CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"OUR TEACHER DOESN'T SPEAK LIKE THEIRS": ANALYSIS OF VARIATIONS IN THE SPOKEN ENGLISH OF TEACHERS IN MULTILINGUAL SETTINGS IN KENYA, AFRICA

M. C. NJOROGE, R. W. NDUNG'U AND M. G. GATHIGIA

Introduction

English and Kiswahili are the two key languages in Kenya.[1] Both are official languages though English is also the medium of instruction in Kenyan schools. The model of English used in Kenyan schools, even at the elementary level, is claimed to be the British Standard, particularly Received Pronunciation (RP). RP is the prestigious dialect that is spoken in the southern parts of Britain and it is used in the media and in the education system. The assumption in Kenya is that at all the school levels, the teachers, who are the learners' main linguistic models, have an excellent command of this yardstick of correctness and appropriateness with regard to pronunciation, grammar and lexis and that such teachers can teach the said variety. This assumption presupposes that teachers in Kenya will use similar linguistic forms to those that a prestigious British Standard speaker uses in England despite their regional and socio-cultural differences. But is this indeed the case? There is need, therefore, to investigate the reality in the English classrooms in Kenya. The chapter, therefore, investigates the variations in the spoken English of teachers in Kenyan primary schools and who are drawn from different language backgrounds. The finding is that the spoken English used by these teachers

significantly varies from the norm of correctness, the British Standard variety.

It is worth noting that English is used in a multilingual environment in Kenya. Unlike those who use it as their only code, Kenyans use English as only one of several codes. For example, most Kenyans have a proficient command of their community language, Kiswahili and English while others even speak French, German or other Kenyan languages. Because of this phenomenon, there is bound to be much code mixing and switching, as well as lexical and phonological influences as these languages interact. So what variety of English do the teachers teaching in Kenyan primary schools present to their learners and how does the variety differ from the norm of correctness – The British Standard variety? How does the ethnicity variable impact on the spoken English as used by the teachers in the classrooms? This was the main focus of the research on which this chapter is based.

The Language Situation in Kenya and the Place of English

Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics (2009) report indicates that majority of the population speaks languages belonging to the Bantu family, which include Gĩkũyũ, Kamba, Luhya, and Kisii. Around 20% speaks Nilo-Saharan languages such as Dholuo, Maasai and Kalenjin. The rest speaks Cushitic languages, which comprise Somali, Oromo and Rendile. These community languages serve as languages of group identity at the sub-national level.

In Kenya, the importance of English increased after independence from Britain in 1963, which ended approximately sixty years of colonization (Mbaabu, 1996). English plays a significant role in Kenya as the language of education, administration, commerce and modernization (Abdulaziz, 1991). Kanyoro (1991) adds that English in Kenya is associated with socio-economic prestige. It is exclusively a high status language associated with white-collar jobs and major responsibilities within the government and the private sector. Mastery of English is a ladder to success and, therefore, there is motivation for learning the language. As Muthiani and Muchiri (1987) observe, proficiency in English is often the yardstick by which young Kenyans are judged. English is indeed used as a measure of a person's educational achievement and success in life (Kembo-Sure, 2004).

Schmied (1991) observes that the British Standard is still regarded as the standard norm among Kenyans. He says that the vernacular (non-standard) forms of English seem to function as a symbol of group identity, which is used to signal national solidarity even by those who have,

through study and travel, clear links with Standard English speakers, but who do not necessarily want to be associated with them in the national context.

Kenya's Language-In-Education Policy

The language-in-education policy in Kenya is spelled out in the Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training report, a guideline for the education system in Kenya (Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training, 1999). In the rural areas, the medium of instruction in the lower primary is the learner's mother tongue or the dominant language within the school's catchment area. However, within Nairobi and other urban centres where the population is made up of people from different language groups, Kiswahili is the medium of instruction. In upper primary, English is to be used as the medium of instruction throughout the country. To enhance concept formation and articulation in linguistic communication, children should continue to be taught in their mother tongue or the dominant language of the school environment until primary 3. During this period, English and Kiswahili, the two official languages , should be taught vigorously as subjects. In upper primary (primary 4 to 8), when the child has already mastered English and Kiswahili, English should then be introduced as the medium of instruction. The revised English syllabus used in Kenyan schools (Kenya Institute of Education, 2002) states that the reference point to be used in teaching English is the British Standard English, specifically Received Pronunciation. It was the objective of this study to determine if teachers of English in Kenya schools used this standard in their teaching.

Research Problem and Scope

Much of the available research into the spoken English language in Kenya has concentrated on code switching (Nthiga, 2003), analysis of errors in learners' language at different educational levels (Nyamasyo, 1994), and issues in English language teaching methodologies (Gathumbi, 1995). However, hardly any of these approaches consider the interaction between English language and the indigenous languages, or how social variables such as gender and education interplay with English to reflect the pronunciation changes that English has been made to undergo in Kenya. Likewise, Wardhaugh (1998) points out that the spoken forms of a language are not uniform entities but vary according to the area people come from, their social class, their gender and age, ethnicity, their level of

education, among other social variables. Thus, the English language as it is used in, for instance, Kenya, is bound to show variation from the variety spoken in Britain due to differences in sociolinguistic contexts.

The research focused on analysing the spoken English of teachers of English in Kenyan primary schools (drawn from different African languages) to identify variations. These are the features observed in the spoken English used by teachers in Kenyan primary schools that make it unique and distinct from the British Standard variety, the norm of correctness in Kenya. Thus ethnicity as a social variable was correlated against the variations observed to test whether it had a significant influence on variability.

Rationale for Choice of Subjects

The rationale of the choice of teachers of English at the primary school level rests on the premise that they are the ones charged with the responsibility of imparting to the learners the four language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening (cf. Chaudron, 1995). In the Kenyan context, just like in many second and foreign language-learning contexts, learners get exposed to English through formal instruction and the majority gets to hear an English word for the first time when they go to school. The teacher in such a case is the most important source of input and as Ellis (2000) observes, the learners' linguistic competence is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the input that the learners receive from their teacher. Ellis further states that some errors in the learner's language will derive from the way in which the teachers use the target language (cf. Gass & Selinker, 2001). These factors justified a study that examines spoken English used by teachers in the classroom.

Research Design

The study was designed to investigate the relationship between one predictor variable (ethnicity) and multiple continuously scaled linguistic dependent variables. According to Schneider (2004), research within the language variation paradigm falls within the quantitative research design. Essentially, the variationist paradigm builds upon quantitative methodology, aiming to establish relationships between social factors and linguistic variables. Nevertheless, qualitative analyses adopted in the study help to illustrate the nature of linguistic variations.

Sites, Population and Sample Size

To achieve the aims of the study, data were collected from teachers of English in the rural areas of Kenya's Bomet, Siaya and Thika Counties and from Nairobi County, an urban setting so as to cater for rural-urban dichotomy and also because the three languages are spoken natively in these areas of study. Judgemental sampling method and the social network approach (Milroy & Gordon, 2003) guided the researcher in choosing the required study sample. The underlying principle of judgemental sampling method entails identifying in advance the target variables. This then presupposes the type of respondents to be studied. Milroy and Gordon (2003) note that if the research questions highlight relationships between variables, or comparisons between groups, then judgement sampling is appropriate since it makes sense to select the sample in such a way that there is maximum chance for any relationship to be observed. The social network approach, on the other hand, looks at an individual in a speech community as having specified networks of relationships with other individuals whom he or she depends on and who in turn depend on him or her. Thus, a researcher is able to enter the field to collect the language data as a friend of a friend, and this aspect helps reduce the Observer paradox since the researcher is part of the network.

The study's target population was teachers of English in Kenyan upper primary schools. The research sample was made up of 48 primary school teachers. According to the distribution principle, a larger sample would not necessarily have given varied data but more examples of the same (Cheshire, 1982), because the patterns can be captured from as few as 16 sample members. In the same vein, Milroy and Gordon (2003) point out that variation studies do not require the statistical analysis of hundreds of speakers' records as variations can emerge even from samples as small as twenty-five speakers. Considering such views, the researcher concluded that a 48-member sample would be sufficient to enable an exhaustive study of linguistic variations in the spoken English as used by teachers in the targeted areas.

Independent Variable: Ethnicity

According to Sahgal (1991), many of the differences between native and non-native Englishes have their source in the structure of community languages. He thus argues that if a variation theory is to include non-native varieties of a language, the speaker's community language has to be recognised as a major variable, analogous to such factors as social class,

region, gender and age which are conventionally recognised in the variation paradigm.

In the present, the focus is on teachers of English from three community languages: Gĩkũyũ, Dholuo and Kalenjin. **Gĩkũyũ,** represented by **KI** in the data analysis, is a language in the Central Bantu branch of the Niger–Congo family spoken primarily by the Agĩkũyũ of Kenya (Mbaabu, 1996). Studies on the Gĩkũyũ language as exemplified in Mbugua (1990, p. 54) agree that the language operates on a seven-vowel inventory and eighteen consonant phonemes. As Mbugua (1990) observes, length and tone are distinctive in the phonological system of Gĩkũyũ and the two are very common features. However, the two supra-segmental features are beyond the scope of this study and will not be discussed because doing so will make the scope too wide. In Gĩkũyũ, vocalic segments can occur in any phonetic environment within a word.

The other language group from which respondents in this study are chosen is **Luo**, represented by **LU** in the data analysis. Dholuo is a Western Nilotic language and is spoken by the Luo of Kenya who are part of the Nilotes collectively referred to as Lwo (Okombo, 1982, p.11). Myers-Scotton (1993) notes that Dholuo is the most prominent non-Bantu language in Kenya because of its high number of speakers distributed in various parts of the country. The phonemic inventory of Dholuo vowels consists of the single low, front vowel /a/ and four pairs of other vowels (Okombo, 1982 and Oduol, 1990). These four pairs of vowels can be divided based on vowel harmony into [+Advanced Tongue Root] and its [-Advanced Tongue Root] counterpart. The phoneme /a/ is neutral. Okombo (1997, p.23) identifies twenty-six Dholuo consonantal phonemes, including two semi vowels and five nasal stop consonants

The third language group examined in this study is the **Kalenjin** group, represented by **KA** in the data analysis. It belongs to the southern subdivision of the greater Nilotic language family, which extends from Sudan in the North to Tanzania in the South (Otterloo, 1979). Kalenjin is used as a broad linguistic classification for social groups in formerly Kenya's Rift Valley Province who speak dialects that share enough linguistic features to be considered varieties of the same language. These groups also share the similar culture and have the same socio-political aspirations (Muthwii, 1994). The present study draws its data from Kipsigis, one of the dialects of the Kalenjin language. Most of the Kalenjin dialects have a ten-vowel system, five of them lax and the others tense. All vowels can occur in word initial, medial and end positions.

Linguistic Dependent Variables

The study adopts Wardhaugh's (1998) definition of a linguistic variable as a linguistic item, which has identifiable variants. Variation in language is an extremely complex phenomenon, and it would be quite unrealistic to attempt to analyse all its aspects. In this connection, the study limited itself to the analysis of the following linguistic variables:

a) Phonological: plosives, fricatives, affricates and approximants.
b) Grammatical: use of the article (omission, redundant use and wrong choice); use of the preposition (omission, redundant use and wrong choice); pronoun copying and subject-verb agreement.

Little needs to be said about the pronoun copying variable as used in the study. It refers to the occurrence of a noun phrase followed immediately by a pronoun with the same referent within a sentence or utterance, for example: "Soi's grandmother ***she*** took him to the bus stop." Unlike UK/US English, this pattern is considered grammatical in most African languages (Schmied, 1991).

Fieldwork and Data Collection Procedures

Classroom interactions during English lessons were tape-recorded three times in order to obtain the language data. Though the interactions during the first visit were tape-recorded, the language data were not used because the visit was only meant to neutralize the effects of the Observer paradox. Since the aim in the research was to find variations in the spoken English of teachers and to capture these as naturally as possible, an initial visit helped to establish a more natural and relaxed environment thus lowering teachers' inhibitions. The first visit, therefore, helped to reduce teachers' anxiety and they had relaxed by the time we made the second one. This helped reduce the Observer Paradox and consequently the teachers were now comfortable with the researcher. Thus, only the one-hour language data tape-recorded during the second and third visits were coded and analyzed. At the end of the three visits, we played back the recording for the respondent who would then listen and point out whether there were some areas he/she did not like, so that they could be deleted. Happily, they never asked us to get rid of any section.

Methods for Quantifying the Linguistic Dependent Variables and Data Analysis

The teachers' spoken language data was first transcribed, and then analyzed to identify the variants of each. Variation in the articulation of consonants was identified through the approach used by Roach (1998) and Wells (1982). Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik's (1985) approach was used for the grammatical variation. We also made use of Oxford Advanced Dictionary in determining a correct description of the specified variation. The second opinion of a native RP speaker was crucial in crosschecking the accuracy of the linguistic variations identified. After this, the total tokens for each variant were determined by counting frequency of occurrence of the specific variant in the language data of each teacher, in each of the two teacher-categories, and in the entire language data.

Nature of Variation

Holding all factors constant (gender, education, rural/urban dichotomy and other social factors), data analyses revealed that the English spoken by teachers in primary schools in Kenya varied significantly from the British Standard variety. This was noted mostly in phonological variation. For example, variation was noted in the use of the labio-dental fricatives [f] and [v]; approximants [r] and [l]; the alveolar fricatives [s] and [z]; the velar plosives [k] and [g] and the inter-dental fricatives [θ] and [t] among others. Grammatical variations were also noted in the use of the article, prepositions, subject verb agreement and pronouns. For example, there was omission of an obligatory article, redundant use of a preposition and lack of agreement between the subject and the verb. The following examples drawn from the teachers' spoken data from Gĩkũyũ (KI/GI), Luo (LU), and Kalenjin (KA) language backgrounds illustrate the nature of variation. The transcriptions are based on how the teachers pronounced the specific word.

Phonological Variation

(a) *KI1*
That word is **[lialais]**. Class say **[lialais]**. I want those who have not **[led]** to
realize realize read
[li:d]. [meli], please [li:d].
read Mary read

These are questions **[flom]** the **[stoli]** and we cannot be able to answer those questions

from story
unless we **[li:d]** again and understand it.
read

(b) *KI5*
We talk of **[lili]** when something is **[veli]** small and another **[veli]** big.
really very very
Cheetah can **[lan]** **[veli]** fast.
run very
The coconut **[tli]** is **[lili]** tall.
tree really
He was **[laða]** disappointed. He was not **[feli]** pleased.
rather very
As we had said earlier, adjectives **[desklaib]** a noun.
describe

In a number of instances where the approximant **[r]** was expected in the RP, the lateral approximant was used as examples in (a) and (b) shown above. Other words which were supposed to be articulated with the approximant **[r]** but were produced with a lateral approximant **[l]** are **writing**, **porridge**, **very**, **removing**, **correct** and **serious**. Consequently, the words **very** [veri] and **correct** [kərekt] were articulated as **[veli]** and **[kəlekt]** in the study data.

In addition, variation was noted in the use of voiced and voiceless labio-dental fricatives as in the following examples.

(c) *KI4*

If you look at our book page eighty **[faif]** write for me at least [**faif]** sentences.
five *five*

Another phonological variation observed was in the use of bilabial plosives [p] and [b] as in the following examples.

(d) *KA40*

Once there was a **[pig]** lion, staying in a forest… he tried his **[pest]** to **[prek]** the net,
big *best* *break*
[pat] he couldn't so the lion struggled. So, he used his teeth .
but

You can see some**[pɔdi]** who is very rich.
somebody

The lion was just walking **[postfuli]**
boastfully

(e) *KA46*

Yes when the **[pɛl]** rings. A few days ago, you drew and [**lepɔd]** many parts.
bell *labelled*
Say a **[pɔtl]** to carry milk.
bottle
A person who works who **[puilds]** a house is called a **[puilder].**
build *builder*
A person who works in a [**laiprari]** is a [**laiprarian]**. A **[prodkasta]** works in ... *library* *librarian* *broadcaster*
A **[putʃa]** works in a **[putʃari]**. The cashier works in a **[paŋk]**.
butcher *butchery* *bank*

In example (e), the word **bell** was articulated with sound **[p]** thus producing **[pɛl].** Likewise, the word **labelled [leibld]** was articulated in the study data as **[leipɔd]** instead of **[leibld]** in RP. Similarly, the words **bank** [bæŋk] and **bone** [bəun] were articulated as **[paŋk]** and **[pon]** respectively. It is worth noting that this particular variant occurred in word-initial and word-medial positions.

(f) *LU22*

When you are introduced to a stranger by a friend, we **[usuali]** say "It is a **[plesa]** to meet you." *usually*
pleasure

(g) *LU24*

You must have learnt this in science. A thermometer is used to **[mesa]** what?
measure
Can you say to **[mesa]** temperature?
measure

In examples (f) and (g), the voiceless alveolar fricative **[s]** was used in the highlighted words, instead of the expected voiced post-alveolar fricative **[ʒ]** in RP. For instance in (g), the word **measure** [meʒə] was articulated in the study data as **[mesa]**. The use of variant **[s]** instead of the voiced post-alveolar fricative seems to be influenced by a mismatch between orthography and pronunciation. In the highlighted words in (f) and (g), the grapheme <**s**> is used in orthography but in pronunciation, the voiced post-alveolar fricative **[ʒ]** is the expected sound.

Grammatical Variation

In this study data, variations were also observed in contexts where there was use of pronoun copying. In cases where a noun phrase subject was expressed, there were a number of cases in which the subject was followed by a pronoun referring back to the subject. Thus, the subject was expressed twice.

(a) *KI2*

Soi's grandmother **she** took him to the bus stop because Soi had to leave early in the morning. The grandmother **she** feared that Soi would be attacked. It was still very dark. Think about what happens in a harbour, like Kenya's Kilindini harbour. Somebody? Very good. The containers **they** were being lifted up.

In the examples in (a), the occurrence of a pronoun immediately after the noun phrases that function as the subject in the sentences can be noted. In so doing, it becomes as though there is occurrence of double subjects within the same sentence, though these two subjects have the same co-referent.

Use of the article displayed variation as illustrated below:

(b) *KA40*

[omis. of indef.art. a] rat is a very small animal and **[omis. of indef.art.a]** lion is a big animal. So **[omis. of def.art. the]** lion, no **[omis. of def.art. the]** rat said...so **[omis. of def.art. the]** rat ran away... so **[omis. of def. art. the]** rat lived in hole.

In the examples highlighted in (b), there is the omission of either the definite article **the** or the indefinite articles **a** and **an.** For example, the indefinite article **a** is needed to indicate that the noun 'rat' is a count noun and that it is being mentioned for the first time in the discourse. The second time the noun 'rat' is mentioned means that it has a direct anaphoric reference and, therefore, it requires that the definite article **the** be used to indicate that the two nouns have co-reference relations. However, in the study data, the article was omitted as example (b) shows. Further, there were variations in the use of prepositions and also in subject-verb agreement. Prepositions were omitted, substituted or redundantly used. Singular subjects were used with the verbs that are normally used with plural subjects while plural subjects were used with verbs that are used with singular subjects.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of each phonological and grammatical variable focused on in the study as it related to the social variable of ethnicity was done. Following the analysis of phonological and grammatical variables we focussed on in this study, we then conducted a statistical analysis..... First, a table that presented the frequency of occurrence of each variant and its percentage as measured in terms of the social variable of ethnicity was presented (see Appendices). In such a table, **1** stands for language data from Gĩkũyũ speakers of English; **2** for language data from Dholuo speakers of English; and **3** for language data from Kalenjin speakers of English. ANOVA tables (see Appendices), on the other hand, contained information on sums of squares, mean squares and significance levels. The use of sums of squares, mean squares, df, and F factor was calculated to help us arrive at the level of significance so that conclusions about the relationship between independent variable of ethnicity and a particular linguistic variant could be reached. The results were then interpreted and presented at the end of each table. In the interests of brevity, we do not

include all the tables for each variable in the chapter; we only include a sample of frequency and Anova tables in the appendices.

Explanation of Variation Observed

The general/main observation/finding in/of this study is that ethnicity has a significant influence on language variability as measured by the use of the phonological and grammatical variables focused on in the study. Our qualitative and statistical analyses show that the variety of English of specific mother-tongue speakers is marked by identifiable phonological features. For instance, variation in the use of the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] is observed in the language data of Kalenjin speakers of English only, while variation in the use of approximants occurs in the language data of Gĩkũyũ speakers only. Such variations, however, do not cut across the variety spoken by speakers of English from all the three language groups dealt with in the study. These specific language variants are useful in identifying the particular varieties of English as spoken in Kenya and which are often used as stereotypes. However, this study shows that perhaps these variants, which are only found in the language of speakers drawn from specific community language, can act as ethnicity markers in a speaker's variety of English. The variation, for example, between [r] and [l] among the Gĩkũyũ, [s] and [ʃ] among the Dholuo and [k], [ɣ] and [g] among the Kalenjin speakers of English reflect the different phonological systems that these languages have. Pronunciation patterns of the speech of those for whom English is not the native language may be expected to reflect many of the phonological and phonetic characteristics of their first languages.

The variation observed in this study has a relation with the phonetic and phonological systems that are found in the three community languages. For example, [r] and [l] sounds are used as free variants in Gĩkũyũ while the same sounds are different phonemes in RP. A Gĩkũyũ speaker of English is, therefore, likely to display variation in articulating the /l/ and /r/ in English words such as **lake** [leik] and **rake** [reik]. In stereotyping of English speech in Kenya, Gĩkũyũ speakers are in most cases stereotyped with the [r/l] phenomenon (Schmied, 1991).

Prenasaliation of consontants, refers to the insertion of nasals [n, m and ŋ] before alveolar plosives of English also relates to the phonological system in a speaker's community language. In Gĩkũyũ, for example, the voiced plosives [b, d, and g] do not occur in isolation. They are preceded by a nasal stop as in the words **mburi** [mbori] (a goat); **mũndũ** [mɔndɔ] (a

person); and **ngui** [ŋgui] (a dog). This then influences the speaker in articulation of the voiced plosives in English.

The statistical analysis done indicated that variation in the articulation of **[θ, p, b, t, d, k, g]** sounds is mainly a feature of the English drawn from the Kalenjin speakers. Muthwii (1994) observes, for example, that the absence in the Kalenjin phonology of the voiced stop and fricative phonemes gives enormous problems of pronunciation to many Kalenjin speakers of English. This leads such speakers to assign voicing occasionally to velar and bilabial sounds in an erratic manner. Consequently, incorrect voicing or lack of voicing marks their English. Sometimes, when sounds are voiced, the voicing may be being patterned after that of the Kalenjin system so that instead of an English voiced plosive stop such as [b], one may articulate the voiced bilabial fricative [β] or [ɣ], if the sound is between vowels: "about" [aβout] and "ago" [aɣo]. One may also say [apout] and [ako]. Muthwii (1994) adds that very often, this defies educational levels attained by speakers, especially in informal contexts. Variability in the use of the affricates [tʃ] where a voiceless affricate is used instead of the expected voiced affricate [dʒ] and vice versa is observed in the language data of Kalenjin speakers of English.

Dholuo, on the other hand, has no post-alveolar fricatives [ʃ, ʒ], only affricates [tʃ, dʒ] and thus some of the speakers will be unable to distinguish between '**sin**' [sin] and '**shin**' [ʃin] (see Kanyoro, 1991: 409). A feature of many Dholuo speakers of English is the articulation of the fricative [s] in place of the post-alveolar fricative sound [ʃ]. In this study data, Dholuo speakers post a high percentage of occurrences of variant [s/ʃ] of 92.98. Kanyoro (1991, p. 409) identifies the two fricatives as consonant sounds that mark pronunciation variability among Dholuo speakers of English. She adds that there is a lack of distinction between the two as in:

(a)Sue [su:] and shoe [ʃu:]
(b)Sat [sæt] and shut [ʃʌt]

As Nondi (1995) points out, the phonemic system of Dholuo does not have /v/, /z/ and /ʃ/. The absence of these sounds in the phonemic inventory of Dholuo presents a challenge to a Dholuo user of English. Nondi further observes that there is a tendency to replace the post-alveolar fricatives [ʃ] [ʒ] with the voiceless alveolar fricative [s] and the voiced alveolar fricative [z] with [s]. While pronouncing an English phoneme that does not occur in the Dholuo language, speakers tend to pronounce the phoneme closest in terms of phonetic features to the one in question that

appears in Dholuo. That is, due to the difficulty in pronouncing say, the voiced post-alveolar fricative [ʒ], the speaker would articulate it as [s] because that is the closest phoneme in Dholuo to RP's post-alveolar fricative [ʒ].

Muthwii (1994, p. 334) suggests that one way of identifying the varieties of English spoken in Kenya could be in terms of the linguistic differences between English and the languages with which it co-exists. She adds that the variety of English spoken by speakers of over 42 languages spoken in Kenya reflects the influence of the linguistic systems of their respective languages similar to what she observes concerning the Kalenjin-English contact situation. This view supports Abdulaziz's (1991, p. 395) assertion that a form discernable as East African English has emerged due to mother tongue influence and that there are features of pronunciation that identify Kenyan from Tanzanian speakers of English (see also Kanyoro, 1991).

The findings of this study reveal some of the phonological variations that have a cumulative effect in marking the variety of English that is used by teachers from the three language groups thus acting as markers of ethnicity. These markers can be summarized as follows.

Gĩkũyũ[r] and [l] as in r̲ice and l̲ice
pre-nasalizing plosives [mb], [nd] and [ŋg]
Omission of alveolar nasal
[f] and [v] as in f̲ive and v̲isitor
[θ] and [ð] as in th̲in and th̲en
Dholuo[s], [ʃ], [ʒ] and [z] in s̲in, s̲hin, meas̲ure, and z̲inc respectively
[f] and [v] as in f̲erry and v̲ery
Kalenjin[k], [ɣ] and [g] as in g̲ood/glean and c̲lean
[p] [β] and [b] as in p̲en,ben ho̲bby/happy and p̲eople/peace/bees
[tʃ] and [dʒ] as in c̲hoose and j̲uice
[t] and [d] as in t̲ie and d̲ie
[θ] and [t] th̲ank and t̲ank
[θ] and [ð] th̲ing and th̲at
[f] and [v] as in f̲ine and v̲ine

Considering the emergent sociolinguistic patterns discussed so far, we may conclude that there are significant differences between the spoken English used by primary school teachers in Kenya and the British Standard variety. This variability cuts across all the three language groups focused on in the study. For example, the speakers from the three language groups vary from RP in their use of specific sound segments and grammatical

features. Since English is mainly acquired formally as a second language through the school system, and since the primary school is the level at which the foundations of English language acquisition are laid, the fact that teachers, the learners' linguistic models, possess a variety different from the prescribed standard, has implications for the various groups of people involved in language in education.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for the curriculum developers and makers of language policies in Kenya. As this study has indicated, there is a discrepancy between the theoretical norm of the English language use in education (RP) and the actual language behaviour that needs to be addressed. Should a country continue using standards that are native-speaker determined or standards that are locally determined? The British Standard variety is the norm of correctness in Kenyan schools, but as this study has shown, the teachers themselves have not fully acquired this norm. Given this sociolinguistic reality in education in Kenyan primary schools, it is almost impossible for the learner to keep in touch with the British Standard English because of lack of resources and overwhelming non-native input.

The users of English in Kenya are expected to conform to local norms and speech strategies when interacting in intra-national contexts. As Yamaguchi (2004) puts it, users of English do wish to keep the uniqueness of their English because their variety of English is closely tied to their identity. In this connection, policy-makers, curriculum developers, and the Kenyan government at large need to initiate and undertake a comprehensive research on English language use until a reliable description of the standard Kenyan variety of English in its phonological, syntactic, lexico-semantic and pragmatic components are made available, and similarly described and correlated with a number of social variables. A full discussion of this variety would lead to an examination of an optimal national language policy for Kenya. Such a discussion would be practical and meaningful for all Kenyans. After this task, Kenya would be able to address the issue of the model of English to be used in education, for as it is revealed in this study, teachers at the primary school level do not use majority of British Standard forms which would enable them to impart RP English to their learners. Thus, the guideline stipulated in the Kenyan English syllabus that teachers should use British Standard variety as the norm of correctness is an ideal that is too hard to achieve (cf. Muthwii & Kioko, 2004).

One can argue that the spoken English used by these teachers has interacted with the local community languages thus varying from the British Standard. This is one variety of English that learners in Kenyan primary schools are presented with in the classrooms by their teachers, their linguistic models. This indigenised variety is what Kenyans are in touch with (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001) and not the standard British variety as claimed in Zuengler (1982) and Schmied (1991). We can posit that the expectation by policy-makers of a native like competence in English for the non-native teachers is an ideal and possibly cannot become a reality in Kenya, as shown by the findings of this study. Though the findings in this study are based on a small sample, they reveal that there is need to ask what the future of English language use in Kenya should be, especially in education.

There is need to address the issue of a more practical standard variety that should act as an appropriate yardstick in the use, teaching and learning of English in Kenyan schools. As it is now, the teacher is expected to use RP as a linguistic yardstick in pronunciation. But how many of them will articulate the word '**home**' as the diphthongised [həum]? This points to the fact that there is a discrepancy between the actual behaviour and the theoretical norm in language in education in Kenya, in that the teachers and the learners have very little contact, if any, with the British Standard English; yet this is the supposed norm of correctness.

Should Kenyans import native English teachers and teacher supervisors, to be the reference for the teacher and the learner and also to act as agents of continuing education for the Kenyan English teacher? As Kioko and Muthwii (2001, p.20) observe, this would be a very expensive option, considering the number of schools that exist in Kenya. Getting enough native English teachers to attend to all local needs will be an insurmountable hurdle. After all, the RP speakers are a minority, even in England (Kashina, 1994). As an export commodity, RP speakers are in short supply and can be recruited only at great expense; thus, it would not be economically viable to import them to Kenya.

Another option would be to send language teachers to native contexts to learn the standard forms. As Kioko and Muthwii (2001) suggest, Kenya can opt to regularly send some of the teachers of English for short courses in native-speaker contexts so that they can improve on both their pronunciation and grammar. This would provide an invaluable input for such teachers so that when they come back to Kenya, they will be appropriate linguistic models for their learners; they will be able to impart this ideal native speaker standard to the learners. However, this would also be a very expensive venture which the country can hardly afford.

The third suggestion would be for educators and linguists in Kenya, together with native speakers of the British Standard variety, to team up to study the way English is used in Kenya and publish on areas of discrepancy which would guide the teachers and learners alike. As Kioko and Muthwii (2001, p. 209) argue, such a measure would create a move that is not in line with other innovations in the democratisation and Africanisation of education in Kenya.

Adoption of Educated Kenyan Variety as the Way Forward

We concur with Kioko and Muthwii's (2001) view that the more realistic and prudent move would be to accept the sociolinguistic reality of English in Kenya and work out a new direction for its use in the education system. The socio-cultural circumstances of learning and using English cannot be ignored and this sociolinguistic reality should be taken into consideration when mapping out the practical model that should be used as the standard while teaching and using English in education in Kenya (Kembo-Sure, 2004). Detailed research into the educated Kenyan variety of English will need to be undertaken. It is after such research that the educated Kenyan's variety of English can be adopted as the endonormative model and consequently used in the education system in Kenya. As the findings in this study have revealed, teachers make use of some linguistic features that make their variety of English unique and distinct from the British Standard variety, and it is this distinct and nativised variety that the learners interact with as they listen to their teachers in the classroom. As Kachru (1992) argues, the implications of the sociolinguistic reality of English language use around the world needs to be recognised.

The dual role of English both as a national language and as an international language in Kenya should be borne in mind in policy-making and standard setting. We argue for the consideration of the sociolinguistic reality in which English finds itself in Kenya, so that a more practical norm of correctness that will be meaningful to the students and achievable by the teacher is adopted for use as a medium of instruction. Curriculum developers and educators need to address this issue of a practical and realistic model if Kenyan users of English are to avoid the dilemma that Rao (cited in Ashcroft 1989, p. 61) talks about when he remarks that:

> ... The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is not one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language... We are all instinctively bilingual, many

> of us writing in our own language and English... We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians.

Adoption of educated Kenyan variety of English will be an answer to the needs of Kenyan learners and teachers. This is a form of English that will be close to the rest of the standards of English. The educated Kenyan's standard will be within the reach of the learners and teachers under normal schools and college conditions. A national standard will set for the teacher and the learner proficiency goals that they can actually achieve. It will be a reference that teachers will easily identify with. The teacher of English will be able to authoritatively claim to know what a correct form is. In addition, the task of training teachers in the use of this model will be much easier. Furthermore, its users will not encounter any psychological barriers like the fear of sounding foreign or lack of motivation to learn the RP.

Using the Kenyan variety of English should reduce the discrepancy between what the teacher wants his class to learn and what the educated members of the society, often including the teacher himself, actually say or write outside the English class. As Okombo (1986) argues, having a national standard of English will enable Kenyans to prepare their native intelligence in a language that has the capacity to reflect their thoughts as Kenyans and whose vocabulary and even structure are in harmony with the unique features of their physical and cognitive environment. In its foreign outfit, English cannot perform native rituals of the Kenyan society: it can never become 'our language' in that shape.

In using a Kenyan standard variety of English in the education system, schools will be adapting their learning to a homegrown product rather than an imported one. We concur with Kachru's (1992) argument that local models of English are more appropriate in non-native contexts than the adoption of exonormative model. Similarly, as Yamaguchi (2004) remarks, the acquisition of native-like English should not be the goal of language instruction in a non-native context, such as Kenya. After all, a majority of the teachers of English language in Kenya are locally trained and speak English with a local accent. Thus, presenting a native-speaker accent as the target of pronunciation instruction via imported audio- and video-tapes sets up impossible goals, creates an alienating discourse, and also touts the norms of native Englishes as superior to endonormative ones that are locally determined. Local standard will only be different from say British English, but not deficient.

Conclusion

As noted in the preceding sections, the spoken English used by teachers in primary schools in Kenya varies both phonologically and grammatically from the British Standard variety, the expected norm of appropriateness and correctness in Kenyan schools. Varieties of a language provide a means for communication and express a sense of belonging to a community. It is our thesis that Standard English is no longer the preserve of native-speaker contexts. The English language has become diversified and as such, it serves a whole range of different communities. As Kachru (1992) observes, English no longer belongs only to native speakers; that is, the native speakers of the language can no longer presume to decide for all speakers of the language- including non-native speakers- what counts as good, bad, acceptable, or correct English.

Appropriate pedagogy considers the way to prepare learners to be both global and local speakers of English so that they can feel at home in both international and national cultures. Speakers of English will, therefore, have to strike a balance between the national ethos and the international functions of English. They should be able to continually renew and alter their variety of English to suit their socio-cultural surrounding, so that as Achebe (1975, p. 62) remarks, "... the English language will be able to carry the weight of (our) African experience, but it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding..." This means that any standard variety of English that is locally developed, although it must of necessity be related to, and so in a sense be in communion with its ancestral origins, owes no allegiance to any descendants of this ancestry in the present. As Romaine (1994, p.221) observes, language has no existence apart from the social reality of its users. Therefore, there is need to move from being prescriptive to becoming descriptive: to describe the English language as it is used in Kenya and not as some people might think it ought to be. This would be a more accommodative approach; the non-standard forms can be seen as simply non-standard and not sub-standard.

As Kashina (1994, p. 25) asks, what is desirable to aim at: the presumed attainable target, for example educated Kenyan English, or the unattainable, British Standard variety? Do we set our eyes on the impossible and in the end achieve the attainable, or do we aim at the attainable and eventually end with what others have implied would inevitably result in a 'lowering of standards'? Kenya should utilise her local brand of English if the language in education has to be practical and meaningful to learners and teachers.

Notes

[1] Kenya is a highly multilingual society and actually there are over 40 indigenous languages. Nearly everyone in Kenya is bilingual and some are trilingual.

References

Abdulaziz, M. (1991). East Africa. In J. Cheshire (Ed.), *English around the world: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 391-401). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Achebe, C. (1975). *Morning yet on creation day: Essays.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, M. (1989). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures.* London: Rutledge.

Chaudron, C. (1995). *Second language classroom: Research on teaching and learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cheshire, J. (1982). *Variation in English dialect: A sociolinguistic study.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. (2000). *The study of second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2001). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Gathumbi, A. W. (1995). *Verbal discourse events in a bilingual formal setting: Instructional procedures in ESL classrooms in Kenyan secondary schools* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of Reading.

Kachru, B. (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures* (2nd ed.). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kanyoro, M. (1991). The politics of English language in Kenya and Tanzania. In J. Cheshire (Ed.), *English around the world: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 402-419). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kashina, K. (1994). The dilemma of standard English in Zambia: Pedagogical, educational and socio-cultural considerations. *Language, Culture and Curriculum,* 7(1), 17-28. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kembo-Sure (2004). Establishing national standard and English language curriculum change in Kenya. In M. J. Muthwii & A. N. Kioko (Eds.), *New language bearings in Africa: A fresh quest* (pp. 101-115). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kenya Institute of Education (2002). *Revised English syllabus for Kenya primary schools.* Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

Kioko, A., & Muthwii, M. (2001). The demands of a changing society: English in education in Kenya today. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 14*(3), 201-213.

Mbaabu, I. (1996). *Language policy in East Africa*. Nairobi: ERAP.

Mbugua, (1990). *A phonological reality of the syllable* (Unpublished MA thesis), Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Milroy, L., & Gordon, M. (2003). *Sociolinguistics: Method and interpretation.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Muthiani, J., & Muchiri, M. (1987). *Teaching English in Kenya secondary schools*. Nairobi: Ministry of Education Publications.

Muthwii, M. (1994). *Variability in language use: A study of Kalenjin speakers of English and Kiswahili in Kenya* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of East Anglia, Norwich.

Muthwii, M., & Kioko, A. (Eds.). (2004). *New language bearings in Africa: A fresh quest*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for code switching: Evidence from Africa.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

National Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Population demographics.* Nairobi: Government Press.

Nondi, E. (1995). *Pronunciation problems in the acquisition of English as a second language by young Dholuo L1 speakers* (Unpublished M.A. thesis), Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Nthiga, P. (2003). *Patterns of code switching in pre-primary classroom discourse in selected schools at Kasarani Division, Nairobi* (Unpublished M.A. thesis), Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Nyamasyo, E. (1994). An analysis of the spelling errors in the written English of Kenyan pre-university students. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 7*(1), 79-92.

Oduol, J. H. (1990). *Dholuo dialects: Synchronic state and some historical inferences* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of Nairobi, Kenya.

Okombo, O. D. (1982). *Dholuo morpho-phonemic in generative framework.* Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

—. (1986). *The functional paradigm and Dholuo constituent order* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of Nairobi, Kenya.

—. (1997). *A functional grammar of Dholuo*. Koln: Rudiger Kopper Verlag.

Otterloo, R. U. (1979). *A Kalenjin dialect study*. University of Nairobi: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language.* London: Longman.

Roach, P. (1998). *English phonetics and phonology* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Romaine, S. (1994). *Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics.* Oxford: Cambridge University Press.

Sahgal, A. (1991). Patterns of language use in a bilingual setting in India. In J. Cheshire (Ed.). *English around the world: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 299-307). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmied, J. (1991). *English in Africa: An introduction.* London: Longman.

Schneider, E. (2004). Investigating variation and change in written documents. In J. Chambers, P. Trudgill & N. Schilling-Estes (Eds.), *The handbook of language variation and change* (pp. 67-96). Oxford: Blackwell.

Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (1999). *Totally integrated quality education and training report of the commission of inquiry into the education system of Kenya.* Nairobi: Government Printers.

Wardhaugh, R. (1998). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wells, J. C. (1982). *Accents of English.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yamaguchi, C. (2004). Towards international English in EFL classrooms in Japan. *TESL Journal*. Nagasaki, Japan.

Zuengler, J. (1982). Kenyan English. In B. Kachru (Ed.). *The other tongue: English across cultures* (pp. 112-124). Oxford: Pergamon Press.