easy to use. You don't think about oh 'how am I constructing my sentences' when you talk. So they use it because they really don't consider the fact that they're using the wrong type of English. It's almost, like, slang English you could say. I don't think it means that you're uneducated but obviously you're not the most articulate person if you speak that way.
- R: And ummm so then, what is, like, right English?
- P: Right English is obviously how it is to be written. You know, like, ummm in the dictionary. As in how you pronounce words and English construction of sentences, that's proper English which very few people including myself speak, like, the Queen's English. You could say that's proper English.
- R: Well who do you think speaks that English?
- P: Ok actually, in most instances it's people that are more intelligent because they consider how they come across, and people who are more exposed to that kind of English. Someone who speaks that way is not exposed to people who speak proper English and if you're gonna look at races I would say mostly white people. I don't think I've heard a white person say "How you did that?" because they're more exposed to the proper way to speak English as opposed to any person growing up in Chatsworth - they're exposed to the incorrect pronunciation of words and sentences and stuff.

R: OK. And in, in, like, a school or university environment, when people speak, like, using these types of constructions, do you think that they should be corrected?

P: No, not at all, because the purpose of talking to someone is to communicate, to get the message across, and if a person [unclear] me I know what they mean, I know what they're trying to say, I don't need to correct them. I know what they mean. I think it comes across as a bit arrogant if you were to correct them because they're not gonna change the way they speak for the rest of their lives because you've corrected them. So, I don't think it requires correction at all.

### **Interview Three**

R: Ok cool, so if you don't use these kinds of constructions yourself, who does?

P: Ummm, most Indian people...family members and friends.

R: And is it just, like, across the board, just Indian people in South Africa or does it depend on where they live or their education or...

P: Ummm, it's, I guess it kind of depends on their upbringing and education. Obviously, like, like, the older generation uses it much more than the younger generation. Like, ummm, some of my peers that are Indian, don't use it, whilst ummm, others do. I guess it depends on, you know, which area they come from. Ummm, what kind of school they went to, that kind of thing.

R: Cool. And so what kind of, how would you describe that kind of English? Like, if somebody were to, like, give you the sentence, would you say it's good English or bad English or it's just a dialect of English or it's just English?

P: Ummm, I would say, it's, well my first opinion would be bad English. You know what I mean? Especially when it's, like, grammatically wrong. But, like, it's just, like, part of their, you know, culture, their way of speaking English. You know, so it can't be bad or can't be wrong.

R: Right, right. And so then what is good English do you think?

P: Ummm, the way it's, oh well, I don't know, probably, like, the way it's meant to be spoken, like, you know, grammatically correct English is the good English.

R: Ok ummm, and do you think that you know that in general Indian people in South Africa speak very differently from other people?

P: Definitely!

R: In what way?

P: It's, it's sort of, like, the English language has become their own that, like, it's become their own language. You know they've taken it and, like, you know, done things to it that makes it theirs. Ummm, you know, grammar, like, you know might as well add in that accent and stuff like that. They've, like, changed English to become, like, you know, South African Indian English, you know? And even, like, the difference between the way English is spoken by Indian people in Durban as opposed to Johannesburg or Cape Town is totally different too.

#### **Interview Four**

R: So for question one for example, if you don't use that kind of construction who, who does?

P: Ahhh, well for me, my group of friends or any people I associate with don't usually talk like that, so the only time I've ever seen that is, like, people who are not native to this country.

R: Ok, alright and ah, A?

P: ummm, ja, I, I talk like that.

R: And who else? Like?

P: Ummm, most of my friends, they err, there's a lot of, there's a lot of abbreviations instead of saying the full sentence. You get the same message from using the same amount of words.

R: So what kind of English do you think it is? Do you think its good English, bad English, just English?

P: hmmm...well it's not...it's not...proper English. But it's in its own form understandable, so I would say B. I would go with B.

R: So what's proper English then?

P: Proper English to me is your definition of how you communicate one person to another and your understanding of it. So if you and the person you talking to say can understand quite, quite well what you talking about then I would define that as correct...the definition.

R: hmmm, cool, and so then do you think people who, like, use those kinds of constructions...people who, you know, can be said to speak South African Indian English, do you think that other people discriminate against them in any way because of the way they use English?

P: I think it's not really discrimination more like identification instead of it. I mean it's tolerated. I mean there's no ill responses or there's no [Sigh] there's no

deception. Basically everything is coerced, we. we are tolerated. There's no, there's no really big issue about it.

R: And in, like, a school or university environment, ummm. Do you think that people should be corrected for using these kinds of constructions, like, in written work or spoken, either one?

P: Well, like I said that again, that's, that's the individual's right, you choose how you wanna speak, I mean it's up to someone else to say you don't like it, it's up to you. But I mean identification in the early stage yes but as one grows older one can't really change who they've become. They become less [unclear] so I would guess they are...really up to the person.

R: Ja, and what do you understand from the term 'Standard English?'

P: Standard English? It's what society dictates as staple, as what we all conform to. It's what everybody does.

#### **Interview Five**

R: Ok so now, if you don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do, who uses it?

P: I think that mostly South African Indians use it. A lot.

R: Mmm hmmm... Ja. Alright. And ummm what do you think of, of this construction?

P: I think it's comical. Because it represents sort of, like, a whole kind of misunderstanding because of the way of the construction of English. So ummm just to save the time of having to correct themselves they'd just rather use it. And it becomes more comfortable within them...to use it, so as a sentence it seems fine to them because the person you're talking to understands it and they understand it.

R: And you don't think that it's fine? Do you think it is....?

P: For my personal use, I would not use a grammatical sentence like that.

R: Why?

P: Only in a sort of jokey manner because ummm society is sort of judged upon how well I can speak English, so I'd like to consider myself in that top half. And that, that grammatical construction represents sort of, like, a...almost, like, a...not a corruption of the language but some sort of laziness...or some sort ummm...a language adaption, like, going from the native tongue to English and it just sort of

stuck. And ummm, I don't like to, I mean...I like to show myself as proficient in English, so I wouldn't use a construction like that.

R: Ok. So then, like, what is good English?

P: What is good English?

R: Ja.

P: Ummm... it's acceptable English in the social sphere because some, some grammatical mistakes are allowed to some point while some are sort of, like, frowned upon and others are not frowned upon. So good English means the English that's sort of around you in the category of the people you like to spend time with. For example: academics, or clubbers or friends or whatever. Then it would be ok.

R: And so, like, at varsity or in school or whatever if people speak or write like that, do you think they should be corrected?

P: Nah, I'd giggle and accept it because they have obviously some cultural background to it and ummm and they haven't had any influence otherwise. I mean I probably used to speak like that, then I went to a Model C high school, and then I was, not corrected but I heard it being spoken around me, and people would giggle if I were to speak in that sort of grammatical sentence and I had to influence myself to change it, so I don't really look upon them as, like, inferior or, or as if, like, I should correct them, I just, like, leave them alone.

R: hmmm...and so if, like, you read something, like, that in the newspaper for example, what would you think of that?

P: I would laugh and think it's unprofessional.

R: hmmm ok, unprofessional huh?

P: I think it's very unprofessional, like, for a paper, it's the wrong, the wrong sort of style.

R: Ok, and so what sort of style is it?

P: Well a newspaper's meant to, like, objectively give you these, like, reports and it should be in a business tone, business sort of, it should be sort of formal not sort of conversational that's what magazines and tabloids are for.

R: Ok so this is, like, very informal?

P: This is, like, ja, this is informal. This is sort of...or...or you know work place, it's more like home, friends and whatever if you speak in that ...

RA: You'll notice with the last interview when he was speaking to his friend before he came here, you heard what he said?

R: Ja.

RA: And then when he was here and he was talking to you, he spoke totally differently.

P: Hmmm, it changes...

R: He said, "When I must meet you?" and then in the interview, then his English was really quite formal and he said he doesn't say stuff like that.

P: Oh. Ok. You see because that sort of sets it up as, this sorts of sets it up as a formal space.

R: Ja, it's about recording quality, I wanted it to be very informal, but I needed to be able to hear what you guys are saying, so...Okay, so what do you understand of the term 'Standard English'?

P: Standard English? That's those rigid norms they use at school - where they try to teach you how to talk English.

R: Ok so who decides what is good English and what's bad English?

P: Well the first instance is your parents do [unclear] and will correct you when you say something wrong. Second will be your teachers and third will be your peers.

R: And then, like, you know further out in society and not in your, like, immediate circle of, of acquaintance, like...

P: Who would dictate that?

R: Ja...

P: Ummm...

R: To your parents, say, or your friends?

P: Ummm...possibly the socialites, the business people anyone who uses that sort of language and you pick it up, you hear it, you hear them discussing over the phones or whatever, wherever you go and they'll be the ones who kind of set the standard because they're the ones who are in that sort of position.

R: Hmm...like, positions of power?

P: Positions of power, ja, something, authority figures for instance. We wouldn't expect Thabo Mbeki to use a construction like that in his speech, you would probably not hear that.

R: That's interesting because he's a second language speaker of English.

P: Exactly, exactly.

### **Interview Six**

R: Ok so, you picked B for the fist two sentences.

P: Yes.

R: So if you don't use this kind of construction who does?

P: Ummm, well look, err, the thing is that I think because of my background, I went to a Model C school, not a private school or a government state school but a Model C school which is a mixture of err...students of different incomes whose parents are in different income groups. So err...the sort of education I got err, led me to make that decision because I, don't speak like that but there are, there would've been other people in, in the classroom or people of different backgrounds err, that, that do use that sort of grammar.

R: What sort of backgrounds?

P: Ummm, I would say, I mean I'd just narrow it down to a lower income group, err, which may not have the same quality of education as others.

R: Ok, alright. Ummm, and why don't you use this kind of construction?

P: Well I just, I don't think it's grammatically correct. I, it's, it just doesn't seem like the English that, the type of English that I would use.

R: And have you ever heard of the term South African Indian English?

P: Err, yes. Maybe not in that definition but I, I sort of understand what you're saying.

R: Ok, and, like, so, what do you think of it?

P: Err... the...I think it also comes down to err, income groups to a certain level err, the Indian community, the South African Indian community err, comes from various different backgrounds. You get ummm, the err, Gujarati, the Hindi,

Tamils and err, those particularly are not in any class as such with regards to income groups because you have Tamil people and err, Hindi people in, like, you know, earning phenomenally well salaries and things like that, so it's, it's something that you, you do hear err, from South African Indians

R: But usually from, like, a lower education...

P: Yes, I would say, ja.

R: Right. And if somebody were to use this kind of construction in school for example or at university whether they say it or write it down, what do you think should happen?

P: Well, I mean, you can't really slap them on the wrist and say it's wrong can you...

[laughter]

R: No, I suppose not...

P: I mean some people err, some people it's, it's just the way they were brought up. It's, it's... they, to them that, that's right. That's the way they were taught and that's the way their parents spoke at home and that's the way they were brought up and they feel that that's right because that's what they were exposed to. What I was exposed to was something different so I feel that what I'm saying is grammatically correct. And err; I think it basically comes down to that.

R: So ummm... do you think there's such a thing as South African Indian English? Like, something you can define as that dialect.

P: Err, yes I, I, I would say that I, I wouldn't really know how to describe it, it's a bit difficult. But I would say that you can, you can categorize it as a kind of...dialect that is not the err, you know, like, it's got a bit of slang and, like, I'm sure you might know err, like, some plays that are produced and, and shown at Suncoast cinemas err, these err, these err, stories about err, South African Indians in the past and their experiences when they came to South Africa and things like that. You'll also see that, that the type of language that is used in these plays err, tries to mimic this sort of err dialect to a certain extent.

R: Ja. And do you know what 'Standard English' is?

P: Standard English?... I would...

R: What in your mind does the term mean to you?

P: Standard English would err, to me err, I would say it's something that is universally accepted in every country as understandable to you know a normal person who knows English.

R: And do you think that people should learn 'Standard English'?

P: Yeah, I think it's very important.

R: Why?

P: Ummm, because err, to be able to communicate. I mean I went to, I went to Europe I err, I don't err, I don't speak French. I had a problem when I was in Switzerland which is err, dominantly French speaking err, city err, country and err, there I thought to myself, yeah you know God, it would be so much easier if these people just spoke English. Err, some level of English. I think some level of English is important.

#### **Interview Seven**

R: Ok so you would use a construction like 'why you wouldn't bring it?' yourself?

P: Yep.

R: And one is 'where it is?' and you don't use that kind of, like, what's the difference between those two sentences?

P: ...um...

R: A difference between one and two, I mean. 'cause in two you say you use that kind of thing and in one you say that you don't use it but other people do, so is there a difference between the two?

R: Ummm, I don't know. It's just, I guess it depends on the way you speak English.

R: Ok, alright so what kind of people do you think use those kinds of constructions?

P: Ummm, maybe older people, like, ummm, my great granny, she would say something like that, because young people are more prone to speaking English because we don't speak our native languages all the time. Some people don't even know what it is. Ja, so that's right.

R: Oh ok. And ummm...do you think that Indian people in South Africa speak English very differently from other kinds of people?

P: No...well for some people. like old people, maybe

R: Really? Like, in what way?

P: Ummm...for example, the second sentence 'why you didn't, why didn't you bring it, why you didn't bring it?' it's a totally different, I think it's because when you speak in, like, we speak Tamil, that's your native language, but when we speak, if you listen to my granny speak it or something, it sounds like similar to Afrikaans where you put, the sentence construction is different. So I think when they speak English, even the older people, they speak English the way they would speak Tamil. The sentence construction is different.

R: So what's your first language?

P: English.

R: Ok, Cool. And ummm, do you know what a dialect is? Like what, what does it mean to you?

P: Roughly?

R: Ja.

P: Well not really. But I know it's got to do with grammar and the way you speak and language.

R: Cool and -

P: - It depends on, like, which part of the country you live in and how it affects the way you speak.

R: Ja, okay. So, what do you think of this kind of English?

P: I don't think anything's wrong with it because I know it very well. In an area that's predominantly Indian so lots of people speak that way, it's common.

R: Ummm, do you know, like, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Standard English?

R: Ja.

P: The English that people in your, like, community or area speak.

R: And ummm. do you think that 'Standard English' is different to South African Indian English?

P: No, the way it's taught in schools. it's just different.

R: It's just different [pause]. And do you think that if somebody were to use South African Indian English, like, in an essay or any university context do you think they should be corrected or just left to use it how, using it however they like?

P: I don't know... not really sure. I mean we speak English the way we speak it. And other people speak it differently but we don't speak it the way it should be spoken, so if you mean it in that context then yes.

R: How do you think it should be spoken?

P: Well, the way that it's supposed to be spoken, the way that it's taught to be spoken.

R: oh, ok cool. And so do you think people should learn 'Standard English', if they don't speak it?

P: Ummm, yes, cause English is, like, the language of the world. You have to know to speak English and you've got to understand it.

R: Ja, ja. And do you think that people who don't speak 'Standard English', do you think that other people, like...look down on them or view them negatively? Do you...

P: They think that you aren't educated.

R: Ok and that is not the case?

P: Not the case.

R: No, it's not the case at all.

### **Interview Eight**

R: So if you don't use them, who does?

P: People in the area. People who have been...like family sometimes friends, depending on the area that you come from. I don't know, I found it, like, certain areas people speak in certain ways and in, that what I found it, like, depending on the areas that people come from and depending on their background and the way that they're brought up, like, when they are traditional background to a more, like, modernized background, how they speak. That's how I found people go with their language. And also, like, the way their parents speak they tend to err follow suit.

R: Oh, ok. And so does it have to do with their education necessarily?

P: Sometimes it does because, like, some people have the err, like, what we call the luck of going to better schools than some other kids because err, like, some

schools although it's government some are better than the others depending on, on, like, the facilities that have been given to them and stuff so it does depend, like, on your, your friends in school because you pick up most children from an early age pick up from their school. You take two kids from a, like, going to a Model C private school to, to different types of government schools and you'll see the difference between all three because in government schools, like, I said it differs with the, the type of education that, because with some teachers they give it their all, whereas some teachers don't really care, they're just there to get it done and get paid and go home. They don't worry about you.

R: Ja. Ummm so, ja do you think that, that South African Indian people speak English very differently from other kinds of people in South Africa?

P: I think everybody speaks English differently. Like, if you compare it, a Durban Indian will sound totally different from a Cape Coloured but if you take a Cape Coloured and you take a Durban Coloured and you're therefore coloured but they speak total different English and then In...uh...In-Indians in Pretoria have a different, like, err [unclear] to their language, they're more, like, sophisticated in their, in their English and my cousin speaks totally different to all of us and she's been living in Pretoria for about eight years and then err... and then there's those who put on an accent... [laughs]

R: What kind of accent?

P: They have, like, a special accent... I don't know [Laughing]. I always find it when, like, they answer the telephone that's when you get the accent. I'm serious you get this, like, you know, like, normal, normal, normal and then the phone rings and they're, like, Hello [in an accent]. [Laughs again]. I always find that funny so it's like that.

R: And you laughed when you read the, the second sentence, why is that funny?

P: Because ummm, like, my gran lives in Unit Eleven and that's, like, Chatsworth and she has a lot of old friends that come over and I stayed a year with her and I hear her and her old friends talking and they talk like that, they talk like that and they talk loud and the fact that they all can't hear each other, they talk like that. They have their little err. language and the, the way they speak and it's, like, broken English with Hindi. You know don't specifically just speak English. They, when they don't want you to hear what they're saying they speak Hindi but they, like, mix up the Hindi with the English.

R: And so do, do younger people, like, sort of our generation of people ever speak like that?

P: Like the second one?

- R: Ja.
- P: Err... some people do. From the...I, I believe they do, but they don't know it they just sometimes do it unconsciously.
- R: So and if they did realise that they were speaking like that then what would they do?
- P: I don't know they just, like, sometimes they, like, change or they just, like, continue as normal, they just continue, it, like, happens unconsciously most of the time because, like, err, when they go back to the families and stuff like that because that's how their families speak and you get used to it and you just go with it.
- R: And what do you think people think of people who speak like that?
- P: Sometimes people laugh and find it funny and sometimes they mock them but then it all depends on the individual whether they get insulted or they take it with a pinch of salt. I just laugh because its funny and I don't understand sometimes and I'll be, like, hmmm...and I'll most probably be agreeing to things that I don't even know what I'm agreeing to. That usually happens when I talk to my cousins and she and the other guys will be, like, in their little slang and I'll be, like...ja.
- R: I have no idea what you're saying -
- P: - what you saying but I agree with you one hundred percent.
- R: Ok so do you think, like, what do you, what do you think of the term 'Standard English', like, what does it mean to you?
- P: There's no such term as Standard English. Because there are so many types of English if, like, depending on how the person speaks because, like, there err, you call, like, South African English and then you have English people English they sound different then you have people in America talking English and they sound different so I don't think that there's, like, a standard type of English it's just the fact that people understand each other that makes it English that people know what they're saying.

### **Interview Nine**

- R: So, ja, so the kind of constructions that we're looking at here, like, if you use them, like, what other kinds of people use them, other English speakers?
- P: I mean, like, a lot of my friends would, would speak in the way, like, that is kind of ummm, what's the word...efficient, you know, like, I mean, we don't really, for questions like this, like, you wouldn't really (long pause) you wouldn't really go on about it, like, 'hey what time do you close?' or, you know, it's pretty, like,

laid back and chilled and no one really, like, worries about that kind of grammar, like, during the day, like, it takes a lot of I mean, like, obviously in an academic setting you would worry about that kind of thing but it takes a lot of energy to, like, and I know it's probably, like, 'where is it' is only three words compared to 'where's that' is only two words but just, like, during the day and just during life you just...shorten everything.

R: Cool, ummm so, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: Ummm, ok, well, I mean, I know, I was thinking about that and, ummm, that Corsa ad and, like, and, like, at first, like when it came out, like, my friends and I were, like, 'are we supposed to find that, like, you know, like, racially, like, you know, not cool and I was, like, I don't know, like, I guess it's fine except for that laughter, like, at the end. You're, like, you know, and then you're, like, are they laughing at us or are they laughing because it's funny? And the thing is, like, especially with, like, language, especially with our past and all that, everyone is, like, so on edge, you know? And it's, like, but what did you mean by that? Hey you see the girl, she's, she's black...and she's umm, oh she's black! But no, no, no, I'm, I just mean, I'm describing her to you, you know, and the thing is, like, you put so much emphasis on words and, and, and instead we should, like, change, like, the stigmas, and the connotations attached to those words. So, like, our intentions are known, like, my intention for saying she's black was so I could describe her to you so I could find her, you know. And I think it's mainly because this is South Africa and everything we've been through and it's so easy to offend everyone and that's the whole thing about, like, being politically correct, like, I think it's nonsense. Honestly because, like, we put so much energy into, like, consciously you know, ok we have to say this and this is what I need when instead we should just, like, get our true intentions across, like, no one's out to get anyone, I'm just trying, I'm just trying to, like, communicate with you but, like, communication is so hard these days because I don't know because that's the thing, like, I don't know if it's ok to say 'oh no, like, he's white' or 'she's black', 'she's Indian' or 'she's coloured'. Like, I don't know because it's such a tense setting and it makes everyone so hypersensitive. We have such a hypersensitive society.

R: And do you think that people sort of, like, target language in that way, like, they attach a stigma to certain types of language?

P: Exactly, exactly, no, no they do and ummm, also ummm, like, within, like, Indian communities, like, even, I don't know if you guys went to that comedy show, Sugar Sammy or whatever anyway there's this guy from Canada down who's Indian but he's from Canada and anyway it's your typical, like, you know jokes about Indians and the way they speak because you know we get, like, different and, like, people associate that with, like, their level of education and you get, like, certain stigmas attached to people, especially in the Indian community, like, if you come from that part or if you come from that part then you know you're a

certain kind of person and ummm, you find, well I find a lot but, like, people who come- 'cause, like, if you say, like, 'oh she's from Phoenix' it's, like, it's horrible but 'oh she's, like, that' or 'she's, like, that' they look down on them and it is because they do speak in a certain kind of way and some people associate that with, like, you know, their education not being up to board or whatever but we judge so many people just from the time they open their mouth so language is very important but you know we have to have that understanding of, like, the reasons behind it and, and maybe not be so judgmental.

R: So what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Standard English...ummm, maybe just ways of communicating so it's kind of understood by the majority.

R: Ok, cool, and do you think that South African Indian English is very different from 'Standard English'?

P: Ummm, I mean not really, like, I mean, maybe - when it, like, comes to, like - 'cause with my little brother he doesn't...like, little thugs and, like,- you- like if I had to, like, speak to him I wouldn't really understand what he was saying because they use a lot of, like, colloquialisms and a lot of slang ummm, because he said- I was speaking to them on Saturday night and he was, like, ja, no, I, like,- he said up goy. I 'up goy' or something like that. which means he threw up and after that he was continuously talking to me, like, but what does that mean? Beside the, beside the slang and that I think it's, it's pretty much easy to communicate with Standard English [pause] Indian language.

R: And so, like, in a university context or whatever do you think people should, like, be, like, corrected if they use, like, constructions like we looked at earlier or...

P: Mmm, I don't really think it's, like, a major issue. Ummm, I mean, like, I noticed I did it the other day it was so irritating but I, I, like, correct people if they not correct everybody but people, like, I know, like, 'oh no that's not how you say it' or 'but that's not really' but, but that's because I was doing essays the whole week and you gotta, like, try and get out of that mode because it becomes a bit irritating. You know, like, everyone just, like, especially on this campus, like, compared to, like, other campuses and stuff, everyone's pretty much, like, chilled out and you know just speak and wanna hear the...um... and try to speak out in a way that everyone understands but then again there's that whole thing about, like, ummm, having some kind of language that is exclusive to, like, your posse. And, you know, like, people always appreciate that and it's nice to feel like you belong in that certain kind of you know sector or...

### **Interview Ten**

P: It's sad.

R: What's sad?

P: that people speak like that.

R: Why's it sad?

P: Personally the way I speak is the way it feels best to me, ummm, just the way it flows. It just feels more natural. And something like 'When you got your license' just doesn't feel right to me. Ummm, it may be correct, I'm not exactly sure about that but it just, I get a bit finicky, like, about things like that, it's just me.

R: Ja, lots of people have that sort of thing. Ummm, so who- what other English speakers use constructions like "Where you got your license?"

P: Ummm, I'd imagine most people actually, because now that I'm looking at it, well, actually thinking about it, it's pretty ummm, its everyday use. Like, when people ask 'when you got your license' how did you know this and stuff like that. I would say 'when you went to get your license' but...

R: Ok, and, and 'what I must say?' does that make a difference?

P: Errm, again that one, just similar reason, it just doesn't sound right to me, it just doesn't flow, flow with me correctly.

R: Ok, so there's, like, no, no real, like, particular group of English speakers in the country that you could say uses these kinds of constructions. Like 'where you are?'.

P: Ummm, well it's gotten to the stage where most people actually speak like this. I think ummm, because people for who English isn't a first language ummm, first language Zulu speakers or something, like, that would pick up a lot of ummm, habits and things, the way they speak English from the people around them or TV or something. Ummm, so things, like, that would become part of their language and then ummm, well Indian speakers they don't particularly care about their English, I mean half the time you really don't know what they're saying unless you're actually from the same area as them. Ummm, the other half, most of the languages in it are mainly slang. It's, again slang's are not generally understood unless you're from the same area.

R: So if you're gonna look at these kinds of constructions and, say, put them down to second language English speakers or English speakers in South Africa. Ummm, like, if you were to choose, like, a pole from positive to negative from you this kind of English...

P: I'm a [unclear] so I'm gonna say negative.

- R: Ok right, so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?
- P: Ummm, a lot of slang, a lot of ummm, more colloquial obviously. Stereotypically funny accents. Mainly a hell of a lot of slang. Ummm, yeah, South African English is...
- R: And do you think South African Indian English and South African English are two different things?
- P: [Long Pause]. Again it's because, like, I'm thinking along the lines of how certain areas have, has their own way of speaking, their own accents, their own language, their own slang's and everything. So it's difficult to say because I'm not entirely sure what you mean by South African English.
- R: Ok ummm, I suppose what I mean is just the way people speak English in South Africa as opposed to the way they speak it in Australia or England or America for example. Ja and, you know, how everybody views how different those kinds of Englishes are is entirely, like, a personal thing...So, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?
- P: Ummm, I can't even think about English people now because they speak terribly. Standard English I would imagine is just a, it's just a type of English that's easy to understand by everyone, like, a generic English type thing. So ummm, not too much jargon and stuff like that.
- R: So, if, when you say the English speak English terribly, can you, like, spell it out for me?
- P: Well what I mean is that their accents are less, again from their areas and terrible to understand what they're saying but umm, I don't know. I'm obviously assuming a lot of things. I'm [stutters] I'm just shooting my mouth off but I think their way of speaking is becoming quite corrupted considering that it's their language to start off with. Like, ummm, say someone from Newcastle, I don't know where cockney accents come from; they almost have their own version of English.
- R: And do you think that everyone should speak like this 'Standard', like, in a certain way with a certain accent?
- P: No, no that's, I mean that takes away individualism. Ummm, I think everyone should be able to so that they can, so everyone can relate and not even necessarily English. Ummm, it could be Spanish or French or something because I'm sure they have the same problems, if you wanna call it problems but ummm, I mean just in the nature of understanding each other and being able to communicate, maybe being, like, obviously having your language you'll speak to everyone

about-with and then being able to still talk to someone from the other end of the planet.

R: So in a university context if somebody were to use, like, these kinds of constructions, do you think they should be penalized or...

P: You talking about ummm, like, in a formal essay or just day-to-day chatting?

R: Ummm, in sort of a formal context or informal, either one.

P: Well informal, nah, I mean it's just talking with your friends or something. So it's no problem. Ummm, formally to learn and to learn a certain subject, you can't really, and if you're going to be studying English or writing an essay or something then you should keep to using proper constructions. 'cause that's part of the point of being marked...to see that you can actually speak the language well, write the language.

R: And who do you think decides what's good and bad English?

P: [Laughs]. It's the same as asking who ummm, like, how, who decided to write the beginning of English would be like that. Ummm, I've actually never really thought about it, things like punctuation, word order, all of that type of stuff, where it all started. And why, it's, like, we just take it for granted, like, that's the right way to do it. Ummm, I guess it just comes down to who's in charge basically.

R: Pretty much. Ok so let's say that there's a dialect, South African Indian English. It exists as a dialect and it has its own grammar and everything. Ummm, let's just say that this is the situation as it stands now in South Africa. Do you think people who use features of that dialect are viewed in any particular way by speakers of other varieties of English?

P: Ummm, possibly but I think that's more to do with how their way of speaking would have to do with their race. Like, stereotypically with Africans, blacks with 'eish' and all of those things and Indians with high pitched, whinny, nasal voice with 'let's vy to Lags and stuff' like that and then white people with their ummm, I don't know how to describe it but the they pronounce their words, like, they won't say 'no' they'll say 'no' I can't actually do it myself. Ummm, because everyone's got their own specific way of speaking but I think it's not, like, ummm, pointing them out and seeing how badly they talk, it's more along the lines of ummm, how the way they talk ties in with their culture and race and things like that. 'cause, I mean, well, our country is quite, well, still hooked up on race and things like that.

## Section Two: Spoken Data

### **Interview Eleven**

R: Ok so, these kind of constructions, can you identify, like, a particular group of people who use English in South Africa who say this sort of thing.

P: Ummm, I think it's it's mostly the Indian race that speaks like that, ummm, I'm not sure why though but I know that I do use these kinds of constructions.

R: Often?

P: Um...I dunno...probably, I guess, I mean, I don't really notice it that much, don't really think about it...

R: So ummm, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: Ummm, well to me it means the way we speak, the manner in which we construct our sentences or the language, not the, not particularly the language but the err, grammar that we use.

R: And ummm, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Ummm, I have no idea... You can just say that it's...um...English, the way you're supposed to talk.

R: Ok, so do you think that people have opinions about the different way that English is spoken by different types of people?

P: Ummm, I don't think so, I don't really have an opinion, this is just the way I speak so there are various people this is the way we are brought up to speak you know. I have no opinion about anybody else and what they you know about the way they speak.

### **Interview Twelve**

R: So what does South African Indian English, the term mean to you?

P: Well, it's just, like, the way Indian people are brought up, their culture, so they learn to speak like that. Not because they have a choice...other people around them speak like that so they learnt it themselves. They picked it up from people around them speaking like that and that's what I think.

R: And do you, does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: Ummm. maybe just the way people are supposed to speak English, like, how the English language is supposed to be spoken.

R: And so do you think that South African Indian English is very different to 'Standard English'?

P: Err, not really, I don't think so. I don't see any big difference. Maybe they just leave out some words or add some words, ja, but it's not much of a difference.

### **Interview Thirteen**

R: What does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: Ja, I think it's, like, err, like, the type of English that we you learn, like, as you growing up or something, like, err, your type of family, like, the area which you come from, ja. Like, if you grow up in Chatsworth or something and you go to an Indian school and then you'll speak like that.

R: Ok, and 'Standard English'?

P: Ok, ja. That's, like, English, like, a universal language. Something like that.

R: So and do you think that they're very different?

P: From other types of English?

R: From other types of English ja.

P: It depends how you speak. Like, if you, like, over here they have, like, certain words, like, maybe other people in other countries, like in England they wouldn't understand. Ja.

R: And do you think that's a problem?

P: No, you can speak, like, err, like, in a more simpler way so if you go there you don't have to talk like how you talk here.

### **Interview Fourteen**

R: Ok, so ummm, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: South African Indian English?

R: Mmm hmmm.

P: Ummm. it's a combination of English broken down into simpler forms of English because English is not, is not the only language in South Africa, there's other dialects and I'm sure Indians break down language and don't use the full extent of the word.

R: And, and does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: Standard English?

R: Ja.

P: I mean they all speak [unclear] standards, like, everyone speaks English.

R: D'you think that, ummm, that compared to whatever 'Standard English' is that people in South Africa speak English very differently?

P: Yes, ummm, some people speak English but say English was in a sentence but use another language words in that sentence as well, like, you would say, you would use Afrikaans words and English words in a sentence or Zulu words and English words in a sentence.

R: Ja, and do you think that people, like, judge other people on how they speak?

P: Yes, ummm, if people don't speak proper English they think they are lower class or even have a low status but if you speak really proper English it goes with a higher status or they're rich.

### **Interview Fifteen**

R: Ok so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: I think it's quite a racist comment.

R: Ok.

P: I think that there's a lot of different groups of people [unclear] broken speech. You know, err, I don't know if it's really specific, maybe it can be, you can sort of locate it in within a specific racial structure. But ummm, you know, you, you just get people that live in certain areas and just speak a certain way.

R: Ok, so you think the label is racist?

P: Ja it's pretty racist. It's pretty segregated. It's pretty, like, Indians speak differently...

R: Ok. And does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: Yeah, it does. Standard English because I'm studying intercultural communication... so err, they, they, they spoke to use about pres-, pres-prescriptive and purist ways of speaking and the standard way of speaking English and so it means that everyone should speak English the same way and there should be a standard. So there should be a standard if people want to

communicated with each other because you, you do get a lots of people who are-but, but that's where slang comes in there you see. You get lots of people that hang out with certain groups and they speak a certain way and other people speak a different way and if you don't have any interaction with these other groups it's pretty difficult trying to work out what they trying to say but that's, like, across the board because we speak English differently here than say to America or England in a sense of what do they mean when they say certain things it's not exactly the proper, like, it's not the denotation it's the connotation that you have to know the catch to it to know exactly what they saying.

R: Ja. So people attach, like, opinions and values to language...

P: Certain words and that's the way it might not be so standardized but sometimes you might hear something that's not actually, like, proper English, like, you know, like, what the fuck is this – but, like, if you look at a way where people talk about getting high, you hear people say 'I got blazed' 'high', 'wrecked', or you know then the other words for, like, a hangover, 'barbie', getting 'wrecked', 'wasted', 'shattered' you know it's, like, all different ways of saying you tired and also you know what I had a rough night out or also I got wasted on drugs or whatever it is. Ja, so they are different sort of connotations. If I go to somebody and say ja you know what I'm goofed and normally when I say that I mean you know what I'm really, really tired. I'm tired. I'm out of it. But certain people would think that, you know, what I'm high off dope. You understand? So it's...

R: And do you think people, like, judge other people by the way that they speak?

P: Of course! That's why you're doing something called South African Indian English. 'cause you think there is a difference.

R: Do you not think that there's a difference?

P: Not really huh? I really think that it's, it's, it's more, it's, it goes deeper than that, it's across the board, it's across the board and how do you decide which one's the standard and which one isn't because I'm err, I'm an English speaker who's defined as, as Indian and I'm a first language English speaker.

### **Interview Sixteen**

R: So does the term South African Indian English mean anything to you?

P: Yes it does.

R: What does it mean?

P: Ummm, improper English err, Hindi speaking err, what language exactly you talking about?

R: English.

P: Just English?

R: Yes.

P: Ja, it's just improper English.

R: Ok, so what's proper English?

P: Err, no slangs and proper grammar.

R: Ok and what does 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Casual English, I guess. Just normal speaking.

R: Ok and do you think that South African Indian people speak differently to other kinds of people in South Africa?

P: Yes.

R: Very differently?

P: Um, it depends but generally yes.

R: Ok and do you think that people make, like, value judgments or have opinions about other people...

P: Stereotypes?

R: Ja, based on their language...

P: Yes. Their stereotypes.

R: Ok so for example, like, what is the stereotype for South African Indian English?

P: Ummm, (long pause) let me think... well, ummm, it's, it's, it's similar to the culture. They, they, they, they... how can I explain?... Well, they, they, they also generalize it with the people in their area so people from Phoenix speak differently compared to people in Chatsworth. So I guess it's a little bit, like, that as well, but ummm, it depends, you can't really be stereotyped. It, It's not everybody in Chatsworth speaks a certain way or speaks with swearing and slang, vulgar languages but ummm, I don't know, I can't give you much details.

### **Interview Seventeen**

R: Ok cool. So B, so if you don't use this construction who does?

- P: Ummm, do you want me to be really, really honest?
- R: Yes please.
- P: Ok well it's, a lot of Indian people will use it but depending on what area you come from or what school you went to that's where you hear it a lot.
- R: Ok cool, so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?
- P: I think when people use it, they use it to refer to a certain group of Indian people depending on where they come from. I don't think you can just say South African Indian English because you get South African Indians in Joburg who don't use that English really.
- R: Ok, fair enough. And 'Standard English'?
- P: Standard English. I don't know, I guess it's what you learn in school. How I speak 'cause I went to an ex-Model C school maybe, I don't know.
- R: Ok cool. And ummm, do you think people, like, make judgments about other people, like...
- P: Yes.
- R: About how they speak?
- P: Yes.
- R: Ok so for example somebody who uses the kind of constructions that we're using as example here.
- P: I think one...well...people will perhaps judge them or look down on them if you come from a different school, or you know a different upbringing and also those people - I know I take a lot of flak because you can get told 'oh. you talk like a white' or you talk a certain way because I don't use those constructions so it works both ways.

### **Interview Eighteen**

- P: Another thing is a lot of people on this campus, their parents don't have the education per say that we do and when they spend a lot of time during the holidays with their parents they tend to speak like their parents. I know I start to speak like my mum, like, 'it's paining'. On campus I would never use - I've got a degree in English, right? And I would never use that word ordinarily. Like, err, my friend M you know M, she tends to say ummm, 'has' like 'as' right? She only uses she only uses the word 'as'. Other than that her English is perfect. But she

just changes when she spends too much time with her parents because her parents speak like that. They also miss it's just the 'h', that's the only thing and they only do it with the word 'as' that's it.

R: Ok so, so if, if you hear it a lot but you don't use it then who does?

P: My boyfriend, I should bring in now that he lives in Merebank so...ummm, my parents. Not so much my dad but my mum, even though her, her dad is a principle or an ex-principle who taught English. Her grammar is ridiculous.

R: So the term South African Indian English, does it mean anything to you?

P: It does but I figure that there's two dialects. The one that's spoken in the English medium which is the correct way of speaking and the other is adapted from ummm, the Indian vernacular. Especially if you directly translate and you're starting words in switching places. Direct translations get messed up - the, the tense and everything, so I, I don't really blame it on the people. It's not that they're stupid, it's just that they're changing it as best they can.

R: And does the 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: It does but in different contexts. Should I explain that? Standard English for the varsity I think about academic English. Like, you cannot submit an academic essay or an academic piece of writing the way a person speaks ordinarily. There's a distinction between the two. But English Standard in terms of speaking to my family, there's some words that I cannot use. Like, if I say dodgy in front of my dad, not cool. If I say something- in fact my dad corrects our English a lot, to the extent that if you don't know the meaning of the word 'oh, bring the dictionary'. So you've got to go find the dictionary and bring it to him, right? And we have to use the word in context. So he does that a lot but my mum- her idea of Standard English is if I can understand it then you speaking English. And that's as far as it goes.

R: And what is, like, who do you sort of lean more toward? Your dad?

P: Toward my-unfortunately during the holiday season I lean a lot toward my mum to the point that she'll make up a mixed up sentence and I'll totally understand what she's saying and my father and my brother will look at me and say you're spending too much time with mummy. Yeah, I know. But I can understand both sides. So, so if I am during the holiday period, speaking to my mum, sorry to my dad, I will speak to him that way he expects me to speak to him. Not, not the way that my mum does. It depends.

R: And do you think people make, ummm, like, sort of, do you think people judge other people by how they speak English?

P: Totally, all the time.

R: Like, what kind of judgment do they make?

P: My boyfriend has the habit of saying 'should of'...drives me round the bend. There's-from the place that he comes from, the place that he comes from their language is...oi oi oi...it's very - I can understand what they're saying but there's these little things that my mum says that I'm being, that I'm nit-picking about and I'm not nit-picking. I'm used to people speaking in a spec- in a specific way. I don't mean a [unclear] language but my standards...so, but I've gotten out of the habit of correcting people. Very offensive. People find it very offensive. So I mean you don't wanna end up with spaghetti on your hair or something, you know?

R: And ummm, oh, do you think people should be taught how to speak 'Standard English'?

P: No matter what you say, I've gone to school with - gone to primary school, secondary school and tertiary education with the same people who still speak in the English that we...I know that for a fact. And I also know people who have gone to former Model C schools or gone to private schools whose language use- I mean their language use is putrid, it's the only way to describe it -

R: - putrid, okay, wow -

P: -that's the only way to describe it. And they, they put on an accent. No offence but they put on this, this, this heavy accent that, that - how do I put this?... I, I don't know how, how to put this but, they twang a lot. But it's not proper English, I can handle proper English, I don't have a problem with that. But when they were telling me that they were 'look aftering someone' then I'm like ahhhh no! I'm like 'on the light and off the light'? So I'm like huh?! When people talk sometimes you want to say, you know, you got that education, why do that? And if you know that's wrong why keep using it? I have this annoying habit of saying line-age instead of lineage because I break up the words I forget how to spell it, like, half way through. so I gotta remember and that's how I remember things and, err, I get, I get a lot of criticism because I'm the one with the English degree and I'm supposed to know this and I'm, like, hey look I'm not God. I don't know everything. Obviously I'm, I'm human. I make mistakes but ummm, I do get a lot of pressure to speak proper English.

R: And is proper English the same as 'Standard English'?

P: Again highly, highly relative to who's speaking it. Standard English, like, it is with my mum anyone who can freaking understand...fine. Bits and pieces of the sentence she understands perfectly. Its fine. doesn't matter. Two of my closest friends, you know my best friends, both white. One went to Durban Girl's College

the other went to, err, Westville Girls. I sit and I enjoy speaking to them because I know what I, what I say, the words that I use, the content of conversation, something that relates to all of us. If I mention something that I assume was general knowledge, I know that they'll get it. And no one's sitting there, and they won't sit there thinking 'err, what are you talking about?' You get people who do that and it's not because they're stupid it's just- they don't know how to express themselves or they don't know how a person is expressing themselves and they don't know what sarcasm is!

### **Interview Nineteen**

R: Ok, so the term South African Indian English, what does it mean to you? If anything...

P: Mmm, I think it's improper, like, compared to what English people speak. I think it's, like, more, more Indian, like, err, slangs and err, mixed other, like, Indian languages you use. Sometimes we mix our English with err, Hindi or Tamil or whatever and speak.

R: Ok cool. And 'Standard English'?

P: Standard English is... I think Standard English is, like, err, proper English with a bit of slang and it's not, like, err, 100% English, it's, like, err, the English part with slangs and... It's more, like...

RA: Socially acceptable

P: Ja, ja, socially acceptable.

R: And do you think people are judged about the way that they speak? Like, on the basis of how they speak.

P: Ja, I think they do because if you can't speak properly then err, certain people have a lot to say about it. And ja they judge by the way that they speak.

### **Interview Twenty**

R: Ok so, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: What did you say? [laughs]. Well I don't really care about it 'cause everyone just speaks differently and I don't classify it as South African Indian blah, blah, blah. Because there's so many types.

R: Of English?

P: Yes.

R: Ok cool. And 'Standard English'?

P: I don't think it exists, I think there's the basic rules you learn in school but no one actually uses them.

R: Ok, ok interesting.

P: Unless you write an academic essay for English, and I'm failing them drastically, but yes.

R: Other than that. Ja, so, do you think people get judged by the way that they speak English?

P: Yes, but I don't think that it's always in a bad way. I think it's more about putting into groups. Like, if you speak like these people you fit in or you don't fit in, but I also think that in South Africa is so multi-cultural that people are just starting to ride over it. Well, of course it's a big comedy factor but...

R: A comedy factor?

P: Yes.

R: Ok, and is it funny or is it offensive?

P: I don't find it funny- I don't find it funny because I think its lame but I don't find it offensive either.

### **APPENDIX THREE: EXAMPLES OF ANTI-INDIAN LEGISLATION**

1921 *The Durban Land Alienation Ordinance, no. 14 of 1922 (Natal)*

This ordinance enabled the Durban City Council to exclude Indians from ownership or occupation of property in white areas.

1925 *The Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill*

This Bill was passed when D. F. Malan was Minister of Interior. It defines Indians as Aliens in South Africa and recommends that the Indian population be limited through repatriation.

1931 *The Asiatic Immigration Amendment Act*

According to this Act, Indians had to prove the legitimacy of their residence in South Africa.

1944 *The Residential Property Regulation Draft Ordinance*

This Ordinance was designed to restrict Indians to certain specific areas.

1953 *Immigration Registration Amendment Act*

This Act prohibited the entry of Indian women into South Africa, after 15 February 1953, who had been born outside the Union of South Africa and who had married a South African Indian overseas. It further prohibited the entry of minor children of these women into South Africa, without special permission.

#### **APPENDIX FOUR: ANTI-INDIAN HATE SPEECH**

These examples of hate speech were collected in the E.G. Malherbe (Main) library on the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal. They were all found on the back of stall doors in the female Toilets.

##### Ground Floor

1. You Indians, stop writing toilets  
(I assume this means *You Indians, stop writing in the toilets*)

##### Second Floor

2. Indians disgusting race
3. Indians must go back to Kalcutta or wherever and shut the fuck up “Khoolies”

##### Third Floor

4. Go to India or hell Indians
5. Sure you’re a damn Indian go back to your country you fuckers
6. U rule in India not in Africa, this is our country

##### Fourth Floor

7. Go home you fucken bollywood darkie Bombay bastards! Take your Mp3s and shove off!
8. Why is it always Indians who make noise/talk in the library  
- they think they’re interesting

**APPENDIX FIVE: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

***INFORMED CONSENT FORM***

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and I am collecting data for my Masters Dissertation in Linguistics. My study looks at the unique and distinctive way that English is used in South Africa. You have been randomly selected from the English-speaking community on the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Your participation and the data you provide me with are vital to the success of my study, so I am grateful for your help. For the purposes of my study, the interview will be recorded for later transcription. Only my research assistant and I will hear these recordings. Please note that the data that you provide me with will be made available to you should you wish. You will remain anonymous, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time should you wish to do so.

(Please indicate your answer with an X)

1. Have you been adequately informed about the research?
2. Have you had the opportunity to discuss further questions with the researcher?
3. Do you understand that the interview will be recorded for later transcription and analysis?
4. Do you understand that you are free to refuse to answer any questions?
5. Do you understand that you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving your reasons?
6. Do you understand that any information you provide will be treated as confidential?
7. Do you agree to take part in the study?

YES	NO




Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name in block letters, please: .....

---

I confirm that quotations from the interview can be used in the final research report and other publications. I understand that these will be used anonymously

---

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name in block letters, please: .....

Thank you for your time.

Lisa Wiebesiek  
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Department of Linguistics  
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## **APPENDIX SIX: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE & RESPONSE SHEETS**

**STEP ONE:** Present participants with sentences 1), 2) and 3), one at a time either printed on response sheet or presented verbally by research assistant. For example:

- 1) Where you are?
- 2) When you did that?
- 3) Why didn't you tell me?

**STEP TWO:** Present participants with the list of responses from A-D:

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself.
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do.
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it.
- D Nobody would say this

**STEP THREE:** Ask participants to choose a response from A-D for each sentence 1) - 3).

**STEP FOUR:** Ask participants to state clearly the reasons for each response.

**STEP FIVE:** Ask participants some or all of the following questions when necessary:

- a) What type of person uses this kind of grammatical construction?
- b) Why do/don't you use this kind of construction yourself?
- c) Do you think that Indian people in South Africa speak English differently to any body else in South Africa?
- d) Have you ever heard of South African Indian English?
- e) Do you know what a dialect is?
- f) What is 'good' English?
- g) Who decides what is 'good' and what is 'bad' English?
- h) Do you know what 'Standard English' is?
- i) Do you think that 'Standard English' is different to South African Indian English? If so, how?
- j) Do you think people should learn 'Standard English'? If so, why?

**RESPONSE SHEET**

(WRITTEN DATA)

1) Where you are?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) When you did that?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Why didn't you tell me?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

**RESPONSE SHEET**

(SPOKEN DATA)

- 1)    A    I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
      B    I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
      C    I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that  
          some native speakers do use it  
      D    Nobody would say this
- 2)    A    I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
      B    I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
      C    I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that  
          some native speakers do use it  
      D    Nobody would say this
- 3)    A    I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
      B    I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
      C    I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that  
          some native speakers do use it  
      D    Nobody would say this

## APPENDIX SEVEN: COPIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSE SHEETS

### RESPONSE SHEET 1

1) Where you are?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) When you did that?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C** I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Why didn't you tell me?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 2

1) How you did that?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it.
- D Nobody would say this

2) Where you found it?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Where are you?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 3

1) Who you spoke to?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) Why you don't eat pork?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Where were you yesterday?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 4

1) How much it cost?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) When you stopped smoking?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) What did I say?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 5

1) Why you don't like him?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) How you made it?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) When did you finish it?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 6

1) Where you got those?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) How long it took?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Why don't you like him?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

## RESPONSE SHEET 7

1) Where it is?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) Why you didn't bring it?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Who did you speak to?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

## RESPONSE SHEET 8

1) Who you spoke to?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) Where you saw him?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) How long did it take?

- A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

## RESPONSE SHEET 9

1) Why you don't like him?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) What time you close today?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Where is it?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

## RESPONSE SHEET 10

1) What I must say?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

2) When you got your license?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

3) Where did you see him?

- A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
- D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 11

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 12

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself
  - B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do
  - C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it
  - D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 13

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself

- B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this

#### RESPONSE SHEET 14

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
 D Nobody would say this

#### RESPONSE SHEET 15

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
 C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
 B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 16

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 17

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it

D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 18

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
**B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
**B** I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 3) **A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 19

- 1) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
**D** Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
**C** I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 3) **A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

### RESPONSE SHEET 20

- 1) **A** I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do

- C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 2) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this
- 3) A I use this kind of grammatical construction myself  
B I don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do  
C I've never heard anyone use a construction like this, but I would guess that some native speakers do use it  
D Nobody would say this

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## **APPENDIXES**

### LIST OF APPENDIXES

- Appendix One: Corpus
- Appendix Two: Transcriptions
- Appendix Three: Examples of Anti-Indian Legislation
- Appendix Four: Hate Speech
- Appendix Five: Example of Consent Form
- Appendix Six: Example of Interview Schedule and Response Sheet
- Appendix Seven: Copies of Participants' Response Sheets
- Appendix Eight: Map of the greater Durban area

## APPENDIX ONE: CORPUS

### Section one: wh-questions

#### WHEN

1. When y`all got back?
2. ~When you did that?...when did you do that?
3. When you found out?
4. When she left?
5. When they got engaged?
6. When I can fetch it?
7. When I must come?
8. When you went there last time?
9. When she said that?
10. When it was?
11. When you finished your degree?
12. When you got your license?
13. When you got together?
14. When you stopped smoking?
15. When she's coming back?
16. When she fixed it?
17. When you phoned me?
18. When you'll be finished?
19. When I talk like that?

#### WHAT

20. What time you close today?
21. What I said?
22. What time I should get there?
23. What you want?
24. What you bought?
25. What she said to you?
26. What I must do now?
27. What you did?
28. What games they played?
29. What time you finished?
30. What you did that for?
31. What time we must be there?
32. What you want it for?
33. What you saved it under?
34. What I must do with this page?
35. ~What I must say?...HELLO... What must I say?
36. What else I want?
37. What time you came?
38. What time you were there?
39. What I'm doing?

40. What you want them to do?
41. What he doing?
42. What they was doing?
43. What they did?
44. What you told him?
45. What colour you saw?

### HOW

46. How long I must wait?
47. How you got here?
48. How much it cost?
49. How long y'all have been together?
50. How you did that?
51. How you made it?
52. How it went?
53. How long it took you?
54. How long you lived there?
55. How you didn't see that?
56. How you know that?
57. How he knew?
58. How I must know what to do?

### WHERE

59. Where you are?
60. ~Where you are?...no seriously, where are you?
61. Where you found it?
62. Where you were yesterday?
63. Where you left your phone?
64. Where you bought that skirt?
65. Where you went to school?
66. Where you went?
67. Where you saw him?
68. Where you learnt that?
69. Where she's living?
70. Where it is?
71. Where I must go now?
72. Where I must meet you?
73. Where you think they're making the money?
74. Where I was?

### WHO

75. Who you waiting for?
76. Who you spoke to?
77. Who you saw?
78. Who you were speaking to?

79. Who you talking to?
80. Who you saw last night?
81. Who I must speak to?
82. Who you gave the book to?

### WHY

83. Why you were late?
84. Why you didn't come to me?
85. Why you left it so late?
86. Why you don't wear them?
87. Why you don't like him?
88. Why you did that?
89. Why you didn't fix it?
90. Why you said that to him?
91. Why you slept late?
92. Why they ran away?
93. Why you didn't tell me?
94. Why you don't eat pork?
95. Why you never called me back?
96. Why you going so far?
97. Why you didn't close the door?
98. Why so long you took?
99. Why you left it there?
100. Why you didn't wait for me?
101. Why you don't read the paper?
102. Why you didn't phone me?

### WHICH

103. Which one you want?
104. Which book she said she likes?
105. Which one you chose?
106. Which way I must go?
107. Which line I must stand in?
108. Which one I should choose?
109. Which one he said I must take?
110. Which one you going to have?
111. Which bag you left it in?

**Total: 111**

*~second sentence more emphatic*

## Section Two: Yes/No Questions

1. You bought cheese, Farouk?  
(Did you buy Cheese, Farouk?)
2. You bought the car?  
(Did you buy the car?)
3. You want to start trouble?  
(Did you want to start trouble?)
4. You arrived on time?  
(Did you arrive on time?)
5. You told him when to come?  
(Did you tell him when to come?)
6. You ate all the rice?  
(Did you eat all the rice?)
7. You know where to go?  
(Do you know where to go?)
8. You're hungry?  
(Are you hungry?)
9. You went to the doctor?  
(Did you go to the doctor?)
10. You left it behind?  
(Did you leave it behind?)
11. You're not finished yet?  
(Aren't you finished yet?)
12. She said something?  
(Did she say something?)
13. She told anyone?  
(Did she tell anyone?)
14. You booked tickets?  
(Did you book tickets?)
15. You're on a diet?  
(Are you on a diet?)
16. He left you any?  
(Did he leave you any?)
17. He bought you something?  
(Did he buy you something?)
18. You typed it all out?  
(Did you type it all out?)
19. You heard what he said about you?  
(Did you hear what he said about you?)
20. You saw it yesterday?  
(Did you see it yesterday?)

## APPENDIX TWO: TRANSCRIPTIONS

It is important to note that the transcriptions do not appear in full. I have included only those sections of the interviews that are relevant to this research. I have not included the sections of the transcriptions where the discussion has gone off topic, or where the participant has simply said 'I don't know'. Some of the transcriptions are longer than others because some of the participants had more to say than others, or said more that was relevant to the topic. No statement, answer or comment that could change the meaning of the Participants' responses has been omitted.

In the transcriptions 'R' stands for *researcher*, i.e. myself, 'P' stands for *participant*, and 'RA' for *research assistant*.

### Section One: Written Data

#### **Interview One**

R: Ok, so if you don't use this kind of grammatical construction, like 'where you are?' Who does?

P: Umm, I have heard umm, many, of...I'm used to Indian South African language construction. So there's a lot of grammatical errors in the way, umm, Indian South Africans speak and it's usually things like that. 'Where you are?'. Umm... [unclear] because some people can say it but err...it's not very common. It's usually in communities where people haven't really been fully educated.

R: ...Because in my thesis what I'm actually arguing is that it's not incorrect. It's a feature of a particular dialect of English that is spoken in South Africa. Ummm, so it's, like, a feature of their specific grammar. So I'm arguing that it's not incorrect. But in your opinion, like, if you were to hear somebody say *that* you'd think it was incorrect.

P: I would.

R: Ok. Alright so and you don't use these kinds of constructions yourself?

P: No.

R: And that's because, and you think people who do are, ummm...less educated?

P: Well. ah. I would say that I'm a kind of an academic snob in that sense, but I will never judge a person on their, their language use. Ummm...I know on campus we

ummm...pick a lot on Indian dialect, because it's just something we do because we can 'cause of being Indian and knowing the situation, we can make humour out of it. But I would think that a person who actually uses that kind of language would be offended if we had to pick on them in front of them. But ummm it is kind if ummm a snobbish kind of thing but people who speak proper English, ummm do think less of people who don't.

R: So do you think that if I were to ask some people about this particular sort of construction, they would be offended?

P: People who use it would be offended. Like, an example would be, I think in my second year class, we were talking about the Raj and Raj tu adverts. A lot of Indians were offended by the fact that these two white men who are picking on err...Indian accents and that no one speaks like that but people actually do and err...people who do speak like that refuse to acknowledge the humour in it.

R: So if I were to...like, explain the arguments to you about it not being ungrammatical in English it's just grammatical in a particular dialect, what would you think?

P: ...well people understand what you're saying even if it's grammatically incorrect so I don't think it's a problem as such but ummm...but as for it being ungrammatical I don't think it's speech that matters, I mean obviously if you're gonna use it in research it would err, be an error and if you use language like that over and over again then obviously there would be red marks all over your work. But in speech it's quite fine because people actually get it.

R: So ummm...what kind of, what would you describe as, like, proper English?

P: Oh...that's a difficult one. Umm...well in my view I think that people outside England actually speak better English than they adhere to. So ummm it's really hard to define. 'cause ummm...within a specific location people understand different types of English and to umm just say...a white person who says ummm...fith instead of fifth. Ummm...it's something that is correct to them. You can't really define proper English because it's been lost in translation so to speak over so many years.

R: So ummm...what do you understand by the phrase 'Standard English'?

P: Standard English would be ummm...basic school English. Ummm...there can't be a Standard English over err...so many cultures as stands in South Africa because um, South African English is littered with err, so many words from the other languages of that specific culture that are just thrown in, like, we can say that something's lekker and it'll still be seen as speaking English. Umm but in actual fact it's Afrikaans. So there's no such thing as Standard English apart from I think apart from writing exams or ja.

R: And do you think that if somebody were to write, like, these sorts of things write them down, like, submit them in a school test or in a university assignment or something, do you think that they should, be penalized for that? Do you think that people should learn as close to 'Standard English' as they can?

P: I think as much as humanly possible really taking into consideration your culture. I think at university level they should be penalized but at school level I think they should be corrected.

### **Interview Two**

R: Umm... so now, who, if you don't use that construction but other people do, who is it that uses it?

P: Oh, in most of my interaction, Indian people. In using that particular sentence. I'm sure other people do, but mostly Indian people.

R: Alright. So ummm people who use that sentence, like, what kind of people are they? Does it, ah, have anything to do with education or where people live, or something?

P: I don't know if they're not educated because I know people who are, have their, their doctor's certificates and they are doctors but they speak wrong English. I think it's also casual, it's easy to use. You don't think about oh 'how am I constructing my sentences' when you talk. So they use it because they really don't consider the fact that they're using the wrong type of English. It's almost, like, slang English you could say. I don't think it means that you're uneducated but obviously you're not the most articulate person if you speak that way.

R: And ummm so then, what is, like, right English?

P: Right English is obviously how it is to be written. You know, like, ummm in the dictionary. As in how you pronounce words and English construction of sentences, that's proper English which very few people including myself speak, like, the Queen's English. You could say that's proper English.

R: Well who do you think speaks that English?

P: Ok actually, in most instances it's people that are more intelligent because they consider how they come across, and people who are more exposed to that kind of English. Someone who speaks that way is not exposed to people who speak proper English and if you're gonna look at races I would say mostly white people. I don't think I've heard a white person say "How you did that?" because they're more exposed to the proper way to speak English as opposed to any person growing up in Chatsworth - they're exposed to the incorrect pronunciation of words and sentences and stuff.

R: OK. And in, in, like, a school or university environment, when people speak, like, using these types of constructions, do you think that they should be corrected?

P: No, not at all, because the purpose of talking to someone is to communicate, to get the message across, and if a person [unclear] me I know what they mean, I know what they're trying to say, I don't need to correct them. I know what they mean. I think it comes across as a bit arrogant if you were to correct them because they're not gonna change the way they speak for the rest of their lives because you've corrected them. So, I don't think it requires correction at all.

### Interview Three

R: Ok cool, so if you don't use these kinds of constructions yourself, who does?

P: Ummm, most Indian people...family members and friends.

R: And is it just, like, across the board, just Indian people in South Africa or does it depend on where they live or their education or...

P: Ummm, it's, I guess it kind of depends on their upbringing and education. Obviously, like, like, the older generation uses it much more than the younger generation. Like, ummm, some of my peers that are Indian, don't use it, whilst ummm, others do. I guess it depends on, you know, which area they come from. Ummm, what kind of school they went to, that kind of thing.

R: Cool. And so what kind of, how would you describe that kind of English? Like, if somebody were to, like, give you the sentence, would you say it's good English or bad English or it's just a dialect of English or it's just English?

P: Ummm, I would say, it's, well my first opinion would be bad English. You know what I mean? Especially when it's, like, grammatically wrong. But, like, it's just, like, part of their, you know, culture, their way of speaking English. You know, so it can't be bad or can't be wrong.

R: Right, right. And so then what is good English do you think?

P: Ummm, the way it's, oh well, I don't know, probably, like, the way it's meant to be spoken, like, you know, grammatically correct English is the good English.

R: Ok ummm, and do you think that you know that in general Indian people in South Africa speak very differently from other people?

P: Definitely!

R: In what way?

P: It's, it's sort of, like, the English language has become their own that, like, it's become their own language. You know they've taken it and, like, you know, done things to it that makes it theirs. Ummm, you know, grammar, like, you know might as well add in that accent and stuff like that. They've, like, changed English to become, like, you know, South African Indian English, you know? And even, like, the difference between the way English is spoken by Indian people in Durban as opposed to Johannesburg or Cape Town is totally different too.

#### **Interview Four**

R: So for question one for example, if you don't use that kind of construction who, who does?

P: Ahhh, well for me, my group of friends or any people I associate with don't usually talk like that, so the only time I've ever seen that is, like, people who are not native to this country.

R: Ok, alright and ah, A?

P: ummm, ja, I, I talk like that.

R: And who else? Like?

P: Ummm, most of my friends, they err, there's a lot of, there's a lot of abbreviations instead of saying the full sentence. You get the same message from using the same amount of words.

R: So what kind of English do you think it is? Do you think its good English, bad English, just English?

P: hmmm...well it's not...it's not...proper English. But it's in its own form understandable, so I would say B. I would go with B.

R: So what's proper English then?

P: Proper English to me is your definition of how you communicate one person to another and your understanding of it. So if you and the person you talking to say can understand quite, quite well what you talking about then I would define that as correct...the definition.

R: hmmm, cool, and so then do you think people who, like, use those kinds of constructions...people who, you know, can be said to speak South African Indian English, do you think that other people discriminate against them in any way because of the way they use English?

P: I think it's not really discrimination more like identification instead of it. I mean it's tolerated. I mean there's no ill responses or there's no [Sigh] there's no

deception. Basically everything is coerced, we, we are tolerated. There's no, there's no really big issue about it.

R: And in, like, a school or university environment, ummm. Do you think that people should be corrected for using these kinds of constructions, like, in written work or spoken, either one?

P: Well, like I said that again, that's, that's the individual's right, you choose how you wanna speak, I mean it's up to someone else to say you don't like it, it's up to you. But I mean identification in the early stage yes but as one grows older one can't really change who they've become. They become less [unclear] so I would guess they are...really up to the person.

R: Ja, and what do you understand from the term 'Standard English?'

P: Standard English? It's what society dictates as staple, as what we all conform to. It's what everybody does.

#### **Interview Five**

R: Ok so now, if you don't use this grammatical construction, but other English speakers do, who uses it?

P: I think that mostly South African Indians use it. A lot.

R: Mmm hmmm... Ja. Alright. And ummm what do you think of, of this construction?

P: I think it's comical. Because it represents sort of, like, a whole kind of misunderstanding because of the way of the construction of English. So ummm just to save the time of having to correct themselves they'd just rather use it. And it becomes more comfortable within them...to use it, so as a sentence it seems fine to them because the person you're talking to understands it and they understand it.

R: And you don't think that it's fine? Do you think it is....?

P: For my personal use, I would not use a grammatical sentence like that.

R: Why?

P: Only in a sort of jokey manner because ummm society is sort of judged upon how well I can speak English, so I'd like to consider myself in that top half. And that, that grammatical construction represents sort of, like, a...almost, like, a...not a corruption of the language but some sort of laziness...or some sort ummm...a language adaption, like, going from the native tongue to English and it just sort of

stuck. And ummm, I don't like to, I mean...I like to show myself as proficient in English, so I wouldn't use a construction like that.

R: Ok. So then, like, what is good English?

P: What is good English?

R: Ja.

P: Ummm... it's acceptable English in the social sphere because some, some grammatical mistakes are allowed to some point while some are sort of, like, frowned upon and others are not frowned upon. So good English means the English that's sort of around you in the category of the people you like to spend time with. For example: academics, or clubbers or friends or whatever. Then it would be ok.

R: And so, like, at varsity or in school or whatever if people speak or write like that, do you think they should be corrected?

P: Nah, I'd giggle and accept it because they have obviously some cultural background to it and ummm and they haven't had any influence otherwise. I mean I probably used to speak like that, then I went to a Model C high school, and then I was, not corrected but I heard it being spoken around me, and people would giggle if I were to speak in that sort of grammatical sentence and I had to influence myself to change it, so I don't really look upon them as, like, inferior or, or as if, like, I should correct them, I just, like, leave them alone.

R: hmmm...and so if, like, you read something, like, that in the newspaper for example, what would you think of that?

P: I would laugh and think it's unprofessional.

R: hmmm ok, unprofessional huh?

P: I think it's very unprofessional, like, for a paper, it's the wrong, the wrong sort of style.

R: Ok, and so what sort of style is it?

P: Well a newspaper's meant to, like, objectively give you these, like, reports and it should be in a business tone, business sort of, it should be sort of formal not sort of conversational that's what magazines and tabloids are for.

R: Ok so this is, like, very informal?

- P: This is, like, ja, this is informal. This is sort of...or...or you know work place, it's more like home, friends and whatever if you speak in that ...
- RA: You'll notice with the last interview when he was speaking to his friend before he came here, you heard what he said?
- R: Ja.
- RA: And then when he was here and he was talking to you, he spoke totally differently.
- P: Hmm, it changes...
- R: He said, "When I must meet you?" and then in the interview, then his English was really quite formal and he said he doesn't say stuff like that.
- P: Oh. Ok. You see because that sort of sets it up as, this sorts of sets it up as a formal space.
- R: Ja, it's about recording quality, I wanted it to be very informal, but I needed to be able to hear what you guys are saying, so...Okay, so what do you understand of the term 'Standard English'?
- P: Standard English? That's those rigid norms they use at school - where they try to teach you how to talk English.
- R: Ok so who decides what is good English and what's bad English?
- P: Well the first instance is your parents do [unclear] and will correct you when you say something wrong. Second will be your teachers and third will be your peers.
- R: And then, like, you know further out in society and not in your, like, immediate circle of, of acquaintance, like...
- P: Who would dictate that?
- R: Ja...
- P: Ummm...
- R: To your parents, say, or your friends?
- P: Ummm...possibly the socialites, the business people anyone who uses that sort of language and you pick it up, you hear it, you hear them discussing over the phones or whatever, wherever you go and they'll be the ones who kind of set the standard because they're the ones who are in that sort of position.

R: Hmm...like, positions of power?

P: Positions of power, ja, something, authority figures for instance. We wouldn't expect Thabo Mbeki to use a construction like that in his speech, you would probably not hear that.

R: That's interesting because he's a second language speaker of English.

P: Exactly, exactly.

### **Interview Six**

R: Ok so, you picked B for the fist two sentences.

P: Yes.

R: So if you don't use this kind of construction who does?

P: Ummm, well look, err, the thing is that I think because of my background, I went to a Model C school, not a private school or a government state school but a Model C school which is a mixture of err...students of different incomes whose parents are in different income groups. So err...the sort of education I got err, led me to make that decision because I, don't speak like that but there are, there would've been other people in, in the classroom or people of different backgrounds err, that, that do use that sort of grammar.

R: What sort of backgrounds?

P: Ummm, I would say, I mean I'd just narrow it down to a lower income group, err, which may not have the same quality of education as others.

R: Ok, alright. Ummm, and why don't you use this kind of construction?

P: Well I just, I don't think it's grammatically correct. I, it's, it just doesn't seem like the English that, the type of English that I would use.

R: And have you ever heard of the term South African Indian English?

P: Err, yes. Maybe not in that definition but I, I sort of understand what you're saying.

R: Ok, and, like, so, what do you think of it?

P: Err... the...I think it also comes down to err, income groups to a certain level err, the Indian community, the South African Indian community err, comes from various different backgrounds. You get ummm, the err, Gujarati, the Hindi,

Tamils and err, those particularly are not in any class as such with regards to income groups because you have Tamil people and err, Hindi people in, like, you know, earning phenomenally well salaries and things like that, so it's, it's something that you, you do hear err, from South African Indians

R: But usually from, like, a lower education...

P: Yes, I would say, ja.

R: Right. And if somebody were to use this kind of construction in school for example or at university whether they say it or write it down, what do you think should happen?

P: Well, I mean, you can't really slap them on the wrist and say it's wrong can you...

[laughter]

R: No, I suppose not...

P: I mean some people err, some people it's, it's just the way they were brought up. It's, it's... they, to them that, that's right. That's the way they were taught and that's the way their parents spoke at home and that's the way they were brought up and they feel that that's right because that's what they were exposed to. What I was exposed to was something different so I feel that what I'm saying is grammatically correct. And err; I think it basically comes down to that.

R: So ummm... do you think there's such a thing as South African Indian English? Like, something you can define as that dialect.

P: Err, yes I, I, I would say that I, I wouldn't really know how to describe it, it's a bit difficult. But I would say that you can, you can categorize it as a kind of...dialect that is not the err, you know, like, it's got a bit of slang and, like, I'm sure you might know err, like, some plays that are produced and, and shown at Suncoast cinemas err, these err, these err, stories about err, South African Indians in the past and their experiences when they came to South Africa and things like that. You'll also see that, that the type of language that is used in these plays err, tries to mimic this sort of err dialect to a certain extent.

R: Ja. And do you know what 'Standard English' is?

P: Standard English?... I would...

R: What in your mind does the term mean to you?

P: Standard English would err, to me err, I would say it's something that is universally accepted in every country as understandable to you know a normal person who knows English.

R: And do you think that people should learn 'Standard English'?

P: Yeah, I think it's very important.

R: Why?

P: Ummm, because err, to be able to communicate. I mean I went to, I went to Europe I err, I don't err, I don't speak French. I had a problem when I was in Switzerland which is err, dominantly French speaking err, city err, country and err, there I thought to myself, yeah you know God, it would be so much easier if these people just spoke English. Err, some level of English. I think some level of English is important.

#### **Interview Seven**

R: Ok so you would use a construction like 'why you wouldn't bring it?' yourself?

P: Yep.

R: And one is 'where it is?' and you don't use that kind of, like, what's the difference between those two sentences?

P: ...um...

R: A difference between one and two, I mean. 'cause in two you say you use that kind of thing and in one you say that you don't use it but other people do, so is there a difference between the two?

R: Ummm, I don't know. It's just, I guess it depends on the way you speak English.

R: Ok, alright so what kind of people do you think use those kinds of constructions?

P: Ummm, maybe older people, like, ummm, my great granny, she would say something like that, because young people are more prone to speaking English because we don't speak our native languages all the time. Some people don't even know what it is. Ja, so that's right.

R: Oh ok. And ummm...do you think that Indian people in South Africa speak English very differently from other kinds of people?

P: No...well for some people, like old people, maybe

R: Really? Like, in what way?

- P: Ummm...for example, the second sentence 'why you didn't, why didn't you bring it, why you didn't bring it?' it's a totally different, I think it's because when you speak in, like, we speak Tamil, that's your native language, but when we speak, if you listen to my granny speak it or something, it sounds like similar to Afrikaans where you put, the sentence construction is different. So I think when they speak English, even the older people, they speak English the way they would speak Tamil. The sentence construction is different.
- R: So what's your first language?
- P: English.
- R: Ok, Cool. And ummm, do you know what a dialect is? Like what, what does it mean to you?
- P: Roughly?
- R: Ja.
- P: Well not really. But I know it's got to do with grammar and the way you speak and language.
- R: Cool and -
- P: - It depends on, like, which part of the country you live in and how it affects the way you speak.
- R: Ja, okay. So, what do you think of this kind of English?
- P: I don't think anything's wrong with it because I know it very well. In an area that's predominantly Indian so lots of people speak that way, it's common.
- R: Ummm, do you know, like, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?
- P: Standard English?
- R: Ja.
- P: The English that people in your, like, community or area speak.
- R: And ummm, do you think that 'Standard English' is different to South African Indian English?
- P: No, the way it's taught in schools, it's just different.

R: It's just different [pause]. And do you think that if somebody were to use South African Indian English, like, in an essay or any university context do you think they should be corrected or just left to use it how, using it however they like?

P: I don't know... not really sure. I mean we speak English the way we speak it. And other people speak it differently but we don't speak it the way it should be spoken, so if you mean it in that context then yes.

R: How do you think it should be spoken?

P: Well, the way that it's supposed to be spoken, the way that it's taught to be spoken.

R: oh, ok cool. And so do you think people should learn 'Standard English', if they don't speak it?

P: Ummm, yes, cause English is, like, the language of the world. You have to know to speak English and you've got to understand it.

R: Ja, ja. And do you think that people who don't speak 'Standard English', do you think that other people, like...look down on them or view them negatively? Do you...

P: They think that you aren't educated.

R: Ok and that is not the case?

P: Not the case.

R: No, it's not the case at all.

### **Interview Eight**

R: So if you don't use them, who does?

P: People in the area. People who have been...like family sometimes friends, depending on the area that you come from. I don't know, I found it, like, certain areas people speak in certain ways and in, that what I found it, like, depending on the areas that people come from and depending on their background and the way that they're brought up, like, when they are traditional background to a more, like, modernized background. how they speak. That's how I found people go with their language. And also, like, the way their parents speak they tend to err follow suit.

R: Oh, ok. And so does it have to do with their education necessarily?

P: Sometimes it does because, like, some people have the err, like, what we call the luck of going to better schools than some other kids because err, like, some

schools although it's government some are better than the others depending on, on, like, the facilities that have been given to them and stuff so it does depend, like, on your, your friends in school because you pick up most children from an early age pick up from their school. You take two kids from a, like, going to a Model C private school to, to different types of government schools and you'll see the difference between all three because in government schools, like, I said it differs with the, the type of education that, because with some teachers they give it their all, whereas some teachers don't really care, they're just there to get it done and get paid and go home. They don't worry about you.

R: Ja. Ummm so, ja do you think that, that South African Indian people speak English very differently from other kinds of people in South Africa?

P: I think everybody speaks English differently. Like, if you compare it, a Durban Indian will sound totally different from a Cape Coloured but if you take a Cape Coloured and you take a Durban Coloured and you're therefore coloured but they speak total different English and then In...uh...In-Indians in Pretoria have a different, like, err [unclear] to their language, they're more, like, sophisticated in their, in their English and my cousin speaks totally different to all of us and she's been living in Pretoria for about eight years and then err... and then there's those who put on an accent... [laughs]

R: What kind of accent?

P: They have, like, a special accent... I don't know [Laughing]. I always find it when, like, they answer the telephone that's when you get the accent. I'm serious you get this, like, you know, like, normal, normal, normal and then the phone rings and they're, like, Hello [in an accent]. [Laughs again]. I always find that funny so it's like that.

R: And you laughed when you read the, the second sentence, why is that funny?

P: Because ummm, like, my gran lives in Unit Eleven and that's, like, Chatsworth and she has a lot of old friends that come over and I stayed a year with her and I hear her and her old friends talking and they talk like that, they talk like that and they talk loud and the fact that they all can't hear each other, they talk like that. They have their little err, language and the, the way they speak and it's, like, broken English with Hindi. You know don't specifically just speak English. They, when they don't want you to hear what they're saying they speak Hindi but they, like, mix up the Hindi with the English.

R: And so do, do younger people, like, sort of our generation of people ever speak like that?

P: Like the second one?

R: Ja.

P: Err... some people do. From the...I, I believe they do, but they don't know it they just sometimes do it unconsciously.

R: So and if they did realise that they were speaking like that then what would they do?

P: I don't know they just, like, sometimes they, like, change or they just, like, continue as normal, they just continue, it, like, happens unconsciously most of the time because, like, err, when they go back to the families and stuff like that because that's how their families speak and you get used to it and you just go with it.

R: And what do you think people think of people who speak like that?

P: Sometimes people laugh and find it funny and sometimes they mock them but then it all depends on the individual whether they get insulted or they take it with a pinch of salt. I just laugh because its funny and I don't understand sometimes and I'll be, like, hmmm...and I'll most probably be agreeing to things that I don't even know what I'm agreeing to. That usually happens when I talk to my cousins and she and the other guys will be, like, in their little slang and I'll be, like...ja.

R: I have no idea what you're saying -

P: - what you saying but I agree with you one hundred percent.

R: Ok so do you think, like, what do you, what do you think of the term 'Standard English', like, what does it mean to you?

P: There's no such term as Standard English. Because there are so many types of English if, like, depending on how the person speaks because, like, there err, you call, like, South African English and then you have English people English they sound different then you have people in America talking English and they sound different so I don't think that there's, like, a standard type of English it's just the fact that people understand each other that makes it English that people know what they're saying.

### **Interview Nine**

R: So, ja, so the kind of constructions that we're looking at here, like, if you use them, like, what other kinds of people use them, other English speakers?

P: I mean, like, a lot of my friends would, would speak in the way, like, that is kind of ummm, what's the word...efficient. you know, like, I mean, we don't really, for questions like this, like, you wouldn't really (long pause) you wouldn't really go on about it, like, 'hey what time do you close?' or, you know, it's pretty. like,

laid back and chilled and no one really, like, worries about that kind of grammar, like, during the day, like, it takes a lot of I mean, like, obviously in an academic setting you would worry about that kind of thing but it takes a lot of energy to, like, and I know it's probably, like, 'where is it' is only three words compared to 'where's that' is only two words but just, like, during the day and just during life you just...shorten everything.

R: Cool, ummm so, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: Ummm, ok, well, I mean, I know, I was thinking about that and, ummm, that Corsa ad and, like, and, like, at first, like when it came out, like, my friends and I were, like, 'are we supposed to find that, like, you know, like, racially, like, you know, not cool and I was, like, I don't know, like, I guess it's fine except for that laughter, like, at the end. You're, like, you know, and then you're, like, are they laughing at us or are they laughing because it's funny? And the thing is, like, especially with, like, language, especially with our past and all that, everyone is, like, so on edge, you know? And it's, like, but what did you mean by that? Hey you see the girl, she's, she's black...and she's umm, oh she's black! But no, no, no, I'm, I just mean, I'm describing her to you, you know, and the thing is, like, you put so much emphasis on words and, and, and instead we should, like, change, like, the stigmas, and the connotations attached to those words. So, like, our intentions are known, like, my intention for saying she's black was so I could describe her to you so I could find her, you know. And I think it's mainly because this is South Africa and everything we've been through and it's so easy to offend everyone and that's the whole thing about, like, being politically correct, like, I think it's nonsense. Honestly because, like, we put so much energy into, like, consciously you know, ok we have to say this and this is what I need when instead we should just, like, get our true intentions across, like, no one's out to get anyone, I'm just trying, I'm just trying to, like, communicate with you but, like, communication is so hard these days because I don't know because that's the thing, like, I don't know if it's ok to say 'oh no, like, he's white' or 'she's black', 'she's Indian' or 'she's coloured'. Like, I don't know because it's such a tense setting and it makes everyone so hypersensitive. We have such a hypersensitive society.

R: And do you think that people sort of, like, target language in that way, like, they attach a stigma to certain types of language?

P: Exactly, exactly, no, no they do and ummm, also ummm, like, within, like, Indian communities, like, even, I don't know if you guys went to that comedy show, Sugar Sammy or whatever anyway there's this guy from Canada down who's Indian but he's from Canada and anyway it's your typical, like, you know jokes about Indians and the way they speak because you know we get, like, different and, like, people associate that with, like, their level of education and you get, like, certain stigmas attached to people, especially in the Indian community, like, if you come from that part or if you come from that part then you know you're a

certain kind of person and ummm, you find, well I find a lot but, like, people who come- 'cause, like, if you say, like, 'oh she's from Phoenix' it's, like, it's horrible but 'oh she's, like, that' or 'she's, like, that' they look down on them and it is because they do speak in a certain kind of way and some people associate that with, like, you know, their education not being up to board or whatever but we judge so many people just from the time they open their mouth so language is very important but you know we have to have that understanding of, like, the reasons behind it and, and maybe not be so judgmental.

R: So what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Standard English...ummm, maybe just ways of communicating so it's kind of understood by the majority.

R: Ok, cool, and do you think that South African Indian English is very different from 'Standard English'?

P: Ummm, I mean not really, like, I mean, maybe - when it, like, comes to, like - 'cause with my little brother he doesn't...like, little thugs and, like,- you- like if I had to, like, speak to him I wouldn't really understand what he was saying because they use a lot of, like, colloquialisms and a lot of slang ummm, because he said- I was speaking to them on Saturday night and he was, like, ja, no, I, like,- he said up goy. I 'up goy' or something like that, which means he threw up and after that he was continuously talking to me, like, but what does that mean? Beside the, beside the slang and that I think it's, it's pretty much easy to communicate with Standard English [pause] Indian language.

R: And so, like, in a university context or whatever do you think people should, like, be, like, corrected if they use, like, constructions like we looked at earlier or...

P: Mmm, I don't really think it's, like, a major issue. Ummm, I mean, like, I noticed I did it the other day it was so irritating but I, I, like, correct people if they not correct everybody but people, like, I know, like, 'oh no that's not how you say it' or 'but that's not really' but, but that's because I was doing essays the whole week and you gotta, like, try and get out of that mode because it becomes a bit irritating. You know, like, everyone just, like, especially on this campus, like, compared to, like, other campuses and stuff, everyone's pretty much, like, chilled out and you know just speak and wanna hear the...um... and try to speak out in a way that everyone understands but then again there's that whole thing about, like, ummm, having some kind of language that is exclusive to, like, your posse. And, you know, like, people always appreciate that and it's nice to feel like you belong in that certain kind of you know sector or...

### **Interview Ten**

P: It's sad.

R: What's sad?

P: that people speak like that.

R: Why's it sad?

P: Personally the way I speak is the way it feels best to me, ummm, just the way it flows. It just feels more natural. And something like 'When you got your license' just doesn't feel right to me. Ummm, it may be correct, I'm not exactly sure about that but it just, I get a bit finicky, like, about things like that, it's just me.

R: Ja, lots of people have that sort of thing. Ummm, so who- what other English speakers use constructions like "Where you got your license?"

P: Ummm, I'd imagine most people actually, because now that I'm looking at it, well, actually thinking about it, it's pretty ummm, its everyday use. Like, when people ask 'when you got your license' how did you know this and stuff like that. I would say 'when you went to get your license' but...

R: Ok, and, and 'what I must say?' does that make a difference?

P: Errm, again that one, just similar reason, it just doesn't sound right to me, it just doesn't flow, flow with me correctly.

R: Ok, so there's, like, no, no real, like, particular group of English speakers in the country that you could say uses these kinds of constructions. Like 'where you are?'.

P: Ummm, well it's gotten to the stage where most people actually speak like this. I think ummm, because people for who English isn't a first language ummm, first language Zulu speakers or something, like, that would pick up a lot of ummm, habits and things, the way they speak English from the people around them or TV or something. Ummm, so things, like, that would become part of their language and then ummm, well Indian speakers they don't particularly care about their English, I mean half the time you really don't know what they're saying unless you're actually from the same area as them. Ummm, the other half, most of the languages in it are mainly slang. It's, again slang's are not generally understood unless you're from the same area.

R: So if you're gonna look at these kinds of constructions and, say, put them down to second language English speakers or English speakers in South Africa. Ummm, like, if you were to choose, like, a pole from positive to negative from you this kind of English...

P: I'm a [unclear] so I'm gonna say negative.

- R: Ok right, so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?
- P: Ummm, a lot of slang, a lot of ummm, more colloquial obviously. Stereotypically funny accents. Mainly a hell of a lot of slang. Ummm, yeah, South African English is...
- R: And do you think South African Indian English and South African English are two different things?
- P: [Long Pause]. Again it's because, like, I'm thinking along the lines of how certain areas have, has their own way of speaking, their own accents, their own language, their own slang's and everything. So it's difficult to say because I'm not entirely sure what you mean by South African English.
- R: Ok ummm, I suppose what I mean is just the way people speak English in South Africa as opposed to the way they speak it in Australia or England or America for example. Ja and, you know, how everybody views how different those kinds of Englishes are is entirely, like, a personal thing...So, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?
- P: Ummm, I can't even think about English people now because they speak terribly. Standard English I would imagine is just a, it's just a type of English that's easy to understand by everyone, like, a generic English type thing. So ummm, not too much jargon and stuff like that.
- R: So, if, when you say the English speak English terribly, can you, like, spell it out for me?
- P: Well what I mean is that their accents are less, again from their areas and terrible to understand what they're saying but umm, I don't know. I'm obviously assuming a lot of things. I'm [stutters] I'm just shooting my mouth off but I think their way of speaking is becoming quite corrupted considering that it's their language to start off with. Like, ummm, say someone from Newcastle, I don't know where cockney accents come from; they almost have their own version of English.
- R: And do you think that everyone should speak like this 'Standard', like, in a certain way with a certain accent?
- P: No, no that's, I mean that takes away individualism. Ummm, I think everyone should be able to so that they can, so everyone can relate and not even necessarily English. Ummm, it could be Spanish or French or something because I'm sure they have the same problems, if you wanna call it problems but ummm, I mean just in the nature of understanding each other and being able to communicate, maybe being, like, obviously having your language you'll speak to everyone

about-with and then being able to still talk to someone from the other end of the planet.

R: So in a university context if somebody were to use, like, these kinds of constructions, do you think they should be penalized or...

P: You talking about ummm, like, in a formal essay or just day-to-day chatting?

R: Ummm, in sort of a formal context or informal, either one.

P: Well informal, nah, I mean it's just talking with your friends or something. So it's no problem. Ummm, formally to learn and to learn a certain subject, you can't really, and if you're going to be studying English or writing an essay or something then you should keep to using proper constructions. 'cause that's part of the point of being marked...to see that you can actually speak the language well, write the language.

R: And who do you think decides what's good and bad English?

P: [Laughs]. It's the same as asking who ummm, like, how, who decided to write the beginning of English would be like that. Ummm, I've actually never really thought about it, things like punctuation, word order, all of that type of stuff, where it all started. And why, it's, like, we just take it for granted, like, that's the right way to do it. Ummm, I guess it just comes down to who's in charge basically.

R: Pretty much. Ok so let's say that there's a dialect, South African Indian English. It exists as a dialect and it has its own grammar and everything. Ummm, let's just say that this is the situation as it stands now in South Africa. Do you think people who use features of that dialect are viewed in any particular way by speakers of other varieties of English?

P: Ummm, possibly but I think that's more to do with how their way of speaking would have to do with their race. Like, stereotypically with Africans, blacks with 'eish' and all of those things and Indians with high pitched, whinny, nasal voice with 'let's vy to Lags and stuff' like that and then white people with their ummm, I don't know how to describe it but the they pronounce their words, like, they won't say 'no' they'll say 'no' I can't actually do it myself. Ummm, because everyone's got their own specific way of speaking but I think it's not, like, ummm, pointing them out and seeing how badly they talk, it's more along the lines of ummm, how the way they talk ties in with their culture and race and things like that. 'cause, I mean, well, our country is quite, well, still hooked up on race and things like that.

## **Section Two: Spoken Data**

### **Interview Eleven**

- R: Ok so, these kind of constructions, can you identify, like, a particular group of people who use English in South Africa who say this sort of thing.
- P: Ummm, I think it's it's mostly the Indian race that speaks like that, ummm, I'm not sure why though but I know that I do use these kinds of constructions.
- R: Often?
- P: Um...I dunno...probably, I guess, I mean, I don't really notice it that much, don't really think about it...
- R: So ummm, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?
- P: Ummm, well to me it means the way we speak, the manner in which we construct our sentences or the language, not the, not particularly the language but the err, grammar that we use.
- R: And ummm, what does the term 'Standard English' mean to you?
- P: Ummm, I have no idea... You can just say that it's...um...English, the way you're supposed to talk.
- R: Ok, so do you think that people have opinions about the different way that English is spoken by different types of people?
- P: Ummm, I don't think so, I don't really have an opinion, this is just the way I speak so there are various people this is the way we are brought up to speak you know. I have no opinion about anybody else and what they you know about the way they speak.

### **Interview Twelve**

- R: So what does South African Indian English, the term mean to you?
- P: Well, it's just, like, the way Indian people are brought up, their culture, so they learn to speak like that. Not because they have a choice...other people around them speak like that so they learnt it themselves. They picked it up from people around them speaking like that and that's what I think.
- R: And do you, does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?
- P: Ummm, maybe just the way people are supposed to speak English, like, how the English language is supposed to be spoken.

R: And so do you think that South African Indian English is very different to 'Standard English'?

P: Err, not really, I don't think so. I don't see any big difference. Maybe they just leave out some words or add some words, ja, but it's not much of a difference.

### **Interview Thirteen**

R: What does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: Ja, I think it's, like, err, like, the type of English that we you learn, like, as you growing up or something, like, err, your type of family, like, the area which you come from, ja. Like, if you grow up in Chatsworth or something and you go to an Indian school and then you'll speak like that.

R: Ok, and 'Standard English'?

P: Ok, ja. That's, like, English, like, a universal language. Something like that.

R: So and do you think that they're very different?

P: From other types of English?

R: From other types of English ja.

P: It depends how you speak. Like, if you, like, over here they have, like, certain words, like, maybe other people in other countries, like in England they wouldn't understand. Ja.

R: And do you think that's a problem?

P: No, you can speak, like, err, like, in a more simpler way so if you go there you don't have to talk like how you talk here.

### **Interview Fourteen**

R: Ok, so ummm, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: South African Indian English?

R: Mmm hmmm.

P: Ummm, it's a combination of English broken down into simpler forms of English because English is not, is not the only language in South Africa, there's other dialects and I'm sure Indians break down language and don't use the full extent of the word.

R: And, and does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: Standard English?

R: Ja.

P: I mean they all speak [unclear] standards, like, everyone speaks English.

R: D'you think that, ummm, that compared to whatever 'Standard English' is that people in South Africa speak English very differently?

P: Yes, ummm, some people speak English but say English was in a sentence but use another language words in that sentence as well, like, you would say, you would use Afrikaans words and English words in a sentence or Zulu words and English words in a sentence.

R: Ja, and do you think that people, like, judge other people on how they speak?

P: Yes, ummm, if people don't speak proper English they think they are lower class or even have a low status but if you speak really proper English it goes with a higher status or they're rich.

### **Interview Fifteen**

R: Ok so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: I think it's quite a racist comment.

R: Ok.

P: I think that there's a lot of different groups of people [unclear] broken speech. You know, err, I don't know if it's really specific, maybe it can be, you can sort of locate it in within a specific racial structure. But ummm, you know, you, you just get people that live in certain areas and just speak a certain way.

R: Ok, so you think the label is racist?

P: Ja it's pretty racist. It's pretty segregated. It's pretty, like, Indians speak differently...

R: Ok. And does the term 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: Yeah, it does. Standard English because I'm studying intercultural communication... so err, they, they, they spoke to use about pres-, prescriptive and purist ways of speaking and the standard way of speaking English and so it means that everyone should speak English the same way and there should be a standard. So there should be a standard if people want to

communicated with each other because you, you do get a lots of people who are-but, but that's where slang comes in there you see. You get lots of people that hang out with certain groups and they speak a certain way and other people speak a different way and if you don't have any interaction with these other groups it's pretty difficult trying to work out what they trying to say but that's, like, across the board because we speak English differently here than say to America or England in a sense of what do they mean when they say certain things it's not exactly the proper, like, it's not the denotation it's the connotation that you have to know the catch to it to know exactly what they saying.

R: Ja. So people attach, like, opinions and values to language...

P: Certain words and that's the way it might not be so standardized but sometimes you might hear something that's not actually, like, proper English, like, you know, like, what the fuck is this – but, like, if you look at a way where people talk about getting high, you hear people say 'I got blazed' 'high', 'wrecked', or you know then the other words for, like, a hangover, 'barbie', getting 'wrecked', 'wasted', 'shattered' you know it's, like, all different ways of saying you tired and also you know what I had a rough night out or also I got wasted on drugs or whatever it is. Ja, so they are different sort of connotations. If I go to somebody and say ja you know what I'm goofed and normally when I say that I mean you know what I'm really, really tired. I'm tired. I'm out of it. But certain people would think that, you know, what I'm high off dope. You understand? So it's...

R: And do you think people, like, judge other people by the way that they speak?

P: Of course! That's why you're doing something called South African Indian English. 'cause you think there is a difference.

R: Do you not think that there's a difference?

P: Not really huh? I really think that it's, it's, it's more, it's, it goes deeper than that, it's across the board, it's across the board and how do you decide which one's the standard and which one isn't because I'm err, I'm an English speaker who's defined as, as Indian and I'm a first language English speaker.

### **Interview Sixteen**

R: So does the term South African Indian English mean anything to you?

P: Yes it does.

R: What does it mean?

P: Ummm, improper English err, Hindi speaking err, what language exactly you talking about?

R: English.

P: Just English?

R: Yes.

P: Ja, it's just improper English.

R: Ok, so what's proper English?

P: Err, no slangs and proper grammar.

R: Ok and what does 'Standard English' mean to you?

P: Casual English, I guess. Just normal speaking.

R: Ok and do you think that South African Indian people speak differently to other kinds of people in South Africa?

P: Yes.

R: Very differently?

P: Um, it depends but generally yes.

R: Ok and do you think that people make, like, value judgments or have opinions about other people...

P: Stereotypes?

R: Ja, based on their language...

P: Yes. Their stereotypes.

R: Ok so for example, like, what is the stereotype for South African Indian English?

P: Ummm, (long pause) let me think... well, ummm, it's, it's, it's similar to the culture. They, they, they, they... how can I explain?... Well, they, they, they also generalize it with the people in their area so people from Phoenix speak differently compared to people in Chatsworth. So I guess it's a little bit, like, that as well, but ummm, it depends, you can't really be stereotyped. It, It's not everybody in Chatsworth speaks a certain way or speaks with swearing and slang, vulgar languages but ummm. I don't know, I can't give you much details.

### **Interview Seventeen**

R: Ok cool. So B, so if you don't use this construction who does?

- P: Ummm, do you want me to be really, really honest?
- R: Yes please.
- P: Ok well it's, a lot of Indian people will use it but depending on what area you come from or what school you went to that's where you hear it a lot.
- R: Ok cool, so what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?
- P: I think when people use it, they use it to refer to a certain group of Indian people depending on where they come from. I don't think you can just say South African Indian English because you get South African Indians in Joburg who don't use that English really.
- R: Ok, fair enough. And 'Standard English'?
- P: Standard English. I don't know, I guess it's what you learn in school. How I speak 'cause I went to an ex-Model C school maybe, I don't know.
- R: Ok cool. And ummm, do you think people, like, make judgments about other people, like...
- P: Yes.
- R: About how they speak?
- P: Yes.
- R: Ok so for example somebody who uses the kind of constructions that we're using as example here.
- P: I think one...well...people will perhaps judge them or look down on them if you come from a different school, or you know a different upbringing and also those people - I know I take a lot of flak because you can get told 'oh, you talk like a white' or you talk a certain way because I don't use those constructions so it works both ways.

### **Interview Eighteen**

- P: Another thing is a lot of people on this campus, their parents don't have the education per say that we do and when they spend a lot of time during the holidays with their parents they tend to speak like their parents. I know I start to speak like my mum, like, 'it's paining'. On campus I would never use - I've got a degree in English, right? And I would never use that word ordinarily. Like, err, my friend M you know M, she tends to say ummm, 'has' like 'as' right? She only uses she only uses the word 'as'. Other than that her English is perfect. But she

just changes when she spends too much time with her parents because her parents speak like that. They also miss it's just the 'h', that's the only thing and they only do it with the word 'as' that's it.

R: Ok so, so if, if you hear it a lot but you don't use it them who does?

P: My boyfriend, I should bring in now that he lives in Merebank so...ummm, my parents. Not so much my dad but my mum, even though her, her dad is a principle or an ex-principle who taught English. Her grammar is ridiculous.

R: So the term South African Indian English, does it mean anything to you?

P: It does but I figure that there's two dialects. The one that's spoken in the English medium which is the correct way of speaking and the other is adapted from ummm, the Indian vernacular. Especially if you directly translate and you're starting words in switching places. Direct translations get messed up - the, the tense and everything, so I, I don't really blame it on the people. It's not that they're stupid, it's just that they're changing it as best they can.

R: And does the 'Standard English' mean anything to you?

P: It does but in different contexts. Should I explain that? Standard English for the varsity I think about academic English. Like, you cannot submit an academic essay or an academic piece of writing the way a person speaks ordinarily. There's a distinction between the two. But English Standard in terms of speaking to my family, there's some words that I cannot use. Like, if I say dodgy in front of my dad, not cool. If I say something- in fact my dad corrects our English a lot, to the extent that if you don't know the meaning of the word 'oh, bring the dictionary'. So you've got to go find the dictionary and bring it to him, right? And we have to use the word in context. So he does that a lot but my mum- her idea of Standard English is if I can understand it then you speaking English. And that's as far as it goes.

R: And what is, like, who do you sort of lean more toward? Your dad?

P: Toward my-unfortunately during the holiday season I lean a lot toward my mum to the point that she'll make up a mixed up sentence and I'll totally understand what she's saying and my father and my brother will look at me and say you're spending too much time with mummy. Yeah, I know. But I can understand both sides. So, so if I am during the holiday period, speaking to my mum, sorry to my dad, I will speak to him that way he expects me to speak to him. Not, not the way that my mum does. It depends.

R: And do you think people make, ummm, like, sort of, do you think people judge other people by how they speak English?

P: Totally, all the time.

R: Like, what kind of judgment do they make?

P: My boyfriend has the habit of saying 'should of'...drives me round the bend. There's-from the place that he comes from, the place that he comes from their language is...oi oi oi...it's very - I can understand what they're saying but there's these little things that my mum says that I'm being, that I'm nit-picking about and I'm not nit-picking. I'm used to people speaking in a spec- in a specific way. I don't mean a [unclear] language but my standards...so, but I've gotten out of the habit of correcting people. Very offensive. People find it very offensive. So I mean you don't wanna end up with spaghetti on your hair or something, you know?

R: And ummm, oh, do you think people should be taught how to speak 'Standard English'?

P: No matter what you say, I've gone to school with - gone to primary school, secondary school and tertiary education with the same people who still speak in the English that we...I know that for a fact. And I also know people who have gone to former Model C schools or gone to private schools whose language use- I mean their language use is putrid, it's the only way to describe it -

R: - putrid, okay, wow -

P: -that's the only way to describe it. And they, they put on an accent. No offence but they put on this, this, this heavy accent that, that - how do I put this?... I, I don't know how, how to put this but, they twang a lot. But it's not proper English, I can handle proper English, I don't have a problem with that. But when they were telling me that they were 'look aftering someone' then I'm like ahhhh no! I'm like 'on the light and off the light'? So I'm like huh?! When people talk sometimes you want to say, you know, you got that education, why do that? And if you know that's wrong why keep using it? I have this annoying habit of saying line-age instead of lineage because I break up the words I forget how to spell it, like, half way through, so I gotta remember and that's how I remember things and, err, I get, I get a lot of criticism because I'm the one with the English degree and I'm supposed to know this and I'm, like, hey look I'm not God. I don't know everything. Obviously I'm, I'm human. I make mistakes but ummm, I do get a lot of pressure to speak proper English.

R: And is proper English the same as 'Standard English'?

P: Again highly, highly relative to who's speaking it. Standard English, like, it is with my mum anyone who can freaking understand...fine. Bits and pieces of the sentence she understands perfectly. Its fine. doesn't matter. Two of my closest friends, you know my best friends, both white. One went to Durban Girl's College

the other went to, err, Westville Girls. I sit and I enjoy speaking to them because I know what I, what I say, the words that I use, the content of conversation, something that relates to all of us. If I mention something that I assume was general knowledge, I know that they'll get it. And no one's sitting there, and they won't sit there thinking 'err, what are you talking about?' You get people who do that and it's not because they're stupid it's just- they don't know how to express themselves or they don't know how a person is expressing themselves and they don't know what sarcasm is!

### **Interview Nineteen**

R: Ok, so the term South African Indian English, what does it mean to you? If anything...

P: Mmm, I think it's improper, like, compared to what English people speak. I think it's, like, more, more Indian, like, err, slangs and err, mixed other, like, Indian languages you use. Sometimes we mix our English with err, Hindi or Tamil or whatever and speak.

R: Ok cool. And 'Standard English'?

P: Standard English is... I think Standard English is, like, err, proper English with a bit of slang and it's not, like, err, 100% English, it's, like, err, the English part with slangs and... It's more, like...

RA: Socially acceptable

P: Ja, ja, socially acceptable.

R: And do you think people are judged about the way that they speak? Like, on the basis of how they speak.

P: Ja, I think they do because if you can't speak properly then err, certain people have a lot to say about it. And ja they judge by the way that they speak.

### **Interview Twenty**

R: Ok so, what does the term South African Indian English mean to you?

P: What did you say? [laughs]. Well I don't really care about it 'cause everyone just speaks differently and I don't classify it as South African Indian blah, blah, blah. Because there's so many types.

R: Of English?

P: Yes.