The Dynamics of English in Namibia

Perspectives on an emerging variety

EDITED BY
Anne Schröder

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The original plan and the first Call for Papers for this book was drafted in collaboration with Alexander Kautzsch. Because of his unexpected and premature death, Alexander never saw the contributors' abstracts in response to our invitation for abstract submissions to this volume nor did he live to see that Stephanie Hackert accepted the book proposal for publication in the *Varieties of English around the World* series.

I would like to dedicate this volume to my dear friend and esteemed colleague Alexander Kautzsch. We miss you.

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The dynamics of English in Namibia
An introduction

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1.   Introduction

This volume is the first book-length publication that puts Namibia and the English language spoken there on the map of World Englishes. In the past it has been noted with regret (e.g. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014; Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Schröder & Zähres 2020) that English in Namibia has been overlooked in most textbooks, handbooks, and surveys of varieties of English around the world (e.g. Kortmann & Schneider 2004; Kachru et al. 2009; Kirkpatrick 2010; Schneider 2011). Elsewhere it has only been mentioned in passing, usually as an offshoot of White South African English (e.g. Trudgill & Hannah 2017; Gramley 2012: 308).[1] That it was not included in two volumes on "lesser-known varieties of English" (Schreier et al. 2010; Williams et al. 2015) is mostly due to the absence of a British colonial history. However, this fact in particular, together with English having been the only official language since Namibia's independence in 1990, has more recently attracted the attention of a number of linguists.

The present volume brings together most of these scholars from various linguistic fields to present their current work on English in Namibia and thus represents the first 'state-of- the art' compilation of research on this new and burgeoning variety of English. However, before discussing the genesis and contents of this book in any more detail, a few general words on Namibia, its linguistic ecology and history may be in place.

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[1]   Gramley (2012: 308) however notes that we find "features which resemble those of Black S(outh) Af(rican) E(nglish)." And in the revised second edition of his book, the author adds that "Namibia seems to be developing a number of features of its own" (Gramley 2019: 205).

2. Background information on Namibia

2.1 Geography and demography

Namibia is a southern African country, bordering South Africa in the south, Botswana in the east, Zambia in the northeast, Angola in the north, and the South Atlantic Ocean in the west and has fourteen administrative regions (Map 1).

Maho (1998: 3) divides Namibia into three main topographic regions: (1) a coastal desert in the west, the *Namib Desert*, covering approximately 15% of the territory and marked by low precipitation, high sand dunes, little vegetation and a cooler climate; (2) the *Kalahari Desert*, a semi-desert in eastern Namibia, covering 25% of the Namibian territory, extending into Botswana and characterised by "shrub vegetation, hot veld areas and practically no surface water at all" (Maho 1998: 3); (3) between these two deserts, a *Central Plateau* with mountain ranges, forest, savannah plains, and woodland vegetation, covering almost 60% of the territory. Other sources (e.g. Namibia Travel Guide) add: (4) the *Great Escarpment*, a mountain range separating

Map 1. Map of present-day Namibia indicating the political regions

the Namib Desert from the Central Plateau, and (5) the *Kavango-Caprivi/Zambezi* region located in the northeast and marked by humid climate and abundant wildlife (see Map 2).

Namibia's geography, i.e. "the scarcity of resources, the size and aridity of the territory, and the wide variations in seasonal and annual rainfall have all played a role in patterns of settlement and control" (Harlech-Jones 1990: 29).

With a population of 2,678,191 people (2021 estimate) on almost 825,000 sq km, Namibia is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. Fifty-five percent of its population live in urban areas. With 404,000 inhabitants, the capital Windhoek hosts almost 20% of the entire population (CIA World Factbook 2021). Other larger urban settlements are Rundu in the Kavango region, as well as Walvis Bay and Swakopmund on the western coast (Melber 2014: 113). Ejikeme (2011: 16) further mentions Rehoboth, Keetmanshoop, Lüderitz as well as Tsumeb, Ojiwarongo, and Okahandja, "which are all relatively small towns". A larger clustering of people can also be found in the extreme north-central area along the border with Angola (CIA World Factbook 2018), with urban settlements such as Oshakati. (See Map 3)
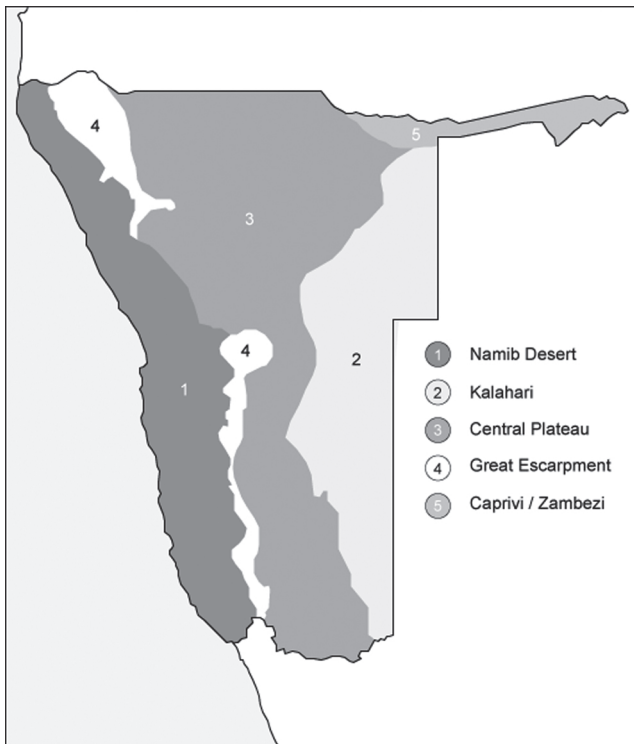
Map 2. Map of present-day Namibia indicating the natural regions

Map 3. Map of present-day Namibia indicating major urban settlements

Although the population is comparatively homogenous by African standards, especially when compared to highly multilingual and multicultural nation states such as Nigeria or Cameroon, there is considerable ethnic diversity in Namibia. The CIA World Factbook classifies the population on the basis of skin colour and tells us that 87.5% of the Namibian population is black, 6% is white and 6.5% is mixed. They also list a number of ethnic groups, such as the Ovambo (with approximately 50% of the population), the Kavango (9%), the Herero (7%), the Damara (7%), the Nama (5%), Caprivian (4%), San (3%), Baster (2%), and Tswana (0.5%) (CIA World Factbook 2018). With this classification the CIA World Factbook largely mirrors the categorisation originally introduced by the former South African administration (cf. Maho 1998: 13).

2.2 Linguistic situation

Ethnic background and linguistic diversity are closely intertwined. "One cannot discuss the languages spoken in Namibia independently of the peoples inhabiting Namibia. It is, nevertheless, necessary to distinguish between the people and their

languages, since linguistic boundaries do not always coincide with group boundaries." (Maho 1998: 16) The country hosts 20–30 languages from three language families:[2] (1) the Bantu languages, such as Oshiwambo and Otjiherero, from the Niger-Congo language family; (2) the Khoesan languages, such as Nama/Damara (or Khoekhoegowab), or San languages, comprising three language families;[3] and (3) the Indo-European languages Afrikaans, English, German, and Portuguese (cf. Maho 1998).

The Population and Housing Census provides an overview of the distribution of the most widely-spoken languages used as the main language in Namibian households. Table 1 summarizes the census data from 1991, 2001, and 2011 and shows that approximately 50% of the population speak Oshiwambo as their main language at home; Nama/Damara and Afrikaans are spoken at home by approximately 10% of the population respectively; the Otjiherero and Kavango languages by roughly 9% of the population.

Table 1. Namibian households by main language spoken, in percentages
(Namibia Statistics Agency)

Language	Language family	1991	2001	2011
Oshiwambo languages	Bantu	51.0	48.5	48.9
Nama/Damara	Khoesan	13.0	11.5	11.3
Afrikaans	Indo-European	9.0	11.4	10.4
Otjiherero languages	Bantu	8.0	7.9	8.6
Kavango languages	Bantu	10.0	9.7	8.5
Caprivi	Bantu	5.0	5.0	4.8
San languages	Khoesan	2.0	1.2	0.8
English	Indo-European	0.7	1.9	3.4
German	Indo-European	1.0	1.1	0.9
Setswana	Bantu	0.4	0.3	0.3
Other African		0.6	0.4	1.3
Other European		0.4	0.5	0.7

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2.   I am well aware that some references to and labels for African languages or language families may carry pejorative connotations, mostly because of their use by the apartheid regime (see Deumert 2009: 354, footnote 5). I will, however, generally reproduce them as in the sources quoted (albeit deciding on one orthographic variant) and do this without any political implication, hopefully in a neutral manner.

3.   See Maho (1998: 22) and Maho (1998: Chapter 4) for details.

However, the census data reproduced in this table fail to make clear that multilingualism is widespread and that the "majority of Namibians claim to speak two or more languages with nearly half claiming three or more" (Tonchi et al. 2012: 4). This is because the participants in the surveys could not give multiple replies.

Afrikaans, for instance, still serves as a major lingua franca and is spoken not only as an L1 by roughly ten percent of the population (see Table 1), but also as an L2 by a large majority of the Namibian population (cf. Fourie 1995; Maho 1998: 183–185). Buschfeld and Schröder, for example, find that more than 40 percent of their informants speak Afrikaans as an additional language (2020: 347, Table 17.4). Similarly, according to Table 1 comparatively few Namibians seem to use English as their main language at home. However, although very few Namibians are reported to speak English as their L1, Table 1 shows that the number of households using English as their main language has been steadily increasing and has more than quadrupled since 1991. Furthermore, most Namibians speak English as an L2. Buschfeld and Schröder, for instance, report that more than 70% of their informants claimed to speak English as an additional language (2020: 347, Table 17.4).

It has been frequently noted that English is making inroads in many private and public domains (e.g. Buschfeld & Schröder 2020; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014) and this is very likely to be a direct result of the government's decision to make this language the only official one on the country's independence in 1990. However, "[i]mperative to understanding how English came to be the official language in Namibia is a brief overview of Namibia's colonial history" (Frydman 2011: 182), to which I would like to add some information on the pre-colonial historical background of the country.

2.3   Historical background

For the history of Namibia, Harlech-Jones (1990: 33) identified the following four major periods: (1) a pre-colonial period (up to the late 19th century); (2) the period of German colonisation (from 1884 to 1915); (3) the period of South African occupation (from 1915 to 1990); (4) the post-independence period (from 1990 to the present).

The precolonial period was already shaped by migration flows that have been part of Namibia's history ever since. The earliest inhabitants were several groups of hunter-gatherers, often referred to as 'Bushmen' or 'San', who "have lived in the country for as long as there are any records" (Maho 1998: 4) and who were joined by two Khoesan-speaking communities during the last centuries of the first millennium BCE (Maho 1998: 4; Deumert 2009: 354). In the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries CE, Bantu-speaking Otjiherero, Oshiwambo and Kavango started

entering the region (Maho 1998: 6; Deumert 2009: 354; Steigertahl 2020: 82), and around 1800 ethnically mixed Oorlam groups from South Africa arrived in Namibia. The latter were "descendants of mixed settler/slave settler/Khoekhoe unions, runaway slaves and Cape outlaws" (Deumert 2009: 355), marked by some degree of European acculturation (Dedering 1997: 52), and bilingual speakers of Afrikaans (Cape Dutch) and Khoekhoe. The Oorlam were similar to a second, ethnically-mixed, group that came from South Africa and around 1870 eventually settled in the Rehoboth territory, where they came to be known as the Rehoboth Basters (cf. Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020 for details).

Apparently the first Europeans to arrive in Namibia were two Portuguese explorers, in 1485 and 1486/1487 respectively, followed by some Dutch explorers in the 1670s (Katjavivi 1988: 5; Kaulich 2003: 38), but notable movements of White people into the territory, primarily traders, farmers and missionaries, only occurred from the second half of the 19th century onwards (Maho 1998: 6). The first larger group of White South Africans of Dutch descent, referred to as Boers ('farmers') or Afrikaners, came in 1874 with the so-called Thirstland Trek (Dorsland Trek) from Transvaal (Tonchi et al. 2012: 19; Kleinz 1984: 15), although they did not stay in the country but eventually moved on northwards to Angola (Wallace 2011: 347, endnote 36).[4] "Missionary activity was spearheaded by the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyans, who began to operate in Namibia in 1802 […]. They were followed, from 1840 onwards, by German and Finnish Lutheran missionaries" (Katjavivi 1988: 6). This influx of White settlers with their missionary and trading activities severely disturbed Namibian societies, aggravating existing frictions, for example, by selling firearms to conflicting groups, by playing them off against one another, and by tricking them into protection treaties (Katjavivi 1988: 7; Kaulich 2003: 39, 41).[5] In 1878, the British annexed Walvis Bay and the surrounding areas (Tonchi et al. 2012: 457; Wallace 2011: 57), and in 1883–1884 the German businessman Lüderitz 'purchased'[6] the area around Angra Pequena in the South, which was later renamed Lüderitzbucht (Katjavivi 1988: 7).

This marked the beginning of increased German economic and political interests in the region as well as the formal installation of German colonial rule

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4. "Some of them returned to the Grootfontein area in 1885" (Wallace 2011: 347, endnote 36).

5. See also Dierks (2002: 23–58) for missionary interference in local politics during that time.

6. Tonchi et al. (2012: 243) rightly set 'purchase' in inverted commas, because the local Orlaam chief was actually tricked into an agreement after lengthy negotiations, and as Dierks explains "[t]his 'sale' is characterised by some fraudulent manoeuvres which exploit the seller's ignorance (in terms of the English mile versus the German geographical mile)" (2002: 57).

(Katjavivi 1988: 7). In the following ten years, German rule, settlement and colonisation expanded over almost the entire territory of what is today Namibia and was then called German South-West Africa (SWA) (Kleinz 1984: 15). The northern border to Angola was established by a German-Portuguese agreement in 1886, the border to the east and to the south was fixed in the Heligoland Treaty with Britain on 1st July, 1890 (Tonchi et al. 2012: 142). In 1890, Germany declared the territory a 'Crown Colony' (Dierks 2002: 71). This German expansion was accompanied by a series of brutal wars and genocidal crimes against the indigenous population, which actively resisted German control (Katjavivi 1988: 7–12). A particularly severe conflict was the 'War of Resistance' (1904–1907). This war involved mostly the Nama and the Otjiherero people, and the genocide of the latter in the aftermath of the infamous Battle of Waterberg (1904),[7] at the end of which 75–80% of the Otjiherero population and 35–50% of the Nama population had been killed (Katjavivi 1988: 8–11).[8] The nature of German colonial rule in Namibia, as aptly summarized by Katjavivi,

> had three key elements. First, land was taken from the Namibian people and made available to German settlers. Second, traditional social structures were destroyed to try to make Namibians subservient colonial subjects. Third, Namibians were used as forced labourers on the now white-owned land and the new mines and early industries. (1988: 11)

German colonial rule ended with World War I and the invasion of Namibia by South African forces in late 1914.

From 1915 onwards, South African troops occupied the territory and the country was under South African military rule (Dierks 2002: 159–170), until in 1920 South Africa, acting on behalf of Britain, gained responsibility for Namibia under the terms of a League of Nations Mandate (Katjavivi 1988: 13). South Africa's government sought to incorporate Namibia into their country as a province (Maho 1998: 8), introduced its policies of racial segregation (Wallace 2011: 205), and "continued and extended the land expropriations of the Germans and encouraged more White settlers to come to the country, mostly Afrikaners from South Africa" (Katjavivi 1988: 14). This policy continued after World War II, although the United Nations still refused Namibia's integration into South Africa (Maho 1998: 8), and instead recommended an international trusteeship system with independence as its ultimate goal (Katjavivi 1988: 34; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 126). Nevertheless, South Africa implemented its apartheid system during the 1950s and 1960s, which

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7. See Tonchi et al. (2012: 460) for details.

8. See Maho (1998: 7–8), Dierks (2002: 103–132), and Wallace (2011: 155–182) for more details.

included the establishment of 'homelands' for the non-White population and their relocation to less fertile areas (Maho 1998: 8). South Africa's aggressive and racist policies fostered resistance and the formation of several liberation movements and organisations (Wallace 2011: 243; Maho 1998: 9), among these the 'South West African People's Organization' (SWAPO).[9] After decades of armed guerrilla struggle, and interventions from the United Nations, South Africa eventually "succumbed to the political pressure and an interim government was set up in 1985, which was to manage the country until independence" (Maho 1998: 10). In 1989, UN-supervised elections took place with SWAPO winning 57% of the votes (Dierks 2002: 306). SWAPO President Sam Nujoma was subsequently elected the first president of an independent Namibia in March 1990.

What followed was a policy of national reconciliation (Dierks 2002: 309), which included – among other things – the establishment of English as the country's sole official language.

> Oppressed and divided by South Africa's apartheid regime, Namibians sought liberation and unity. English, they believed, would be the vehicle to achieve these ideals. If Afrikaans was the language of oppression, then English was the language of resistance and liberation. Imbued with this symbolism, English and its prospect as Namibia's official language gained widespread support among the masses, whose views by and large echoed those of the SWAPO government.
>
> (Frydman 2011: 183)

Although English had played a rather subordinate role in the education of most Namibians, at least until the early 1980s (Harlech-Jones 1990: 85), it was also propagated as a major medium of instruction in education. Today, it serves as the medium of instruction from Year 4 onwards, although with sometimes negative side effects (Frydman 2011: 186). Attitudes towards the language have been overwhelmingly positive ever since independence (see also Steigertahl 2020: 215–218). As mentioned at the end of Section 2.2 above, a number of recent studies show that the language is making inroads into many private and public domains, functions as a language of identity for the young (Ejikeme 2011: 15; Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 278) and as pan-ethnic non-White, urban lingua franca (Stell 2014b, 2019).

This seeming success story and the obvious prestige that the English language has gained in the past three decades, as well as its multiple uses and forms within the country, are the reasons why the present collection of articles appears timely.

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9. See Schröder (this volume) and Steigertahl (2020: 85–88) for more details on liberation movements and the struggle for independence.

3. The genesis and contents of the present volume

3.1 The beginnings

The genesis of the present volume goes back to the first decade of this century, when a handful of researchers noted, at approximately the same time and independently of each other, that something was going on in Namibia. English had been the country's sole official language for less than 20 years, but to these researchers it seemed to have established itself firmly in the daily life of the population – particularly among young people. It had become omnipresent, at least in those parts of the country to which these non-Namibians regularly travelled for different reasons. Four of these, Markus Bieswanger, Sarah Buschfeld, Alexander Kautzsch, and Anne Schröder, met for the first time in 2013 and decided to join forces in a project with the working title *English in Namibia or Namibian English?* With this title, their primary research question was an obvious reference to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model and hence the question of whether variety status could be accorded to English as spoken in Namibia. Is it "just a variant without a discrete character of its own" (Schneider 2007: 50), i.e. 'English in Namibia' (EiNa) or does it already have "the status of a distinct type, set apart from and essentially on equal terms with all others" (Schneider 2007: 50), i.e. can it be referred to as 'Namibian English' (NamE)? The latter would also mark the transition from a nativisation phase to the phase of endonormative stabilisation and hence the acceptance and subsequent codification of local features (Schneider 2007: 50–52).

The aim of these four researchers was therefore to investigate systematically and empirically Namibian uses of and attitudes towards English, as well as the linguistic features of the English spoken in this country. To this end, they travelled to Namibia in 2014, collected written questionnaire data as well as audio recordings, and hence substantially enlarged the data base of Buschfeld and Kautzsch's (2014) pilot study, which was published at approximately the same time. During the subsequent and prolonged stage of processing, evaluating, and analysing the data, the four realised that other people had also started working empirically on complementary research questions, most notably on code-switching and other multilingual practices in Windhoek (e.g. Stell 2014a, 2014b; Mlambo 2017) and language attitudes in Lüderitz (Steigertahl 2010). They further encouraged young scholars to look or continue looking at Namibia in more detail, which led to seminar and scientific papers (e.g. Zähres 2016a), as well as to master's (Zähres 2016b; Kauschke 2019) and doctoral theses (Steigertahl 2020; Zähres in prep.). Some of them started working with additional linguistic data and methods, engaging in side projects, for example the compilation of a corpus of Namibian online English (Kautzsch 2019), linguistic landscaping (Schulte & Schröder 2019) or the pragmatics of Namibian English (e.g. Schneider & Schröder fc.; Schröder & Schneider 2018; Schneider & Schröder 2016).

Others continued working on more theoretical issues and the modelling of World Englishes, with Namibia as a test case (e.g. Buschfeld 2014; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017; Schröder & Zähres 2020).

Hence, a substantial body of publications on English in Namibia has appeared in the last few years. Following the first impressionistic attempt to describe the features of NamE on different linguistic levels by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014), more recent approaches to this variety of English have focussed on specific phonetic details (Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Zähres 2016b; Kautzsch, Schröder & Zähres 2017; Stell & Fuchs 2019; Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020). Kautzsch (2019) has identified a variety of potential lexical and morpho-syntactic Namibianisms based on the newly-created 40-million-word *Corpus of Namibian Online Newspapers*. Steigertahl (2020: Chapter 7) describes morpho-syntactic features of NamE spoken by Black Namibians. Furthermore, various pragmatic phenomena (Schröder & Schneider 2017; Schröder & Schneider 2018; Schneider & Schröder fc.) and code-switching practices in various domains of language use have been described (e.g. Stell 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Zähres 2016b). Finally, there are several publications on language attitudes and identity formation (e.g. Buschfeld & Schröder 2020; Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Steigertahl 2015, 2020).

Much of the recent and ongoing research on NamE, however, is not easily available or is scattered as article publications in various journals or edited volumes. Therefore, Alexander Kautzsch and Anne Schröder intended to bring together scholars actively involved in the research on English in Namibia, to join forces and make this work more visible to a wider public. Because of his unexpected and premature death, Alexander never saw the contributors' abstracts as reaction to the invitation for abstract submission to this volume nor did he live to see that Stephanie Hackert accepted the book proposal for publication in the *Varieties around the World* series.

The present volume is the first book-length representation of the English language in Namibia since Pütz's seminal publication in 1995. However, this latter book, published shortly after the country's independence, focussed exclusively on language planning and sociolinguistic aspects.[10] The present volume broadens the perspective and covers a wide range of additional linguistic issues, such as empirical analyses on various levels of linguistic description and use, as well as the application of diverse methodologies, from questionnaire surveys, sociolinguistic interviews and focus group discussions, to corpus linguistics, linguistic landscaping, and digital ethnography.

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10. Most previous publications focussed on language planning and policy or educational issues (see Steigertahl 2020: 92 for an overview). Steigertahl's book (2020) published in the meantime – with its focus on educational issues and NamE used by Black Namibians – is also less comprehensive than the present volume, although there is overlap with regard to some topics.

3.2 The articles of this volume

This book covers most of the recent fields of study of NamE. It begins with Gerald Stell providing the reader with a socio-historical overview of the development of the English language in Namibia, from its earliest colonial presence to its implementation as the country's sole official language. This includes an assessment of the distinctiveness of the English language in the linguistic ecology of the country today. Stell's contribution is thus a much-needed addition to and extension of the short historical overview presented in Section 2.3 of this introduction.

This chapter is followed by three contributions dealing with communicative practices and the country's multilingual make-up. Helene Steigertahl investigates the use of English and indigenous languages in Namibian classrooms across the country and shows that despite positive attitudes towards the English language, learners and teachers of English face serious challenges in its utilisation during lessons. Nelson Mlambo examines the use of English vis-à-vis other Namibian languages in the healthcare sector in Windhoek and concludes that successful communication in these environments necessitates the exploitation of the interlocutors' multilingual repertoire. Finally, Marion Schulte looks at language practices in public space and explores written and spoken language use in the country's capital Windhoek. The chapters of this section reflect on the effects that Namibia's language policy and its decision to make English the sole official language have had on the communicative behaviour of its citizens.

The next section contains descriptions of linguistic features of Namibian English at different levels of linguistic analysis, which are combined with more general or theoretical considerations. Anne Schröder, Frederic Zähres and Alexander Kautzsch investigate NamE phonology, with a special focus on vowel realisations, showing that NamE should be described as a variety separate from South African Englishes. Frederic Zähres adds a digital perspective and expands World Englishes research, as well as the study of NamE phonology, by analysing audio-visual data from the social media platform YouTube. Sarah Buschfeld's study looks at morpho-syntax, more specifically the use of progressive marking in NamE, and possible implications for the discussion of structural nativisation of this variety. Anne Schröder and Klaus P. Schneider examine the pragmatics of NamE, evaluating responses to thanks on the basis of quantitative as well as qualitative data. They stress the complexity of the facework as well as the importance of cultural norms for this speech act in Namibia's multilingual ecology. All papers in this section show that NamE is developing features of its own and should therefore be described as a variety of English in its own right. With regard to Schneider's Dynamic Model (2007) already mentioned at the beginning of the previous section, this would definitely mark the transition into a nativisation phase, possibly also the acceptance of these features and hence the phase of endonormative stabilisation.

Endonormative stabilisation would also entail the emergence of literary creativity (Schneider 2007: 50), and this is what the chapters in the next section concern themselves with. Kerstin Frank provides an overview of various forms of Namibian literature written in English, with a focus on post-independence literature and the negotiations of identity issues at the individual and national level. Anne Schröder examines the depiction of linguistic diversity in two Namibian novels, whose historical setting also allows for a discussion of language ideologies shaping the Namibian nation on its way to and shortly after independence. Both chapters clearly illustrate that Namibian literature in English offers valuable insights into the country's cultural practices and processes of self-reflection.

In the final chapter of the book, Edgar Schneider and Anne Schröder recapitulate the main points of this volume, setting its findings in the larger framework of World Englishes modelling and enlarging the scope to a more general (Southern) African and global perspective.

3.3   A final note on labelling English in Namibia/Namibian English(es)

This final chapter also resumes in more detail the debate concerning the variety status of the English language as spoken in Namibia, already briefly discussed in Section 3.1. above. This discussion also includes new insights gained from the papers in this volume. As detailed in Schröder and Schneider, we should perhaps "refer to the variety of English spoken in this country as English in Namibia (EiNa) rather than Namibian English (NamE)" (2018: 342). Thus far, studies have shown that the English language in Namibia is developing variety status and has not yet entered the stage of endonormative stabilisation (cf. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014; Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017) in the Dynamic Model (Schneider 2007) or the Extra- and Intra-territorial Forces Model (EIF) (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017). However, for reasons of practicability and in order to stress the fact that this variety of English should be seen as a variety in its own right, many authors use NamE as a label in their publications (e.g. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014; Schröder & Schneider 2018), as do most contributors to this volume.

It has also been argued more recently that NamE "cannot be regarded as a monolithic variety, but rather as consisting of several sub-varieties" (Schröder & Zähres 2020: 56). A label such as NamE (in the singular) is therefore potentially inaccurate and possibly does not describe the linguistic situation adequately.[11] NamE seems to be developing features typical of the differentiation phase and this somewhat challenges the applicability (or at least the consecutiveness) of the models (the

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11. See also Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (2020) and Buschfeld (this volume).

Dynamic and the EIF Model) in the Namibian context (see Schröder & Zähres 2020 for a more detailed discussion).

Quite obviously, the development of English in Namibia is vibrant and an entire volume on the language dynamics surrounding this new variety of English is therefore definitely justified.

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Setting the scene

CHAPTER 2

English in Namibia
A socio-historical account

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This chapter provides a socio-historical account of the English language in Namibia from early colonial times to the present. Although its current dominant status in Namibia may at first sight appear historically incongruous, English was locally acknowledged as a prestige language along with Afrikaans and German from the earliest stages of the South African occupation (1915–1990), one with which SWAPO, the dominant liberation movement, as well as its populous northern support base, strongly identified. This chapter pays attention to the considerations that led to English becoming Namibia's only official language upon independence. Furthermore, this chapter reviews indications that – despite the challenges besetting its implementation as medium of instruction – English is developing distinctively local spoken varieties.

Keywords: Namibian English, colonial language policy, language policy, multilingualism, nativization

1. Introduction

Namibia's decision to make English its sole official language upon its independence from South Africa was widely criticized as impractical in a context where Afrikaans was the hegemonic lingua franca. However, English was not entirely foreign in pre-independence Namibia: It had locally been functioning as a prestige language since the country was placed under South African administration, especially along the populous northern border where English-speaking missionaries had been active. The gradual dismantlement from the late 1970s of 'Bantu education' – one tenet of the apartheid regime imposed by South Africa – allowed English to further take hold in the north while Afrikaans temporarily remained dominant elsewhere. The fact that English had by then become the linguistic symbol of the Liberation Struggle, largely led by northerners, led to its eventual imposition as a language of

Namibian nationhood. Despite the considerable challenges that have been besetting its implementation as a universal medium of instruction, north-to-south migration dynamics from the 1980s shaped a social context in which English could become an inter-ethnic lingua franca in post-independence Windhoek and other urban centres, possibly developing its own informal varieties. This chapter generally offers a reflection on the socio-political forces that have led English to spread in Namibia. Based on recent observations, it also provides an account of the status held by English in present-day Namibia and of its emergent linguistic features. This chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the presence of English in Namibia from early colonial times to 1978, when Namibia began its transition to independence from South Africa under the terms of the Turnhalle Conference. Section 3 describes the language policy proposals that were made during that transition period and explains why the option of English as sole official language eventually prevailed. Finally, Section 4 examines sociolinguistic trends in post-independence Namibia with a specific emphasis on how English is currently co-existing with Afrikaans and Namibia's indigenous languages and what linguistic features its local spoken varieties have been developing.

2.   Namibia's sociolinguistic landscape from early colonial times to the transition period (1978): Early presence of English

Namibia has historically been inhabited by various Khoesan-speaking nations (whose modern-day descendants are mainly the Nama, Damara and San) in its southern and central regions while Bantu speaking populations (whose modern-day descendants mainly comprise the Ovambo, Kavango, Herero, Tswana and Caprivians) began to settle its northern fringes from the 17th century on. Oorlam populations, that is, westernized Dutch-speaking Khoin hailing from the neighbouring Dutch Cape Colony, began to migrate across the Orange River in the late 18th century (followed by the Basters in the mid-19th century), subjugating local Nama and San populations in the process (Lau 1987; Marais 1968). The rise to hegemony of Oorlam polities, aided by missionaries connected with the Cape Colony, rapidly led to Cape Dutch becoming the prestige language and lingua franca in the country's southern and central regions (Stals & Ponelis 2001; see further Dedering 1997). Great Britain, which had taken over the Cape Colony in 1814, showed little interest in the territories north of the Orange River until Germany herself did in the late 19th century. As a result, Great Britain rushed to annex Walvis Bay and the guano islands off Namibia's coast in 1878 while Germany proclaimed a protectorate over the rest in 1884. *Deutsch-Südwestafrika* became the only German colony with a substantial German settler population. German was

imposed as a medium of instruction (MOI) at European schools while early 20th century migrant Boer communities (ca. 25% of the territory's European population in 1910) were allowed to run their own private Dutch-medium schools in the south (Walther 2002; von Weber 2002; Cohen 1994). Education for non-Europeans was entirely left to missionaries, who – apart from the Finnish Lutherans in the north who ministered to the local Ovambo populations in Oshiwambo only – offered tuition in both indigenous languages and German (Lehtonen 1999; Cohen 1994). Meanwhile, English had gained visibility in the British enclave of Walvis Bay, where Anglican missionaries had established themselves (Oermann 1999). Additionally, a short-lived effort was made by Catholic missionaries at offering English-medium tuition to the children of the few scattered English and Irish families living in the Omaruru region of the German protectorate (Buys & Nambala 2003). World War I altered Namibia's sociolinguistic landscape radically. After a short conflict, South Africa, then known as the Union of South Africa, seized it in 1915 and from 1919 administered it as a League of Nations mandate. Although mandates were supposed to be temporary, Pretoria's de facto aim was to annex the territory, which was renamed 'South West Africa' (SWA). To that end, it promoted large-scale White settlement in SWA while subjecting it to South African legislation.

The settlement scheme that South Africa implemented in SWA had a rapid effect on the composition of the territory's White population (which by 1981 stood at 7% of the total population, see van der Merwe 1983). SWA's second population census during the South African period, held in 1936, showed that Afrikaners already formed the majority of the territory's White population, eventually reaching 73% in 1981, while the German component had decreased from 75% in 1910 to 17% in 1981 (Botha 2007; Coetzee 1982). Although their numbers were relatively small (never more than 10% of the White population), White English-speakers who migrated from South Africa and Britain to SWA formed the socially preponderant group at the beginning of the South African period. Unlike the Afrikaners, they were highly urbanized, associated with government, and co-existed with the Germans in the professions and in business throughout the South African period (Kotzé 1990; Botha 2007). Language legislation applicable to South Africa was originally imposed without any adjustment on SWA: Dutch (from 1925 referred to as Afrikaans) and English were SWA's two official languages with equal status in theory. Provisions were subsequently made for German as a third official language in 1932, although these provisions were never fully implemented (Kleinz 1984; Bertelsmann 1979; see further Steyn 1980). Except for its tolerance of German private schools, language-in-education policies for the White population also largely followed South Africa's model: Afrikaans and English were jointly used as mediums of instruction at government schools, while single-medium English schools were allowed to subsist (Cohen 1994; see further Malherbe 1977). The pro-Afrikaner National

Party's coming to power in 1948 brought change to SWA's sociolinguistic landscape by encouraging Afrikaner mass-migration (Botha 2007). As a result, Afrikaners came to outnumber Germans and English-speakers in the cities while the civil service became almost exclusively Afrikaans-speaking (Botha 2007; Kleinz 1984). In addition, the National Party imposed its own brand of language-in-education policies for Whites. One among their effects was that dual-medium instruction was abolished, which in SWA led to separate Afrikaans-, English- and German-medium White schools or to separate streams for each language within White schools. By 1981, the overwhelming majority of SWA's 67 government-run White primary and secondary schools used Afrikaans as a single MOI, while only seven used German and five English (Kleinz 1984; Cohen 1994; see further Malherbe 1977). Afrikaans- and German-speaking learners still retained exposure to English as a (compulsory) subject, while it otherwise remained the dominant MOI at private Anglican and Catholic schools for Europeans (Kleinz 1984).

The colonial policies of socio-economic subjugation that Germany had pursued towards the territory's non-European populations acquired a more systematic character under South African rule (Wallace 2011; Kaulich 2003). Non-European land ownership and labour control formed two major questions on which the South African authorities took immediate action. Non-European populations living on land earmarked for European settlement were redistributed across an expanded network of 'native reserves' strategically positioned away from main roads and railways (Wallace 2011; see further Figure 1). Vagrancy laws were enforced to increase the cheap labour pool available to the mining industry, which accounted for most of SWA's economic output (Gordon 1997). Restrictions were placed on non-European migration to cities, and into the 'Police Zone', the portion of the territory allocated to White farmers that excluded the densely settled northernmost border regions (Miescher 2012).

Mission education for non-Europeans within the Police Zone largely came under the nominal control of SWA's Department of Education. To qualify for government subsidies, 'Coloured' and 'Native' schools both had to use Afrikaans as a MOI (with English only taught as a subject), following a stage of instruction in one of the indigenous languages in the latter case. In contrast, mission education outside the Police Zone initially remained largely self-administering and thus freer to determine its own language-in-education policies (Cohen 1994). Mission schools in Ovamboland, the most populous region outside the Police Zone, were more inclined to offer English than Afrikaans as a subject, while Ovamboland's only high school before World War II (St Mary's in Odibo, run by the Anglican church) used English as a dominant MOI (Buys & Nambala 2003; Hopson 2010). The Caprivi region was a special case in that local mission stations initially followed the Rhodesian curriculum and as a result used English as a dominant MOI in most cases (Buys &
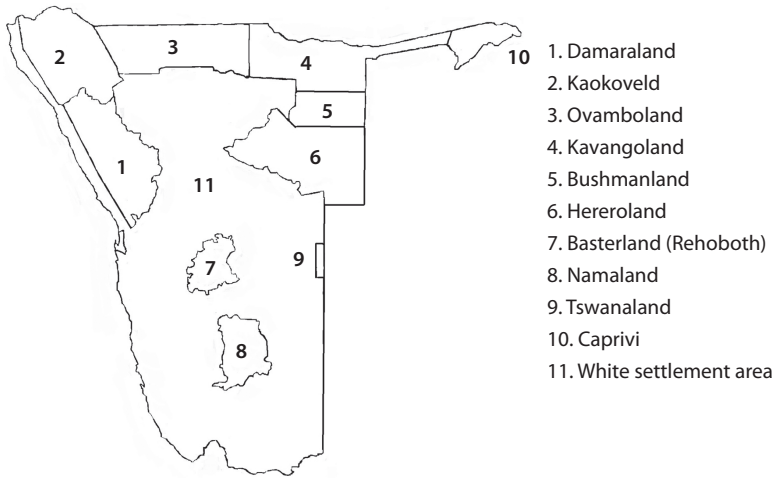
Figure 1. Ethnic homelands in SWA (1968–1989)

Nambala 2003; Kangumu 2011). Lehtonen (1999) mentions considerable demand for English as a subject at the Ovamboland Finnish Lutheran mission schools and resistance to attempts by the Department of Education to impose Afrikaans as a MOI or subject. Harlech-Jones (1990) also notes pre-World War II demand for English-medium education among non-European communities within the Police Zone, which suggests that English held prestige in the eyes of SWA Non-Europeans from the earliest stages of the mandate onwards.

Following its electoral victory in 1948, the National Party proceeded to implement apartheid, a set of policies aimed to promote the ideology of 'separate development' for 'Whites', 'Coloureds', and 'Blacks'. The latter two racial groups were subdivided into ethnolinguistic groups, assigned designated 'Homelands' and distinct residential areas in towns (Dubow 2014). Following the Odendaal Commission (1962–1963), apartheid was systematically implemented in urban SWA (Sohn 2003; Simon 1983), while existing native reserves were consolidated into Bantustans, namely, Ovamboland, Kavangoland, Hereroland, Damaraland, Namaland, Rehoboth, Tswanaland, and Caprivi (Wallace 2011; van der Merwe 1983). Education for Blacks and Coloureds was placed under tight government control. Bantu education provided a systematic template for language use at Black schools in South Africa: Instruction had to be given in one of the Bantu mother tongues during the primary education phase, followed by Afrikaans and English in the secondary phase (Malherbe 1977; Horrell 1969). The Bantu education model was also gradually extended to SWA following the Van Zyl Commission in 1958. To facilitate its implementation, provision was made for a SWA Language Bureau, tasked with codifying SWA's indigenous languages for education purposes

(Cohen 1994; Maho 1998). Unlike in South Africa, where Black schools had in certain regions been allowed to use English as a MOI for secondary education, Afrikaans was – except in Caprivi – made the only available option in SWA with English being kept as a subject only (Horrell 1969; UNIN 1981, 1986). The effect of Bantu education was most strongly felt in Ovamboland, where using Afrikaans as a MOI was a novelty, while it had already functioned as a MOI at Non-White schools within the Police Zone. Noteworthy is that English was maintained as a MOI at two private high schools for Blacks: St Mary's High School in Odibo (until its destruction during the Border War) and Martin Luther High School, a Lutheran institution that had been founded in Karibib in 1962 (Buys & Nambala 2003; Hopson 2010). Additionally, religious organizations catering to Blacks and Coloureds in urban areas were active in privately teaching English to children and adults (Harlech-Jones 1990).

Highly detailed information on SWA's sociolinguistic landscape by the beginning of the transition period (see next section) is available in Prinsloo et al. (1982a), a large-scale government-commissioned report on language knowledge, use and preferences in SWA (see further Harlech-Jones 1990). The report found that Afrikaans was the most widely known language in the territory at 87% reporting at least some knowledge of it, followed by English at 55%. Knowledge and use of Afrikaans and English were more widespread in towns than in rural areas and could be found across all SWA population groups. The only other languages whose knowledge and use were to some extent spread across ethnolinguistic boundaries were Otjiherero and Khoekhoegowab (i.e. the heritage language of the Hereros and Namas/Damaras, respectively). The ethnic groups most frequently reporting knowledge of English were the Whites (98%), followed by the Caprivians (89%), Basters (84%) and Coloureds (73%), leaving all other ethnolinguistic groups far behind. Afrikaans was the language most frequently reported as a medium of interaction in contact situations ('with good friends', 'while shopping', 'at work'), followed by Kwanyama[1] and English, although English took second position after Afrikaans in urban areas, followed by German (see further Ohly 1987). The part of the report specifically dealing with the Ovambo population (Prinsloo et al. 1982b) provides some information on the status of English in the northern districts. English played a more important role than Afrikaans for Ovambos residing within Ovamboland than for Ovambos residing outside. The component of the northern Ovambo population that most frequently reported knowing or using English were

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1.   Although the report describes the Ovambos as one single group, it distinguishes between the various historical dialects of Oshiwambo. It thus separately provides for speakers of Ndonga, Kwanyama (which form the two standard dialects of Oshiwambo), Kwambi, Kwaluudhi, Mbalantu, Kolonkadhi and Ngandjera.

the Kwanyamas although Afrikaans still was the official language that they knew and used most. One explanation for the relatively strong position of English among Kwanyama speakers may have been their exposure to the Anglican Church, which had been active in the Oukwanyama region (Buys & Nambala 2003).[2] Despite the fact that – except for the Caprivi region – Afrikaans was more widespread than English, there was a clear preference for English as a MOI in the upper primary and secondary phases of education, which shows that English was generally associated with social mobility (see further Harlech-Jones 1990). Other than Prinsloo et al. (1982a), another quantitative source of information on language in SWA by the beginning of the transition period is Kleinz (1984), who noted that English was the most visible advertising language in Windhoek, either on its own or combined with Afrikaans and/or German, while Afrikaans was generally dominant elsewhere in the territory.

To summarize this section, the dominant lingua franca in colonial Namibia was Cape Dutch/Afrikaans. The South African regime – especially under the National Party – worked towards entrenching this situation by, among other things, eclipsing German and limiting the visibility of English as an official language and MOI. Still, English clearly began to function as a prestige language associated with urban areas from the beginning of the South African period onwards. Native Afrikaans speakers were generally proficient in it, and it became established as a second language in specific northern regions, namely, Oukwanyama in Ovamboland and Caprivi. By the time Prinsloo et al. (1982a) appeared, SWA's Non-White population generally perceived English – more than Afrikaans – as the linguistic attribute of social mobility, indicating a preference for it as a MOI for the upper primary and secondary phases of education.

3.   The transition period and Namibia's new English-only language policy

Namibia's independence in 1990 followed on a long history of indigenous resistance to colonialism combined with mounting international pressure on South Africa to withdraw from SWA. Disillusionment with South Africa's segregationist policies began at an early stage, giving rise to armed rebellions against the background of intensifying political activism. One major catalyst in this respect was the post-World War I Africanization of SWA missions and their growing identification with nascent

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2.   St Mary's, Ovamboland's Anglican school, is located in Oukwanyama. Oukwanyama had been opened to the Anglicans at the beginning of the Union of South Africa's mandate, while the Finnish Lutherans remained confined to Ondonga, i.e. the Ndonga-speaking region (Buys & Nambala 2003; Lehtonen 1999).

pan-Africanist ideologies (Buys & Nambala 2003; Katjavi 1988). The emergence of a pan-ethnic form of nationalism in SWA seems to coincide with the exposure that migrant Ovambo workers in South Africa gained to local protest politics in the 1950s. First founded in 1959 as the *Ovambo People's Organization*, the *South West Africa People's Organization* (SWAPO) promoted a post-tribal outlook that eventually gained it multi-ethnic support for its anti-colonial cause. With United Nations backing, the organization eventually emerged as the 'sole authentic representative of the Namibian People' at the expense of other pan-Africanist movements, as well as of traditional rulers supported by Pretoria within the framework of its Bantustan policy (Elischer 2013; Dobell 1998). Faced with persecution, SWAPO's leadership went into exile and embarked as of 1970 on guerrilla warfare from bases in neighbouring Zambia and from 1975, from Angola, where it could receive direct logistical support from the Soviet bloc. South Africa's response to the SWAPO challenge was initially uncompromising and efforts to implement apartheid legislation intensified in the wake of the Odendaal Commission. However, the revocation by the United Nations of South Africa's mandate in 1966 nudged Pretoria into experimenting with a federalist self-governing SWA (in which Bantustans were rebranded as 'second tier authorities') to set the stage for a nominally independent Namibia politically aligned with South Africa. Among the decisions made during the Turnhalle Conference (1975–1977), which heralded the transition period, 'petty apartheid' was largely repealed while some powers were devolved to second tier authorities in 1978 (Kaela 1996). Meanwhile, South Africa remained locked in warfare against SWAPO along the northern border, enjoying some degree of Western support as an ally of Washington against Soviet expansionism in Africa (Dale 2014). The winding down of the Cold War in the late 1980s eventually forced South Africa into a negotiated withdrawal.[3] Namibia's first all-inclusive elections, held in 1989, saw SWAPO emerge as the newly independent country's dominant political party, which it has remained up to this day.

The general principles of Namibia's current language policy, laid down by SWAPO during its exile years, can largely be read as a reaction to the federalist experiment initiated in SWA by South Africa. *Toward a Language Policy for Namibia* (UNIN 1981) was the first policy paper on language disseminated by SWAPO. It argued that only English was suitable for the role of official language and dominant MOI in an independent Namibia as it met eight essential criteria that other plausible candidates (i.e. Namibia's indigenous languages, Afrikaans, German and French) did not. These eight criteria were subsumed into the keywords 'unity', 'acceptability', 'familiarity', 'feasibility', 'science and technology', 'Pan-Africanism',

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3. The Walvis Bay enclave, which had been administered as part of South Africa's Cape Province from 1910 to 1922, and from 1977 to 1992, was ceded to Namibia in 1994.

'wider communication' and 'United Nations'. In the view of the policy paper, Afrikaans only met the criteria of 'familiarity', as it already was an established lingua franca, and of 'feasibility', as it was already in wide use as a MOI. Being confined to Southern Africa, it did not meet the criterion of 'wider communication' while its image of 'oppressor's language' made it 'unacceptable'. In contrast, German and French both met the criteria of 'wider communication', 'science and technology' and, in the case of French, 'Pan-Africanism' and 'United Nations', but French did not meet the 'feasibility' criterion while German did not meet the 'acceptability' criterion, being – in the view of the policy paper – a 'colonial' language. Finally, the indigenous languages of Namibia were dismissed as only meeting the 'familiarity' criterion. The ideology underlying the somewhat arbitrary reasoning pervading SWAPO's language policy paper was analysed in detail by Frydman (2011), who describes it as a retroactive validation of a policy choice that had been made long before its formulation. The consideration probably lying at the core of that policy choice was that English had already been established within SWAPO since universal English-medium instruction had been employed in its fast growing Angolan and Zambian camps (Sturges 2005; see further Williams 2015). Furthermore, SWAPO had a strong connexion to Ovamboland's population, among whom support for English as a MOI was strong and perceptions of Afrikaans – never widespread in Ovamboland – were increasingly negative. Ovamboland was first to scrap Afrikaans in favour of English as a MOI as soon as the administration of education matters was devolved to second-tier authorities (Elischer 2013; Combrink 1985; see further Prinsloo et al. 1982b and Fourie 1991). Finally, yet importantly, SWAPO's leadership largely stemmed from Oukwanyama, where many of its members had attended St Mary's High School and thus constituted an English-speaking elite eager to set a linguistic example (Hopson 2010; Düsing 2002).

The basis for alternative language policy proposals came in the form of the AGN (*Advieskomitee vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing*, the Advisory Committee for Scientific Research) reports (AGN 1982), which made recommendations for a Namibian language-in-education policy based on the trends in language knowledge, use and preferences in SWA summarized in Prinsloo et al. (1982a). Apart from pressing for more centralization in administering education, these recommendations largely reproduced the defining principles of Bantu education: The mother tongue was to be used as a MOI, after which preferably Afrikaans was to be phased in. Harlech-Jones (1990) places the discourse of the AGN recommendations in the perspective of 'apartheid reformism', a political project that arose in the wake of the Soweto (South Africa) riots in 1976, when Black students took to the streets to protest against Afrikaans as a MOI. The aim of that project, whose first testing ground was SWA, was essentially to 'repackage' apartheid while salvaging its tenets in order to not only allow Afrikaners to survive as a group in a democratic

South Africa, but also to ensure that the Black majority would remain politically divided (Dubow 2014; Giliomee 2004). While the AGN reports distanced themselves from the original economic purpose of Bantu education, which was to prepare Non-Whites for low-skilled employment, they still appeared compatible with its political purpose of cementing ethnolinguistic divisions (cf. Kros 2010). However, their formulation did not openly involve political considerations. Rather, they were presented as based on linguistic practicality, as well as on the educational argument that didactic exposure to the mother tongue facilitates cognitive development. As such, the AGN recommendations mirror the post-Sowetan discourses produced by the Afrikaner linguistic establishment, that is, discourses that use the rhetoric of pluralism and linguistic minority protection while advocating the continued use of Afrikaans (Orman 2008; Du Plessis 1992).

SWAPO's definitive language policy was promulgated in 1990 and confirmed the status of English as Namibia's sole official language. However, it displayed a measure of pluralism by permitting the use of other languages for local administrative purposes (Pütz 1995). Official language-in-education policy was first set out in detail by a policy brief published shortly after independence by the Ministry of Education and Training (1992). It makes provision for 'national languages' (mother tongues and English) to be used as MOIs during primary education, although loopholes in its formulation leave open the possibility of using only English from Grade 5 or even from Grade 1 on (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir 2001). Later formulations (see e.g. NIED 2015) stipulate that English should be phased in as the sole MOI from Grade 4 onwards, although it still leaves open the possibility of introducing English from Grade 1 onwards.

It is difficult to track the gradual dismantlement of Afrikaans as an administrative language in independent Namibia. Part of the independence settlement was a clause that civil servants previously appointed would not be removed 'without just cause' (Dobell 1998), which ensured that Afrikaans temporarily retained an association with the civil service.[4] However, the Diergaardt case, a complaint against language discrimination lodged in 2000 by members of the Baster community,[5] suggests that government officials were taking active steps to limit the use of Afrikaans for oral and written communication with the public (Morawa 2002). The implementation of the government language-in-education policy had

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4. The SWAPO government thus inherited a 40,000 strong body of civil servants in 1990, to which it proceeded to add its own members. By 1991, Namibia's civil service was ca. 60,000 strong (cf. Melber 2014; Freeman 1992).

5. The Basters are native Afrikaans speakers formerly classified as 'Coloureds' under the apartheid regime (cf. Marais 1968; Britz et al. 1999).

a variety of outcomes. Wolfaardt (2001) observed that indigenous languages were used more frequently as MOIs in ethnically homogenous (northern) rural areas while English was the dominant MOI at Windhoek schools. Additionally, most historically White schools (as well as schools in the southern regions) still had Afrikaans as a MOI while providing for English streams. The dominance of English at Windhoek schools could be accounted for as a practical adjustment to ethnolinguistic diversity in classrooms. It also reflects parents' insistence on their children gaining maximal exposure to English to increase their employment opportunities (see further Webb 2002 for similar attitudes in South Africa). Finally, English may be the only possible option in a context where the teaching staff are not trained to use indigenous languages as MOIs (see further NERA 2000 and Brock-Utne & Halmarsdottir 2001).

By far the greatest challenge to implementing the new language-in-education policy has been the low proficiency in English among Namibian teachers. This was presented as an explanation for the low English literacy skills among Namibian learners established by two consecutive surveys conducted in 1995 and 2000, as well as by a country-wide English proficiency test held in 2011 (Tötemeyer 2012; Ngololo & Nekongo-Nielsen 2017). In response to these surveys and the low proficiency scores on the test, the government embarked on a country-wide campaign of remediation in the form of the *English Language Proficiency Programme*, implemented between 2011 and 2015 (Ngololo & Nekongo-Nielsen 2017). Overall, language policy in post-independence Namibia has been most visibly focused on spreading English and improving its standards among the population. In contrast, little has been done to promote the use of indigenous languages in the primary school phase, as Wolfaardt (2005) and Brock-Utne & Halmarsdottir (2001) pointed out.

SWAPO's decision to pursue an English-only policy has been criticized as ideological, unpractical, and contrary to educational philosophies. However, that English-only policy reflects historical processes of elite formation within SWAPO and long-established language ideologies in Ovamboland, where SWAPO has drawn most of its support base from. In addition, an English-only policy offered the only politically acceptable break with the legacy of Bantu education and its political aims of ethnolinguistic fragmentation. Implementing English as a MOI has been fraught with pedagogical difficulties in a context where English had held but marginal lingua franca status at best while being accessible to only a small elite. However, government policy and post-independence socio-demographics have ensured that English has become a highly visible and widely used language in Namibia, to the point that it is possibly developing a distinctly local variety.

4.   English in Namibia today

The latest census data on languages in Namibia – currently home to a population of ca. 2.3 million – come from the 2016 *Inter-censal Demographic Survey* (NSA 2017). 50% of households declared Oshiwambo as their dominant home language. The next most frequently declared main home languages were Khoekhoegowab (11%), Afrikaans (9%), Rukavango (10%) and Otjiherero (9%). A comparison with previous censuses (NPC 2012; NSA 2003; CSO 1994) reveals a minor decline in the proportions of households with Afrikaans and Khoekhoegowab as their main languages. English was the only language that by 2011 mustered significant growth as a main home language (3.4% of the population in 2011, up from 0.8% in 1991). There is a north-south divide in the geographic distribution of main home languages: Oshiwambo is the main home language mostly in the northern districts that constitute the historical Ovambo heartland while Afrikaans is the main home language mostly in the southern and central districts, historically home to majorities of Namas, Damaras and Basters. However, Oshiwambo has become the main home language in two central regions, namely, Erongo and Khomas. Windhoek (in Khomas), which previously was inhabited by a majority of Whites, Coloureds, Hereros and Damaras, is nowadays home to an Ovambo majority (Peyroux 2004; Sohn 2003; Pendleton 1996). The spread of Oshiwambo outside of the northern districts is the outcome of north-to-south migration that began when restrictions on internal mobility enforced under the South African regime were lifted in the late 1970s. The Afrikaans and English literacy rates recorded by the 2001 census (NSA 2003)[6] suggest that English has become Namibia's dominant prestige language. Apart from language-in-education policies, two macro-social factors seem to have facilitated its spread. One is the emergence of an urban Black middle class, which is often connected with government and by, implication, identifies with SWAPO's English-oriented language ideology (Melber 2014). The other factor is the steady influx into urban areas of immigrants from northern regions where exposure to Afrikaans is historically limited (see further NPC 2012; Fourie 1991).

Some attention has been paid to language perceptions and attitudes in independent Namibia. Based on urban samples of young educated Namibians, Stell (2016, 2019a) paints a qualitative picture of language perceptions and attitudes in the urban context (see further Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014). Confirming the findings of LeBeau (1991), Stell (2016) found evidence of strong ethnolinguistic stereotypes against a backdrop of ethnic and racial polarization. Although they may be used for 'crossing' purposes, Namibia's indigenous languages are closely tied to the

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6.   69.4% of the population declared that they were literate in English compared with 37.5% in Afrikaans.

ethnic in-group (which confirms the findings by Prinsloo et al. 1982a). In addition to ethnicity, degrees of urbanity are sociolinguistically salient, especially among the Ovambos, who distinguish between fresh rural migrants from the north and the urban *Ombwiti* (Oshiwambo for 'rootless'). With little contact with the historical Ovambo heartland, the *Ombwiti* are stereotypically seen as language shifters, speaking more English and Afrikaans than Oshiwambo (see further Stell 2019a). As a native language, Afrikaans is associated with Whites, Coloureds and Basters. Additionally, it performs the functions of an informal lingua franca, especially in central and southern cities (Stell & Groenewald 2016). Apart from being perceived as the preferred lingua franca of northerners, English tends to be the preferred medium of interaction between Whites and Non-Whites as each of the two groups tend to use Afrikaans varieties perceived as distinctive and ethnoracially exclusive (Stell & Groenewald 2016; Stell 2020b). Additionally, English tends to be associated with higher registers and young Black women in general, perceived as preferring it to Afrikaans, which, conversely, is associated with males and 'street credentials' (Stell 2020a, 2020b). As the most prestigious language, English carries the most ethnically neutral values, not being seen as a native language specific to any ethnic group, except perhaps incipiently for urban Ovambos (see further Ausiku 2010).

There has been some speculation on how 'South African' Namibian English varieties are, given Namibia's close historical association with South Africa. Unlike Trudgill and Hannah (2008), Buschfeld (2013) argues that Namibian English cannot be an offshoot of South African English on the ground that English was little or no more than a school subject in pre-independence Namibia and that – as such – it had little scope for developing focused local varieties, including varieties that could be called South African. In the light of Section 2 and Section 3, one cannot dispute the historical fact highlighted by Buschfeld that English was not widespread as a lingua franca in the South African period. However, one should not overlook the possible long-term linguistic effects of SWA's historical location on the periphery of the British Empire.[7] English was introduced into SWA not only by an imperial elite, but also by Afrikaners, that is, British subjects among whom it already was a widespread second language from early on during the South African period (Kleinz 1984). The survey conducted by Prinsloo et al. (1982a) produced a picture in which Afrikaans monolingualism among SWA Whites was almost extinct: Half reported to use English on a daily basis outside of home, while almost 20% reported to use English on a daily basis at home. In line with Trugdill and Hannah (2008), there is no historical reason to assume that the English varieties spoken by SWA Afrikaners were distinct from those spoken by their part-Anglicized South African peers (see

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7. SWA de facto became part of the British Empire and remained so at least until the Union of South Africa (1910–1961) passed the Status of the Union Act in 1934.

further Steyn 1980). The South African English variety that Watermeyer (1996) calls 'Afrikaans English' and attributes to (South African) Afrikaners forms part of Broad White South African English, that is, a continuum of varieties marked by not only transfers from Dutch/Afrikaans but also Southern Hemisphere English features that seem to have spread from early on among Cape Dutch/Afrikaans speakers (Lanham & McDonald 1979; Watermeyer 1996). Outside of Anglican schools, English as a subject was chiefly relayed by native Afrikaans-speakers, possibly in South African forms (Kleinz 1984). It is only with the abolition of Bantu education that the ethno-linguistic backgrounds of the teaching staff began to diversify (Cohen 1994), thus potentially opening avenues for divergence from South African norms.

Namibian English has so far mostly been described in its phonetic and grammatical features (Stell 2020a, 2020b; Stell & Fuchs 2019; Schröder et al. 2020; Steigertahl 2020). Based on ethnolinguistically representative samples that comprised Afrikaners, Coloureds, and speakers of Khoekhoeghowab and Bantu languages (i.e. Oshiwambo and Otjiherero), Stell (2020a, 2020b) and Stell and Fuchs (2019) observed linguistic polarization between Whites (Afrikaners) and Bantu-speakers, with Coloureds and Damaras occupying an intermediate position in between the two. Afrikaner (and to a lesser extent Coloured) English vowel systems seem to be oriented towards South African English models, more specifically to White South African English (WSAfrE), as manifested by glide-weakened PRICE with +backed open onset and MOUTH with [æ]-like raised onset, which have no equivalent in Afrikaans (see further Stell 2020b). In contrast, the Bantu-speakers display a range of mergers (i.e. within the FLEECE-KIT, FOOT-GOOSE and NURSE-DRESS pairs), as well as strong monophthongizing tendencies in especially FACE and GOAT. These features can be interpreted in the light of the five-vowel systems characteristic of Namibia's Bantu languages and their lack of diphthongs. However, L1 background cannot account for all variation in Black Namibian English varieties. A clear indication in this respect comes with the Khoekhoegowab speakers, who, in line with the Bantu-speakers, tend to exhibit [i] for FLEECE-KIT and [ɔ]-like onsets for GOAT where +centralized or schwa-like vowels may theoretically be transferred from Khoekhoegowab.[8] Overall, +substratal features are more associated with males while –substratal features are conversely more associated with females. Indications that focused Black Namibian English varieties may be emerging are found in phonetic features untypical of Inner Circle standard varieties that are equally exhibited by females and males. These include the already mentioned KIT-FLEECE merger, as well as +tense/-centralized FOOT/GOOSE, +monophthongized FACE/GOAT.

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8.   Khoekhoegowab has a schwa-like allophone that occurs as onset in the diphthongs 'ai' ([əu]) and 'au' ([əu]). See further Fredericks (2013) for details.

The morpho-syntactic analysis of Namibian English began with written corpora, in which Dabrowska (2017) noted potential grammatical transfers from Namibia's Bantu languages, such as particularly resumptive pronouns. In addition, she noted local features with no clear substratal origin in the form of overgeneralized present progressive forms. Steigertahl (2020, 2019) focused on spoken Black Namibian English, which she experimentally elicited in monolingual form. She reports on features attested in South African English (e.g. *busy + -ing* progressive structures), along with overgeneralized features (e.g. duplicated modals, emphatic past tense marking), some of which are attested in other postcolonial English varieties as 'Angloversals' (see further Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann 2009). Importantly, Steigertahl observes no significant contrast between the English varieties of her Bantu- and Khoekhoegowab-speaking participants. Given the fact that the Bantu and Khoesan families vastly differ in grammatical terms, this could be treated as one more indication that a Black Namibian variety is emerging.

Studies of spoken Namibian English tend to rely on data elicited in unnaturalistic settings. Observing Namibian English in naturalistic settings amounts to observing complex multilingual data. Based on a corpus of unmonitored interactions between students, Stell (2014) provides a description of where and how English is used across informal intra- and inter-ethnic contexts. In line with perceptions discussed in Stell (2016), English turned out to be the dominant medium in interactions between northern-born Ovambos and other ethnolinguistic groups while Afrikaans turned out to be dominant in all other contexts. Stell (2019b) notes in another study of the same interactional data that – even where Afrikaans was dominant – Black female participants generally used less Afrikaans and more English than their male peers. In addition, English was strongly present in interactions with Afrikaners even where the Black participants knew Afrikaans. One major finding from the studies cited above is that English has generally become part and parcel of intra-ethnic repertoires, except among the Afrikaners. The main types of intra-ethnic codeswitching involve English with indigenous languages and Afrikaans, English with indigenous languages alone (in the specific case of the northern-born Ovambos) or English with Afrikaans alone (in the case of the Afrikaners and Coloureds). A striking feature of English when used as a lingua franca between Non-Whites in general is that it involves recurring discourse marking devices of Coloured Afrikaans origin (such as, e.g. exclamative *etse*, indicator of shared knowledge *mos*, interrogative *hoeka*, etc.) that are absent in the English and Afrikaans varieties used by Afrikaners. Stell (2019a) remarks that young urban Ovambos tend to mark their English as Ovambo by using specific Oshiwambo discourse markers in the context of intra-ethnic interactions. The observations made by Stell (2014, 2019a, 2019b) could be summarized as follows: English in Namibia is a prestige language whose use extends into informal registers, where it is in the

process of developing indigenous forms marked as either 'ethnically neutral' or 'ethnic' depending on the interactional context.

Thirty years after independence, English has acquired wide visibility in Namibia, where it unquestionably is the dominant prestige language. Far from being confined to classrooms, as Wolfaardt (2001) once observed, its use now extends deep into informal spheres. Its increasing visibility as an informal medium of communication derives to a large extent from north-to-south migration dynamics and the historical sociolinguistic isolation of the north, where Afrikaans was never able to take hold as it did in other regions. The fact that English is used in informal contexts opens avenues for 'nativization' (Kachru 2005; Schneider 2007). Although Afrikaners seem to follow WSAfrE models, there are some suggestions that a consensual English variety with potentially distinctive features may be emerging among Black Namibians.

5.   Conclusion

The introduction to this chapter referred to the view that Namibia's English-only policy is historically incongruous. This policy appears less incongruous when one considers the fact that English had become a practical reality for Namibia's large exile population, which was destined to become politically dominant. The linguistic symbolism of the anti-apartheid struggle must also be taken into consideration. As a minor partner of the South African *African National Congress* (ANC), fighting a common Afrikaans-speaking foe, there was no obvious reason why SWAPO should not adopt the ANC's view of English as an instrument of nation-building and socio-political transformation symbolically set against Afrikaans, whose image of 'oppressor's language' had spread across the world in the wake of the 1976 Soweto riots. English may have been relatively invisible to the masses in SWA, but – as pre-independence language attitude surveys clearly revealed – liberation ideologies had successfully 'packaged' it as the only possible linguistic medium of social advancement for Blacks. Thirty years after independence, English is now firmly established in Namibia as a lingua franca, often combined with Afrikaans. Except perhaps for White Namibian Afrikaans speakers, it seems to have become an inextricable component of informal registers. In other words, English has come alive in Namibia, and it is, for that reason, well-positioned to start developing indigenous varieties alongside varieties still oriented towards South African English models. Namibia's English-only policy still appears experimental to many. It is hoped that future sociolinguistic studies will provide a fuller picture of how what in the view of many began as an arbitrary language policy experiment is now giving rise to a full-fledged new variety of English.

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PART II

Communicative practices

Voices from the post-independence classroom

Language use and attitudes towards English in Namibia

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With its implementation as Namibia's sole official language, English also became the only medium of instruction after mother tongue education during the first school years. This generated advantages as well as disadvantages, particularly in the educational sector, as English had – except in the northern regions – hardly been used in Namibia until 1990. This article discusses Namibia's educational policy, assessing both quantitative and qualitative data on the use of English and home languages in the Namibian classroom. In this context, the results of a quantitative questionnaire study are triangulated with the analysis of qualitative interviews providing a more comprehensive view on the linguistic situation in (English) classrooms in post-Independence Namibia.

Keywords: educational policy, English as medium of instruction, language attitudes, home languages, post-Independence Namibia

1. Introduction

With Namibia's independence in 1990, English became the only official language of the new nation and the sole medium of instruction (MOI) after mother tongue education (MTE) during the first school years. Despite having low numbers of L1 speakers, English was chosen for its symbolic association with "liberation" while Afrikaans – the formerly dominant official language – was disparaged as "the language of the oppressor" (Harlech-Jones 1997: 231). Moreover, English was considered "neutral" and a global language that would help Namibia's integration into the wider world (Harlech-Jones 1995: 185; Frydman 2011: 182). As it is perceived to have a unifying character in the context of multilingual Namibia,[1] attitudes towards English have generally been positive ever since (Beck 1995; Pütz 1995; Steigertahl

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1. For an overview of the demography and linguistic situation as well as the historical background of Namibia, see Section 2 in the introductory chapter of this volume.

2010, 2015, 2020; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014). Regardless of the language's potential advantages, English has come with challenges, particularly in the educational sector, as proficiency of both teachers and students has been considered low for a long time (Harris 2011; Kisting 2011, 2012).

This chapter discusses Namibia's educational policy, the introduction of English as the sole MOI in 1990 and its use in schools ever since. In a quantitative data analysis, the results of 263 questionnaires on language use and attitudes are evaluated and analyzed while emphasis is put on the use of English as compared to the use of home languages (HL). Furthermore, the chapter examines qualitative data in the form of 77 semi-structured interviews that were conducted as part of the corpus of *English(es) Spoken by Black Namibians Post-Independence* (*ESBNaPI*).[2] Finally, an outlook on the future use of English in post-Independence Namibia, both inside and outside the classroom, is given.

2.   Namibia's educational policy

When English was introduced as the sole official language with independence in 1990, Article 3 of Namibia's Constitution stated that English should be the official language of Namibia; at the same time other languages could also be used for pedagogic, legislative, administrative and judicial reasons (Government of Namibia 1990: 6–7). Accordingly, it is possible to teach in a language other than English as long as "proficiency in the official language" (Government of Namibia 1990: 6–7) is achieved. However, the definition of "proficiency" remains problematic. Implementing this policy promised to be fraught with difficulties as few spoke English (Beck 1995: 207–208; Harlech-Jones 1997: 227), and consequently, local teachers had to undergo training, while foreign ones were brought in from abroad (Tötemeyer 2010: 13, 64). Furthermore, during the first school years the MOI should be the students' HL. However, only a few languages are selected as MOI and schools usually offer MTE in two to three languages only although students come from more diverse L1 backgrounds. Due to the lack of teachers of different languages, few children can benefit from MTE. Hence, even L1 acquisition lags behind as children enter (pre-)school at an early age; at this point English learning or acquisition can be even more difficult when the children's L1 is not fully developed (Harlech-Jones 1997: 229, 231; Wolfaardt 2004: 367; Harris 2011: 59; Kisting 2012). Other Namibian languages are mentioned in Article 3, but an interpretation of this Article and the exact use of HLs in the multilingual classroom

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2.   For more details on terminology, see Steigertahl (2020) and Section 3.3 of the introductory chapter of the present volume.

have remained unclear (Harlech-Jones 1998: 2; Frydman 2011: 187). Meanwhile, parents hold a negative attitude towards indigenous languages, tend to associate them with Mother Tongue instruction in the Apartheid era, unaware of the detrimental effects of defective L1 acquisition to cognitive development (Brock-Utne 2000: 202; Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh 2004: 181).

Educationists have suggested a new approach to Language-in-Education policies: staff training, parental support, sufficient school materials, new strategies such as translanguaging, and MTE (Harris 2011: 19, 21; Iipinge 2013; Mwinda & van der Walt 2015). A cost benefit analysis has also shown that a change in the system would bring improvement to drop out rates and the lack of English proficiency (Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh 2004: 178; Frydman 2011: 184–186; Harris 2011: 60). Frydmann (2011: 186) argues that the high costs of implementing MTE could eventually help diminish school drop out rates. Meanwhile, none of the proposed reforms have been implemented and drop out rates, as well as costs for remedial education, remain high (Harris 2011: 13–14, 60; Iipinge 2013; Mwinda & van der Walt 2015).

In comparison to other African countries, especially to neighboring South Africa, Namibia's generally monolingual language policy can be considered exceptional, as English usually only serves as one of several official languages. In the following, language use and attitudes towards English are assessed, also in comparison to Namibian HLs, building on Pütz' (1995) work from shortly after independence.

3.   Data collection and methodology

Field research was predominantly conducted in smaller towns and their surrounding locations, i.e. Usakos, Divundu, Ruacana, Gobabis, but also Windhoek and Tsumeb (see Map 3 in the introductory chapter to this volume). In addition to the question of variety status, the project aimed to assess if (and how) the educational policy of Namibia takes the potential variety status of English(es) in Namibia into account (cf. Steigertahl 2020). In this context, data in the form of interviews and questionnaires on language use and attitudes[3] were collected, next to participatory observation.

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3.   The questionnaire draws on the survey by Pütz (1995), which was influenced by Schmied (1991), and on empirical studies by Igboanusi and Peter (2005), Steigertahl (2010), Buschfeld (2013) and Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014). The questionnaire used in 2010 was altered after my own observations during several trips to Namibia in 2011 and 2013. The questionnaire is reproduced in Steigertahl (2020: 361–368).

3.1   Questionnaires and interviews

Questionnaires were designed to receive information on language use and attitudes in Namibia, with a focus on English(es) in contrast to HLs. As questionnaires might show what people say they do but not necessarily what they actually do, they possibly reveal language ideologies. Consequently, they were accompanied by interviews and participatory observation to receive a more realistic picture of the linguistic situation (Schmied 1991: 30; Pütz 1995: 253; Igboanusi & Peter 2005: 95–96). The triangulation of the different data types could increase the "explanatory power" of the results (Meyerhoff et al. 2012: 122).

3.2   Participants

The participants were contacted through the friend-of-a-friend approach, mostly at schools and (educational) organizations in the different areas. The (potential) participants were informed about the purpose of the survey being a study on language use in Namibia, and selected according to the following criteria: (1) They were supposed to be Namibian nationals or at least residing in the country for at least 15 years, (2) they had to be proficient in English and (3) at least 16 years of age.

A breakdown of participants by age is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Age distribution of questionnaire participants and interviewees

Age groups	Questionnaire participants		Interviewees	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
16–25	138	52.5%	35	45.5%
26–35	68	25.9%	20	26.0%
36–45	36	13.7%	16	20.8%
46–54	13	4.9%	6	7.8%
> 54	4	1.5%	0	0%
NA	4	1.5%	0	0%
Total	263	100%	77	100%

The mean value of the questionnaire participants' age is 27.4. The overall mean age of the interviewees is 29.

There are slightly more females among the participants, as visible in Table 2.

Table 2. Sex of questionnaire participants and interviewees

Sex	Questionnaire participants		Interviewees	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
female	141	53.6%	40	51.9%
male	120	45.6%	37	48.1%
NA	2	0.8%	0	0%
Total	**263**	**100%**	**77**	**100%**

As typical of multilingual societies, the L1[4] background of the participants is very diverse, clearly illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Home languages of questionnaire participants and interviewees

Language	Questionnaire participants		Interviewees	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
NA	1	0.4%	0	0%
Portuguese	1	0.4%	0	0%
Nkumbi	1	0.4%	0	0%
Mbundu	1	0.4%	0	0%
Chokwe, English	1	0.4%	0	0%
Afrikaans, Damara/Nama	1	0.4%	0	0%
Oshiwambo, Silozi	0	0%	1	1.3%
Oshiwambo, Kavango	0	0%	1	1.3%
Setswana	4	1.5%	0	0%
English	4	1.5%	1	1.3%
Afrikaans	13	4.9%	1	1.3%
Zambezi	19	7.2%	9	11.7%
Otjiherero	31	11.8%	11	14.3%
Damara/Nama	41	15.6%	14	18.2%
Kavango	67	25.5%	14	18.2%
Oshiwambo	78	29.7%	25	32.5%
Total	**263**	**100%**	**77**	**100%**

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4. For a better overview, different speech forms are subsumed under one name, e.g. different Oshiwambo languages/dialects/varieties such as Oshindonga, Oshikwambi and Oshikwanyama as Oshiwambo.

3.3   Settings

Table 4 presents a breakdown of participants by location.

Table 4. Places of residence of questionnaire participants and interviewees

Place of residence	Questionnaire participants		Interviewees	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
Divundu (Div)	85	32.3%	24	31.2%
Usakos (Usa)	81	30.8%	27	35.1%
Ruacana (Rua)	46	17.5%	16	20.8%
Gobabis (Gob)	45	17.1%	8	10.4%
Windhoek (Whk)	3	1.1%	2	2.6%
Tsumeb (Tsu)	2	0.8%	0	0%
NA	1	0.4%	0	0%
Total	**263**	**100%**	**77**	**100%**

One ethnolinguistic group was dominant in the settings of Divundu, Ruacana, Usakos and Gobabis each, also based on the former homeland policy under apartheid (cf. Steigertahl 2020). In Divundu, Rukavangos are the dominant group; in Ruacana, Ovambos are predominant; in Usakos, Damaras form a big group; in Gobabis, the researcher was mainly surrounded by Ovahereros. Thus, it was assumed that language needs could diverge in the different settings. For instance, Gobabis and Usakos are located near the center of Namibia where Afrikaans plays a crucial role in several settings (Stell 2009: 86). Divundu is close to Namibia's neighboring countries Botswana and Zambia, hence presumably more influenced by English (Nampala & Shigwedha 2006: 173–230; Wallace & Kinahan 2011: 86–93, 201–203). Ruacana is located in the far north, close to the Angolan border. This region tends to be linguistically homogeneous as languages other than Oshiwambo are not needed for everyday communication (cf. Harlech-Jones 1995: 186; Brock-Utne 2000: 200; Stell 2014: 226). In fact, Oshiwambo has been the lingua franca in the north for a long time (Harlech-Jones 1995: 186; New Era 2015). In addition, the majority of Namibians lives in the north (Harris 2011: 10; Wallace & Kinahan 2011: 2, 75–76); hence, this region was included in the project. The south has not been considered feasible for quantitative research on languages due to its sparse population (Harris 2011: 10; Wallace & Kinahan 2011: 2). Another reason for the choice of these settings were former contacts from earlier visits to Namibia. Although this could be regarded as a reason of convenience, it has to be considered crucial as trust plays a key role when conducting research in Namibia: Contact persons are necessary as trust is created when you, as a friend-of-a-friend, spend time with well-known and respected people, e.g. police officers and teachers.

3.4   Data collection and analysis

The questionnaires were distributed and the participants were interviewed in settings such as schools, offices, shops and at home, i.e. their own comfortable environment. All in all, 82 semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed orthographically; they make up the corpus *ESBNaPI* which comprises 29 hours of spoken English(es) and 190,000 words, excluding the interviewer's speech. The corpus was then analyzed in a content-based approach, i.e. searched for the same topics as asked in the questionnaires as a complement to the quantitative study. Hence, further insights and a better interpretation could be gained on language use and attitudes in the communities of focus as some quantitative results were relativized (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain 2009: 195, 198; Steigertahl 2020). This is addressed in the following sections, focusing on language use and attitudes in the Namibian educational context.

4.   Language use and attitudes

In addition to the comparison of quantitative and qualitative results, the variables of age and L1 were looked into so as to find possible differences between age and linguistic groups. However, among the different interviewees no particularities could be found (cf. Steigertahl 2020).[5]

4.1   Learning English

Most participants (65.4%) started learning English at primary school, but a considerable part (i.e. 15.6%) also seem to have acquired the language at home, at secondary school (10.3%) or with friends (6.1%).

Altogether, most participants ticked 'at primary school', which reflects the sharp linguistic transition experiences by average Namibian learners from home to school environments reported by Wolfaardt (2004) and Brock-Utne (2000). Against this general backdrop, a group of mostly L1 Afrikaans- and L1 Zambezi-speaking informants stated that they had acquired English at home. This reflects group-specific tendencies: 38.5% and 26.3% among the L1 Afrikaans-speakers and L1 Zambezi-speakers, respectively, stated that they had acquired English at home.

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5.   To ensure anonymity, variables such as occupation are not analyzed, although I refer to teachers as a distinctive category during the qualitative data analysis. The variable "education" was often misunderstood in the questionnaire so that some participants ticked the school form where they worked instead of their level of education.
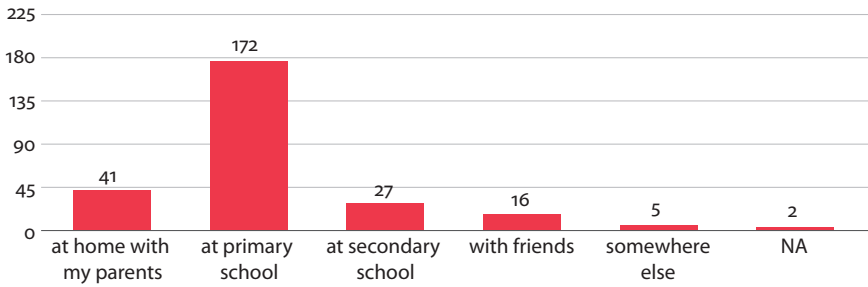
Figure 1. Starting point of learning English

The high percentage reported for L1 Afrikaans-speakers possibly has to do with the long-standing tendency towards Afrikaans-English bilingualism among Afrikaners and Coloureds, who together make up most of Namibia's L1 Afrikaans-speaking population (Stell 2020a, 2020b).[6] The high percentage reported for the L1 Zambezi group likely has to do with their home region's proximity to Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana, which all always had English as an official language. It also fits with perceptions that Zambezi people are 'better' at English (Stell 2019a).

Another salient group is formed by half of the informants aged between 46 and 54 years (46.2%, i.e. 6 respondents, none of them L1 Afrikaans- or Zambezi-speakers) who ticked 'at secondary school'.[7] This choice reflects apartheid language-in-education policies which made provision for English only as a subject and never as a MOI. For these participants, the possibility of learning English must have presented itself only after the abolition of apartheid.[8]

The interviews generally corroborate the results returned by the questionnaire study. They also shed light on how some of the participants continued learning English after primary education:

(1) *Rua f22 Ovambo*[9] I learn it […] just first from primary yeah and through secondary school and, vocational yeah, I've been learning English.

(2) *Div m37 SiLozi* From school. Primary, secondary, tertiary.

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6. The questionnaires included no questions on ethnic self-categorization. The term 'Coloured' that I am using here refers to the corresponding racial category acknowledged during apartheid, which comprises Basters, Cape Coloureds, and Griquas (van der Ross 1979).

7. See Table 5 in the Appendix.

8. The Bantu Education Act was a cornerstone of apartheid. Its aim was to promote tribalism by imposing mother tongue instruction (Harlech-Jones 1997: 229; Alexander 1989: 21–27).

9. The participants are named after their place of residence, sex (m = male, f = female) and age in years as well as their ethnolinguistic belonging. This participant, for instance, lives in Ruacana, is female and 22 years old and identifies as Ovambo.

Some also explained why they learned English at secondary school, much later than most interviewees. The excerpt below highlights the anxieties connected to the process:

(3) *Rua f46 Ovambo* So I just did eh learning English […] I think grade eight/ […] Grade seven, […] and to learn a new language is sometimes, sometime you're getting shy, you're afraid of eh ehm maybe making mistakes

Four respondents mentioned additional settings where they started learning English (highlighted in bold); hence, institutional and more informal learning go hand in hand.

(4) *Usa f20 Damara* I learned English from the, sometimes **from the street**, but I usually learn English from primary school.

(5) *Rua f32 Ovambo* English, I just learn it, ah, at school, as a subject. Yeah. Then from there, you just do it from own, **catching from people** when #they are speaking and all those things.

(6) *Div m28 Kavango* I learned English through schools and, **through friendships** with the others. […] what made me to be better in English is eh #you **reading**. And listening to the **radio**.

(7) *Div f23 Ovambo* At school. […] but **my dad** would definitely speak with us in English/ […] **at home**.

4.2   Medium of instruction

Figure 2 shows the preferred MOI and the actual MOI used at school[10]

The vast majority (91.3%, i.e. 240 participants) preferred English as the MOI for all subjects at school. Only very few people preferred other languages, such as Oshiwambo (1.1%), Afrikaans (1.1.%), Kavango (0.8%), Damara/Nama (1.5%), Otjiherero (1.9%) or a mix of several languages (2.3%).

The participants overwhelmingly confirm the hegemonic position of English as MOI. Most (87.5%) reported that they were/are taught in English at school, while small numbers reported having been taught in other languages, namely, Afrikaans (3.4%), Kavango (1.9%), Damara/Nama (1.5%), Oshiwambo (1.1%), Otjiherero (1.1%) or other languages (3.4%). L1 and/or age background apparently have no influence on these figures.

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10. It is possible that the questionnaire participants misunderstood the statement *The language at school was/is* and referred to the current situation at Namibian schools instead of their own situation in the past.
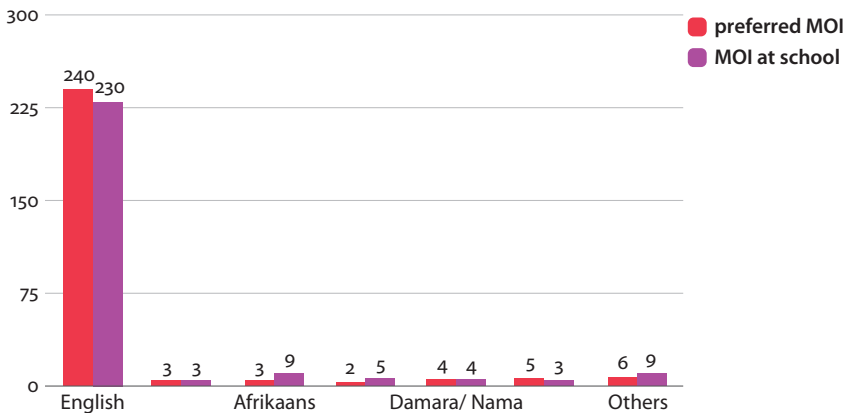
Figure 2. Preferred MOI and MOI used at school

Those informants who stated to have begun learning English only from secondary school onwards testify to the implementation of Bantu Language education at their schools and its promotion of Afrikaans at the expense of English, such as in Excerpt (8):

(8)   *Usa f45 Damara* But before that time, Eng-, Afrikaans was the eh medium of instruction those years, ya. We were having English only as a subject.

(9)   *Gob m45 Yeyi* Yes, we don't have Afrikaans, but before, when I went to school at primary eh, in grade eleven, there was Afrikaans from grade one to grade eh five. […] Then it was phased out. Then you find, only find Afrikaans in the far, southern part of Namibia. Say from maybe Otjiwarongo, Windhoek, down there, yes.

(10)   *Gob m53 Herero* I was exposed to English since grade one. […] I was exposed to English, ehm, we were taught in Afrikaans, it was the medium of instruction, and then English was coming as a very strong second language, but the teachers […] I was having the time, they were strong people in English as well.

These excerpts under (9) and (10) testify to how the change in Language-in-Education policy was experienced and resulted in the retreat of Afrikaans as a MOI or lingua franca.

Furthermore, nowadays Afrikaans is reported to be mostly used in the capital and south of Namibia. Surprisingly, Example (10) stresses the teachers' English proficiency at his time despite frequent discussions of the difficulty of finding good Namibian English teachers right after independence (Tötemeyer 2010: 64). Overall, these voices add to the picture of the quantitative study (cf. Figure 2).

4.3   Problems with English

In the questionnaire study, the participants were asked if they noticed mistakes when they were writing or speaking in English or problems understanding/listening to English (cf. Steigertahl 2020: 361–368). The results are displayed in Figure 3.
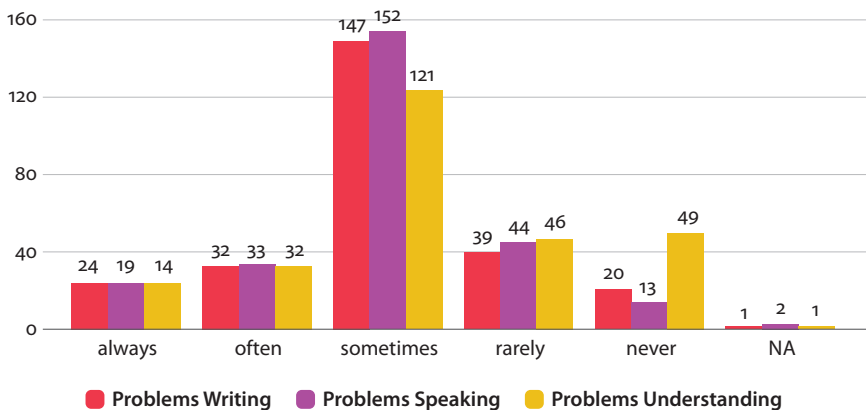
Figure 3. Problems with English

As can be seen for all three areas, the majority of the 263 respondents stated that they 'sometimes' have problems writing (55.9%) and speaking English (57.8%). Fewer problems seem to occur understanding English as 46.0% ticked 'sometimes'.

Two of the 82 interviewees elaborate on the linguistic disconnect between home and school:

(11)   *Rua f52 Ovambo* The medium of instruction is English but at home they doesn't use it.

(12)   *Rua f43 Ovambo* The fourth grade they start with English as a medium of instruction […] like the first te- term, it's always difficult because they are not fluent, and when you are teaching in English, […] it's a little bit difficult for them to capture what we are saying

As it seems, the lack of English usage at home, especially in the north, as well as the transition from MTE to English pose a challenge for both teachers and students. Hence, several teacher participants reported that their students had problems learning English:

(13)   *Rua f42 SiLozi* English was, I'd say we are, it's a bit of a struggle/ […] In a sense that, our learners, in most cases, they are not like performing at their appropriate level.

(14) *Usa m38 Damara* To be honest ehm, some if not many of our learners are struggling with English. […] one can see that learners are really struggling because many of them are failing ah English. […] it is a bit better in other languages. […] Especially the mother tongue/

(15) *Usa f52 Nama* I've one girl, […] she's coming from the north. […] She don't know Afrikaans. […] Even English, she's struggling with English.

(16) *Div m28 Kavango* I cannot say that they are well doing in English. […] the learner find difficulty in spelling of some words in English, and the way to pronounce some of the words in English. […] And how how to create a sentence, so that you can understand it, it is difficult for them.

(17) *Rua m26 Ovambo* For grade five, […] it's quite difficult. But if you repeat […] the topics several times, it will be very easy, cos you know they are still learning. […] But the grade six learners, you can see […] they are improving/

There is thus a perception that students usually perform better in their L1 and that some find it difficult to make themselves understood in English.

According to the teacher participants, the primary reason for these difficulties is a lack of exposure to the English language outside the classroom, as summarized in (18), (19), and (20):

(18) *Rua m42 Ovambo* But now the challenge is, this learners are not exposed. […] maybe they have got nowhere to, […] acquire language, you see? […] here the person does not understand basics.

(19) *Rua f46 Ovambo* Like even you're teaching them, so it's cannot be, […] mostly affected because, here at home, the parents they're eh speaking Oshiwambo. You see. Again the community s- are speaking Oshiwambo, they're not understanding #the E- English […]

(20) *Rua m23 Ovambo* I shouldn't say they are really that fine. […] English is not really being spoken that much in here. Ya. But the learners are quite OK. […] Even though they are kind of struggling here and there. Because of the exposure also.

The excerpts quoted above mirror a state of monolingualism in the school surroundings. The traditional Ovambo districts, such as Omusati where these excerpts were elicited, are marked by their ethnic homogeneity (NSA 2012). Therefore, it may not come as a surprise that English locally lacks lingua franca functions that could make it more visible to students in everyday life.

4.4 Proposed solutions?

There is no clearly perceived solution to the challenges described by the teacher participants. The introduction of a MOI other than English does not receive unqualified support from the respondents, as Figure 4 clearly shows.
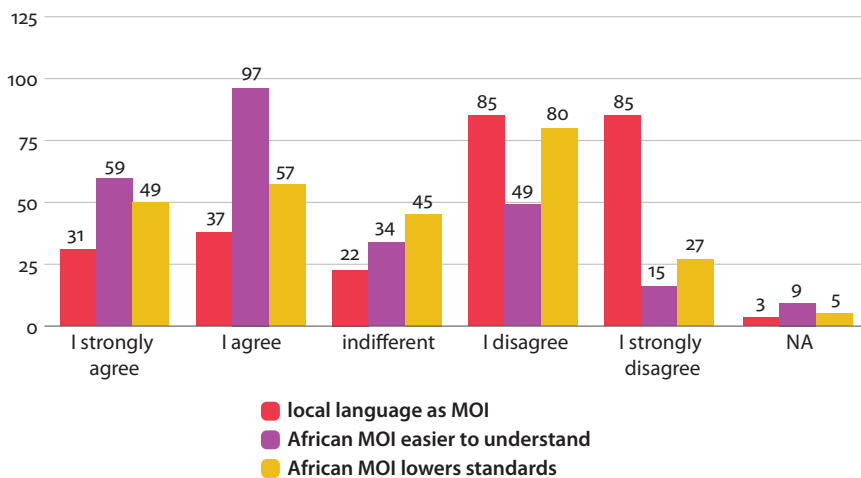

Figure 4. English and local languages as MOI

The majority of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (85 or 32.3% each) with the statement *I would like a local language to replace English as the classroom language in our schools, colleges and universities*, while approximately a third strongly agreed (31/11.8%) or agreed (37/14.1%), with 8.4%, that is 22 people, remaining 'indifferent'.

The statement *It is easier to understand difficult ideas when they are explained in African languages* was more supported, with 59 (22.4%) respondents strongly agreeing or 97 (36.9%) agreeing, and 49 (18.6%) disagreeing and 15 (5.7%) strongly disagreeing; 34 (12.9%) respondents remained indifferent and 9 (3.4%) did not answer this question.

Finally, answers to the statement *Switching to African languages as a medium of instruction would bring down the educational standards* were not conclusive: 18.6% (49) of the respondents strongly and 21.7% (57) agree with this statements, while 30.4% (80) disagree and another 10.3% (27) strongly disagree. 17.1% (45) remain indifferent and 1.9% (5) did not answer this question.

In the interviews, however, some teacher participants suggested code-switching involving English and a local language as a solution to communication problems in the classroom:

(21) *Div f28 Kavango* Sometimes you have to enter using vernacular language because that words if it is not explained you will leave the learners think. […] If you go in a bit, then you come back, then, they will be able to follow.

(22) *Usa f45 Damara* [The teachers often] have to switch to Khoikhoi because the the learners have got lot of difficulties speaking English. […] They're still struggling here and there.

This view is rejected by other teacher participants, such as in (23), where the participant points towards the usually multi-ethnic character of the Namibian classroom as a justification to only use English, albeit a 'simplified' form of English:

(23) *Rua f43 Ovambo* I just speak [English], I just try simplify my sentence until I make them understand. […] It's since this kids do not understand but at least now I'm using the peer teaching, […] when I really find it difficult for me to get through but I don't switch to Oshiwambo at all. […] we've got other Namibians who are non-Oshiwambo speaking and […] so if you train them to switch, then it will be a problem if somebody else comes in.

4.5   Summary and discussion

The quantitative data has shown that English is supposedly frequently used and also favored in many domains in Namibia. At least in areas located away from the main urban centers, English rather seems to be learned formally in the classroom than acquired naturally and is perceived as more compatible with MOI functions than local languages despite their undisputable advantages with regard to comprehension (see also Steigertahl 2010, 2015; Stell 2014, 2019a, 2019b). These observations were to a large extent mirrored in the qualitative data. Some teacher participants stated that they prefer not to switch into local languages during class despite the evident lack of English knowledge among their students. While the apparent aversion to the concept of MTE might have to do with its connotations of Bantu Education, the (teacher) participants mostly name practical considerations linked to multilingual classroom management as their reason for supporting English only. In addition, the qualitative data illustrate the transition between pre- and post-Independence Language-in-Education policies. They explain why competence in English may be absent among older Namibians.

According to the questionnaire data, problems with writing/speaking/understanding English occur 'sometimes' but do not seem to cause major challenges for the participants (cf. Figure 3). The interview data, such as exemplified by (18) to (20), link low competence to lacking exposure to the official language. The relative absence of English outside of classroom settings partly has to do with local demographics.

Generally, the quantitative data suggest that L1 Afrikaans-speakers and L1 Zambezi-speakers behave differently from the others. The interviews with the L1 Zambezi-speakers suggest that borders in the Zambezi region are frequently passed, which may explain why that language group appears more familiar with English. Interaction between the Zambezi region and the neighboring Anglophone countries has a long history. For example, education was administered from neighboring Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe) until late in the colonial period (Kleinz 1984). Nowadays, the Zambezi is socio-economically oriented towards its neighbors more than it is towards central Namibia, as suggested by internal migration trends (NSA 2012). At a geographic point where several Bantu language groups intersect, English establishes itself as a lingua franca (along with Silozi) and exposure to it is accordingly more present than in the other communities discussed in this study.

Lack of exposure to English in the Oshiwambo-speaking north has to do with the essentially mono-ethnic character of the region (NSA 2012). On the other hand, lack of exposure to English in Gobabis, Tsumeb, and Usakos has to do with the lingua franca functions that Afrikaans still locally performs in peripheral urban contexts where Damaras and Hereros have co-existed since colonial times. In the context of Windhoek, Afrikaans still performs lingua franca functions within the low-income areas where the Bantu-speaking participants were recruited. Additionally, Afrikaans tends to be the non-indigenous language most known to the older generation that was subject to Bantu Education. This is reflected in the interviews as the older participants stated not having English as MOI at the time they attended school (cf. Excerpts (8) to (10)).

Solutions to the lack of English competence, such as code-switching, are reportedly applied at times but there are no systematic recommendations for using code-switching (see Mwinda & van der Walt 2015 as an exception).

5.   Conclusions

This study sheds light on the use of English in the Namibian classroom as well as on attitudes towards this language. Language-in-Education policies unbinding makes recommendations on the use of MTE that are regarded as non-binding in practice. In contrast, recommendations that English be used in the classroom are not questioned. Several locally involved scholars have raised their voice in favor of a stricter implementation of MTE in order to avoid high dropout rates and low marks, for instance (e.g. Harlech-Jones 1998: 6; Wolfaardt 2004: 366–368; Harris 2011).

However, English seems set to retain its hegemony in education for the reason that MTE is not practicable in multilingual classroom settings unless segregation by language group is – again – implemented, as it was under apartheid. In addition,

English enjoys high prestige and there is little support for enhancing the position of local languages as MOI (see also Steigertahl 2010, 2015; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014). At a methodological level, the study confirms that language use and attitudes should be assessed jointly using combined quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires, interviews and participatory observation produce a more comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistic situation in Namibia, where – despite the positive attitudes towards English revealed in both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis – the 'struggle' with English, even more than 25 years after independence, continues, in some regions more than in others.

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Appendix

Table 5. Responses to *Where did you start to learn English?* according to age groups

	16–25		26–35		36–45		46–54		> 54		NA	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
at home with my parents	26	19	11	16	3	8					1	25
at primary school	89	64	50	74	23	64	6	46	1	25	3	75
at secondary school	9	7	2	3	9	25	6	46	1	25		
with friends	11	8	3	4	1	3	1	8				
somewhere else	3	2	1	1					1	25		
NA			1	1					1	25		
Total	**138**	**100**	**68**	**100**	**36**	**100**	**13**	**100**	**4**	**100**	**4**	**100**

English and multilingual repertoires in healthcare

Communicative experiences of expatriate healthcare providers in Windhoek

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This chapter investigates the role of English in the communicative practices among multilingual participants in healthcare in Windhoek, Namibia, from the perspective of expatriate healthcare practitioners working in the private sector. It provides insights into the use of English in Namibia and informs about the multilingual communicative resources and needs from the perspective of healthcare providers (HCPs). The chapter illustrates that expatriate multilingual HCPs, working in a multilingual context, find the linguistic diversity at their workplace both challenging and enriching. They experience the use of English and many other languages to be an engagement that broadens their professional, social, and cultural views and this ultimately results in improved work relations and improved HCP-patient relationships.

Keywords: Namibian English, healthcare, multilingual workplace

1. Introduction

This chapter focusses on the role of English and multilingualism in health communication by specifically focussing on the Namibian context. The aim is to investigate communicative practices among multilingual participants in healthcare in Windhoek, Namibia, from the perspective of expatriate healthcare practitioners working in the private sector. The multilingual environment of healthcare has remained largely un-investigated in Namibia, which is a matter of concern considering how heavily Namibia relies on healthcare providers of foreign origin whose linguistic repertoires are diverse. English was constitutionally afforded the status of the only official language after independence in 1990 (Frydman 2011), though

Afrikaans still remains the lingua franca in many contexts (Tötemeyer 2010). Even so, at independence English was a first language (L1) to a very small percentage of the population, the majority not being fluent in this language (Frydman 2011; Tötemeyer 2010). This raises questions regarding communicative challenges and negative impacts on the quality of healthcare in the country. The chapter gives an exposition of a number of authentic, self-reported communicative experiences of multilingual expatriate healthcare providers (HCPs) with varying linguistic repertoires. Being of foreign origin, the linguistic repertoires of expatriate HCPs add to the linguistic diversity of the country as many have non-Namibian languages as their L1s. Therefore, they may not fully share the language resources of their clients, thus turning English into a lingua franca in this context as well.

2.   The use of English and multilingual repertoires in healthcare

The increased mobility of professionals, which include HCPs, has had the effect that communication across different languages and cultural divides in healthcare provision is now a widely distributed phenomenon. Namibia, as many other African (and non-African) countries, is no exception. Currently, different fields are giving critical attention to communication in healthcare with a view to providing patient-centred care of an acceptably high quality (see for example Gibson & Zhong 2005; Rosenberg et al. 2007; Meeuwesen et al. 2009; MacFarlane et al. 2008; Sobane & Anthonissen 2013). Country-specific research in the use of English in health communication is critical (Joubert & Ehrlich 2010) because of the differences in healthcare systems, in resources for healthcare, in local customs and beliefs, among others. Thus, local research seeks to answer specific questions related to particular issues of concern. Polit and Beck have singled out the need for an "increase of small, localized research designed to solve immediate problems" (2012: 3). They encourage researchers to be culturally sensitive in health interventions and to seek ways of improving the cultural competence of healthcare workers. Linked to this are questions of language and how language discordant HCPs, their colleagues, and the patients themselves manage communication in the work place when there is a lack of communication because of differences in the languages used, and how the English language is therefore used in a multilingual context like the one in Windhoek. This chapter, thus, asks questions about the ability of physicians to engage with patients with whom they do not share an L1, and where the use of English as a lingua franca is most likely not adequate. Furthermore, it gives insight into the strategies used in multilingual communication in healthcare between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages.

In addition, the World Health Organisation (2011) has indicated that there is a human resource crisis in the Namibian public health sector characterised by shortages of HCPs. For the year 2012–2013, it is recorded that 51% of HCPs (specifically medical doctors in this instance) appointed in state facilities resigned (Ministry of Health and Social Services (henceforth: MHSS) 2013). Notable is how "expatriate doctors abandon state hospitals" (Health Reporter 2013: 16) for neighbouring South Africa and also to open private practices in Namibia. In the period of April 2012 to March 2013 alone, in the Khomas region (where Windhoek is situated), about 600 licences for operating private practices were renewed, while 119 new licences were issued (MHSS 2013). This is a positive growth in the private health sector as opposed to the 51% attrition in the public health sector. Therefore, it appears that expatriate HCPs largely prefer to work in private practices, which they find more lucrative and professionally rewarding. Considering these numbers, as well as questions of access to healthcare, this study chose private practices as the medical context for conducting the research. Still, despite this positive move of having medical centres and practices closer to the people, the matter of HCP/ patient communication remains one of concern. There has been a public outcry in the Namibian health sector on how "[l]anguage barriers hamper health service" (*New Era* 9 April 2015) and how language barriers hinder healthcare delivery in more isolated parts of the country, such as Kunene in northern Namibia (*New Era* 25 November 2015). Given such a background, this study developed from an awareness of the need to gain insight into the multilingual expatriate HCPs' linguistic repertoires, their communicative needs and the strategies they employ in their workplace communication.

On the historical grounds detailed in the introductory chapter of this volume, English finds itself in the position of a lingua franca that is serving a myriad of purposes in a linguistically and ethnically diverse Namibia. Frydman (2011: 10) finds that Namibia's education sector has been using English as a medium of instruction in a multilingual setting for the past 20 years now and this has benefitted a wider community than would otherwise have happened. However, language use and the application of the language policy in the Namibian health sector has received considerably less attention.

Worth noting is that the reliance of the Namibian health sector on foreign expertise exacerbates the indigenous language complexity. With the exception of nurses, the tertiary institutions in Namibia have not been training health professionals. Only in 2016 the country graduated its first cohort of Namibian-trained medical doctors from the University of Namibia's School of Medicine. Therefore, most medical doctors, pharmacists, radiographers and dentists (among others) in the country are Namibians trained outside the country or expatriates from other

countries who come to work in Namibia as government contract workers or as owners and operators of private medical practices and pharmacies.

Public discourse, especially in Namibian newspapers, has raised alarm to this particular circumstance. According to the *New Era* Newspaper of 9 April 2015 and also 25 November 2017 (online), in articles entitled "Language barrier hampers health service" and "Language barrier hinders healthcare delivery in Kunene", there are language-related concerns in healthcare provision. The reporter thus laments that doctors, both local and foreign, fail to understand patients and vice versa (*New Era* 2015). Furthermore, language may also be a barrier between the HCPs and people accompanying patients when they are not proficient in the most widely used languages in healthcare, namely English and Afrikaans, as highlighted in the same article (*New Era* 2015). Thus, language is critical in the healthcare sector and in the Namibian multilingual healthcare setting language-related challenges need to be addressed.

Similarly, at national level and in the public health sector, scenarios are reported where expatriate nurses are incapable of speaking the dominant local languages. As a result, "patients and the nurse ended up communicating by means of sign language and pointing to where they feel the pain" (*New Era* 2015). Similar conditions are reported for Lesotho by Sobane (2012: 109) who asserts that language becomes a barrier to quality healthcare provision and for effective healthcare to be attained. In such contexts, language becomes an intransparent medium and it has to be overtly and attentively managed.

It therefore seems that attention to managing multilingualism must be paid if HCPs aim to provide high quality healthcare in line with the principles of human rights and equity, as well as responsiveness and fairness (Antia & Bertin 2004; Bischoff & Denhaerynck 2010). Bischoff and Denhaeynck (2010), Deumert (2011) and Sobane and Anthonissen (2013) have demonstrated how researchers agree that language discordance between the HCPs and patients often results in compromised health communication effectiveness. Difficulties likely to arise relate to understanding the reported medical symptoms, arriving at an accurate diagnosis, managing general misunderstandings, impediments to the establishment of rapport and trust, inaccurate prescriptions, poorer health outcomes and an increase in the risks of patient safety.

3.   Research design and methodology

The study presented here was part of a Master of Arts degree in Intercultural Communication at the Stellenbosch University in 2017 and it utilised a qualitative research approach to record, analyse, and understand the communicative experiences

of multilingual doctors and pharmacists working as foreigners within the Namibian healthcare system. Non-probability sampling was used, where the researcher purposefully selected HCPs who worked in private practices, were of foreign origin, had been trained outside Namibia and had been working in the country for not more than ten years.

In addition, via snowball sampling technique, the researcher contacted an existing network of HCPs to which he has personal access and he relied on those whom he already knew to give reference to further participants who fit the criteria. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling in identifying three expatriate medical doctors and one expatriate pharmacist whom he already knew as he himself is an expatriate – though working in the higher education sector. These participants were asked to assist in the pilot study which tested the data collection instrument, a newly developed questionnaire. In the second stage of the study, the researcher then consulted this purposefully selected sample and requested informants to give references to other possible participants, which resulted in the sample's expansion to a total of 19 participants. The research instrument used was a questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions (for details see Mlambo 2017: 71–76).

4.   Findings of the study

4.1   Linguistic biographies and repertoires of HCPs in Windhoek

Section A of the questionnaire requested information on (i) the respondents' L1s, (ii) all other languages they know, and (iii) which language(s) they had had as a language-of-learning/instruction (Medium of Instruction = MoI) (see Mlambo 2017: 72–73). The wide range of languages represented reflects the sample of HCPs. A total of 19 participants (14 male and 5 female) returned completed questionnaires. These respondents came from five different countries: Zimbabwe (12), South Africa (4), Tanzania (1), India (1) and Cuba (1). The participants' L1s as well as their languages of learning and instruction other than English are presented in Table 1 in the Appendix. As this table shows, all the participants stated that they speak several languages as will be explicated further below.

The places where the HCPs attained their medical training further illustrate their linguistic diversity and capabilities. These were the University of Zimbabwe, Harare Polytechnic, University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape, Nairobi (unspecified), in Cuba (unspecified), and Ryazan State Medical University (Russia). The mention of Nairobi (Kenya) and Russia as places of medical training seems particularly noteworthy. Thus, respondent KSS was born in Zanzibar, Tanzania and got her medical training

in Russia as well as Nairobi, Kenya; respondent Manie was born in Pondicherry, India but got his medical training from Ryazan State Medical University in Russia, which explains why he speaks Russian, Tamil, Hindi and English. This illustrates the respondents' mobility and also accounts for their varied linguistic biographies (see Appendix).

In addition to English, the participants had used nine other languages in education: Shona (7), French (2), Tamil (1), Russian (2), Swahili (1), Portuguese (1), German (1), Sesotho (1) (not an MoI in higher education but part of the respondent's repertoire) and Afrikaans (3). Five respondents did not have any other MoI than English. However, the role the L1s and community languages vs. Medium of Education/Instruction (MoI) languages play could not be ascertained.

4.2   Knowledge and use of languages including English

Section B of the questionnaire profiled the HCPs' knowledge and use of languages more broadly, asking them to rate their linguistic ability in the languages they had listed, and self-assessing their skills in the understanding of the spoken form, speaking, reading and writing (Mlambo 2017: 73). Participants indicated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor, how they rated their own abilities. The respondents were particularly requested to indicate their proficiency in English: 14 respondents (73.7%) allocated a score of 5 for their ability to understand, speak, read and write English. This indicates that these 14 HCPs consider themselves able to communicate confidently in English with both patients and colleagues in the health profession.

The other five participants indicated a score of 4 on some of the language skills: Only one indicated a score of 4 for the skill 'understand', two indicated a score of 4 for the skill 'speak', four indicated a score of 5 for the skill 'read' and three indicated a score of 4 for the skill 'write'. It therefore seems that all respondents are highly proficient in the use of the official language in Namibia, and this should positively affect their provision of quality healthcare to those patients who are equally proficient in English.

The respondents also indicated proficiency in other languages, notably some 'non-Namibian' languages as discussed above. Furthermore, the respondents indicated some level of proficiency in Namibian languages. This further corroborates the statement that the participating HCPs' linguistic biographies are indicative of multilingualism at play.

4.3   Sex, age, and employment history

Five respondents (26%) were female, of which three were pharmacists, one a sonographer, and one a specialist. Fay indicated that she had knowledge of five languages, three of which she seems to have acquired in Namibia (Oshiwambo, Afrikaans, and Portuguese). Shekih indicated knowledge of five languages, namely English, Shona, and Ndebele acquired in her home country, and Oshiwambo and Afrikaans acquired whilst working in Namibia. One other female indicated some knowledge of Oshiwambo. However, gender did not seem to play any role in acquiring Namibian languages within the healthcare sector as no significant differences between male and female respondents' reportages of linguistic knowledge could be detected.

The same applied to the age of respondents, whereas the length of stay in Namibia apparently influenced the number of Namibian languages acquired, particularly for those who had stayed in Namibia for less than three years. Five respondents indicated that they had been working in Namibia for three years or less and of these only one (BZ) indicated some knowledge of Oshiwambo and Portuguese, whilst the other four reported that they had not acquired any languages in Namibia at all. Moreover, BZ rated the skills 'understand', 'speak', 'read' and 'write' all at level one (poor), probably because of his having stayed in the country for two years only. However, he seemingly was willing to learn and indeed already had some knowledge of these two languages. As for the respondents having stayed in the country for more than three years, there was also a relative increase both in the number of languages acquired and the level of their knowledge and use of these languages. Eight respondents had acquired an indigenous language. However, there were some respondents who did not indicate any mastery of Oshiwambo and Otjiherero and these are respondent Merk (10 years in Namibia and knowledge of German and Afrikaans), Huvan (5 years in Namibia and knowledge of Afrikaans), KG (9 years in Namibia and knowledge of Setswana) and Ham (8 years in Namibia and knowledge of Afrikaans and German).

The influence of the respondents' employment histories on the acquisition of indigenous Namibian languages came out strongly from four respondents: Nena, BK, and Shekih had worked in northern Namibia before moving to Windhoek and seem to have acquired some knowledge of the region's dominant language, Oshiwambo RK had worked in Opuwo for two years, where Otjiherero is mostly spoken, and hence he rated his understanding and speaking of the language at level three and at level one for reading and writing.

4.4   Age and place of language acquisition of HCPs in Windhoek

English was acquired as an L2 in early childhood, that is between three and nine years of age, by almost all the respondents (18). The respondent of Cuban heritage started to acquire the language at 13 years of age at secondary school. The implication of the early acquisition of English is that the HCPs' English proficiency is high.

Furthermore, 16 respondents indicated that they learnt English at pre-primary and primary school, and two even indicated that they had acquired English from the age of two onwards. One respondent indicated that she had been a "late learner", being introduced to English at secondary school, as Spanish was the language she learnt formally in primary school at the age of four. This respondent still reported that she is "excellent" at speaking, understanding, reading and writing in English. Hence, the school environment seems to have provided most of the respondents with the foundations of knowing and using English.

In addition, the respondents reported that other than their L1 and English acquired at an early age, they also acquired other languages later in life, in formal (classrooms) as well as informal (outside of classrooms) settings, with varying degrees of success. The age of acquisition for most of these additional languages ranged from between their mid-20s to early 30s. These languages include some which are widely spoken in Namibia, mainly Oshiwambo, Afrikaans, Otjiherero and Portuguese. The context of acquisition as well as current use of these languages was mainly reported to be the work place. Moreover, some respondents reported that they use these languages for social communication with friends and colleagues and also at social gatherings like the church.

4.5   Language in the work place

The HCPs reported that the languages mostly used at work are English, Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and Portuguese. The languages listed as being encountered in the work place are Afrikaans, Damara-Nama, Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Silozi, Portuguese, Chinese, Ndebele, Shona, German, French, Hindi, Spanish, Rukwangali and Tswana.

The multilingual Namibian healthcare sector, according to information from the 19 respondents in this study, is indeed multilingual, characterised by HCPs and patients using at least ten languages

Participants also reported that in addition to speaking languages other than English (LotE) to patients, the HCPs also, in specific circumstances, use LotEs to communicate with colleagues. However, five of the 19 respondents indicated that they only used English with colleagues. The following are some of the verbatim responses these participants gave in explanation for not using any LotE in the work place:

(1) BK: No since all are expected to be proficient in English.

(2) Angel: No. We usually communicate in English.

(3) KG: With colleagues I only use English.

These curt responses all show support for the expectation that English is the preferred lingua franca in the healthcare sector.

However, 14 of the respondents indicated that they use LotEs with colleagues in the work place, and Namibian languages do not feature very prominently among these. One respondent indicated the use of Oshiwambo and three the use of Afrikaans. Interestingly, seven respondents, thus more than those using Namibian languages, indicated a periodic use of non-Namibian languages, such as Shona (7), Russian (2), Hindi, Tamil, and Spanish (all 1). As one respondent explicated:

(4) RK: Shona: When we deliberately want to discuss a patient's condition during e.g. awake surgery (spinal).

Seemingly, in situations where they want to discuss patients in their presence without them being able to follow the conversation, they use Shona. This language, shared by expatriate HCPs from Zimbabwe, but not by the patients, paradoxically becomes a language of exclusion as well as a tool that can privilege the HCPs to share sensitive information about patients in their presence, without the HCPs having to leave the theatre.

In addition, another respondent had the following to say concerning the use of LotEs with colleagues:

(5) Manie: Afrikaans – greetings to the nurses.
             Russian – to make Russian colleagues comfortable.
             Hindi and Tamil – to make Indian colleagues comfortable.

These answers, as in Examples (5) and (4), suggest that the HCPs' multilingual repertoire is a resource used to foster a healthy communication environment which can improve intercultural interactions between colleagues. Furthermore, it also helps to cultivate good human relations in the work place in general, as the following responses indicate:

(6) Doc: Shona – If I meet Shona speaking friend. Oshiwambo – If I meet Oshiwambo speaking friend.

(7) Huvan: Yes; Afrikaans. If the person's first language is Afrikaans.

(8) Shekih: Oshiwambo – most of my colleagues are not proficient in English.

(9) Maggie: Yes, I use Spanish with the other colleagues in our free time.

As these responses illustrate, English is widely used as a lingua franca by all the HCPs, but not exclusively so. There are limits to its use as other languages are available to the HCPs when they communicate in the work place with colleagues, Namibian or non-Namibian. However, what stands out clearly from these findings is the fact that in the linguistically diverse healthcare set up in Windhoek, language is exploited to the benefit of the HCPs. Language is used as a communication accommodation strategy (Giles et al. 1991) as using a colleague's first language may be preferred in making the colleague more 'comfortable'.

Given the pluri-linguistic situation in the Namibian private healthcare system, this study also sought to establish whether this produces any communication barriers in the work place. More than half of the respondents (10 out of 19) indicated that they do not experience any challenges in their communication with their colleagues in the work place. Whilst most (8 out of 10) of the respondents simply negated the question whether language, at times, posed a barrier when communicating with colleagues, without any further explanations, one respondent detailed:

(10)   BK: No, since all are expected to be proficient in English.

However, nine respondents mentioned language barriers and the following challenges:

(11)   ATA: Yes, some colleagues are not proficient in English and getting information to or getting information from them can be challenging.

(12)   Kura: Yes, there are colleagues not keen on using English. They would rather avoid English-speaking colleagues.

(13)   Doc: Yes. There are conditions where English is not appropriate to describe.

(14)   Fay: At times they do not know the English word for what they want to put across, or they may not understand my English expressions.

(15)   Shekih: At my work place meetings are held in Oshiwambo. I have resorted to not attending them since I do not understand the proceedings. And colleagues will have to update me of the meeting.

(16)   Angel: Yes, some of the colleagues are not proficient in English and they misinterpret the meaning of what you say.

(17)   Manie: Only when people/nurses think that I can communicate in Afrikaans well.

(18)   RK: Yes: Most older white colleagues are more comfortable in Afrikaans and they fail to express (sic).

(19)   Nena: Yes – those from Francophone countries who are not proficient in English.

These responses reveal that there are some challenges affecting the communication between the expatriate HCPs and their colleagues (who may or may not be HCPs) in the private healthcare system in Windhoek. Therefore, according to the HCPs in this study, they encounter limited English language proficiency amongst some colleagues, such that these colleagues resort to the avoidance of those who use English at the work place. English may also not always be the best language to express some medical conditions (Example (13)) and colleagues may not always be proficient enough in the appropriate English medical jargon (Example (14)). This may distort information due to wrong encoding or decoding. These challenges confirm previous descriptions of the low use and proficiency levels of English in everyday life in Namibia (Frydman 2011; Tötemeyer 2009, 2010; Kisting 2011). These findings also suggest that due to low English proficiency, some colleagues may resort to avoidance of communication, which in turn may result in lack of team work between the expatriate HCPs and their local teammates (Example (12)). Further, communication break downs and/or wrong encoding or decoding of the intended meaning may occur and this may have a negative and even disastrous effect on the sensitive healthcare environment. As Example (11) and Example (16) clearly illustrate, there might be miscommunication and this can be frustrating to both parties.

In addition, Example (13) and Example (14) show that not only questions of simple English grammatical proficiency but also of register are of concern. If the expatriate HCPs' work mates are not medically trained, they may not fully understand the medical jargon used. This of course is also possible when speakers have the same linguistic repertoires but different professional training, for example English medical professional and English patients. Therefore, interventions should be crafted, including a section on medical jargon and expressions to alleviate this challenge. Noteworthy is that the challenge faced by Shekih (15) is in a different category, as Oshiwambo, although not an official language, is used in official meetings at the work place. This example shows that language practices, regardless of official policies, prefer the respective community's dominant language even in work place interactions. Although Shekih (in (15)) did not attend meetings where Oshiwambo is overwhelmingly used, she reported a better understanding of Oshiwambo than other respondents who indicated that they had some knowledge of Oshiwambo. Perhaps in contexts such as meetings, speakers use complex Oshiwambo structures which Sheik may find difficult to follow and therefore avoids going to such meetings and risking misunderstandings. Finally, Mannie (Example (17)) and RK (Example (18)) reported that Afrikaans is one of the languages regularly spoken by their colleagues. As some of the HCPs working in Namibia were trained in South Africa with Afrikaans being the language of instruction and Afrikaans also being the main language spoken by 12% of households in Windhoek (Namibia Population and Housing Census Indicators 2011), this does not come as a surprise.

4.6   Linguistic and communicative practices established by HCPs to facilitate the provision of quality healthcare

While all HCPs rated their English language proficiency as high (Question 6), it has to be reiterated that nationally in 1990, English was spoken as L1 by 0.8% and as L2 by only 4% of the population (Frydman 2011). Up to these days, the use of English in public spaces is problematic (Tötemeyer 2011). As Kisting (2011) points out, even professionals like teachers demonstrate an alarmingly low English proficiency, with 98% of them failing an English language proficiency test administered in 2011. Therefore, this study also aimed at showing strategies the HCPs take to overcome communication barriers with patients not proficient in English. Hence, respondents were asked to explain which course of action they would take in such situations. Their answers show that HCPs established linguistic and communicative practices such as using interpretation, trying to speak the patient's language themselves, using 'sign language', and using Google Translate and making use of drawings:

(20) BK: We have employed assistants who are proficient in all the main languages whom we use for translation purposes.

(21) Fay: I try with the limited Afrikaans, if I get stuck I ask for someone to translate (members of staff who speak the language).

(22) Angel: I either draw a diagram on label to explain or ask the assistant who is proficient in the language.

(23) Mannie: Translator (professional), if not available then family member only for non-confidential issues or google translator app in iPhone.

(24) TD: Translator, sign language.

(25) Nena: For Oshiwambo and Portuguese I sometimes can, but for deeper stuff and Afrikaans I have a translator.

The 'sign language' (24) is probably a makeshift sign language, not a formal sign language used by the Deaf people, and 'translator' (25) probably stands for an interpreter.

These responses show that HCPs face some language challenges, how they devise ways to mitigate them and facilitate the provision of quality healthcare. The most common strategy reported is translation/interpreting by someone who is proficient in the patient's preferred language. This is in agreement with previous studies indicating that where a lingua franca like English fails, an interpreter/translator is often called on (MacFarlane et al. 2008; Ulrey & Amason 2001; Sobane & Anthonissen 2013; Hadziabdic et al. 2015). Thus, 18 out of 19 respondents report on this strategy, using mainly informal translators who are engaged on an ad hoc basis.

Interestingly, some HCPs also make use of technological support to translate such as the Google Translate application on the iPhone (Example (23)). However, not all languages are registered on Google Translate, so this could work for English, Afrikaans, German, Spanish and Portuguese but not for indigenous Namibian languages. Where the instrument is available, concerns with regards to confidentiality are raised. The instrument may be a preferred alternative because of its convenience and the fact that the same or a similar application can be used to learn the language. Most HCPs have indicated that they encounter and make use of different Namibian languages which they are also in the process of learning. Online language learning resources, such as Omniglot or the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport publications,[1] could work for some. Even so, the responses corroborate that the HCPs try to communicate in the patients' language in spite of their supposedly low levels of proficiency.

Another strategy reported is the use of diagrams, drawn by the HCP to accompany an explanation difficult to express because of language challenges between the two speakers. 'Sign language', i.e. the informal use of hand gestures and bodily movements as well as facial expressions and code-switching were also indicated as strategies to support a better understanding in the healthcare setting. This is in agreement with strategies reported in Lesotho (Sobane & Anthonissen 2013: 267–273).

The issue of code-switching was further investigated by asking the respondents whether they had encountered a situation in which they had used one language like English while the patient had used another one and still managed to understand each other. Some respondents reported to never have been in such a situation:

(26) ATA: We usually do not get by so I always insist on interpretation.

(27) KG: No I have not as I do not understand the local Namibian languages.

However, some respondents indicated that they have found themselves in such situations:

(28) Kura: It has happened on a few occasions, but the Oshiwambo used was light, mixed with broken English and [I] used visual aids.

(29) Fay: Yes. Some patients understand English but cannot speak, and I manage to understand their Afrikaans though I cannot answer back.

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1. <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/oshiwambo.php>; <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2010/2/nama.pdf>

(30) Shekih: Yes, my Oshiwambo is limited and some terms I do not know them so I end up using English and we manage.

(31) KSS: Yes, I understand when they use sign language while talking.

(32) Mzaya: Yes, my vocabulary is limited but some words [are the] same with my local language and I also try to simplify my English and we get by.

(33) Nena: Yes, when my understanding is better than my spoken proficiency or the patient is in a similar situation.

This suggests that in a multilingual healthcare context as in Namibia, the official language might prove to be limiting for the patient whilst for the expatriate HCP the patient's language might as well be limiting. In such circumstances, interlocutors may use their own language, understanding (as far as they can assess themselves) but not being able to speak the one of their conversation partners. This strategy of code-switching is accompanied by the use of simple vocabulary and signs and gestures (also incorporating visual images) as accommodation strategies. Furthermore, speaker and hearer contribute to advancing communication by collaborative meaning making.

The present study also sought to explore why expatriate HCPs code-switch in interactions with either a colleague or a patient. Some of the insightful verbatim responses were as follows:

(34) ATA: If we are both proficient in both languages and one can express something better in the other language.

(35) Doc: When you are discussing the patient [with a colleague] in the patient's presence.

(36) Fay: With a patient I would switch if they express failure to understand or if they express being more comfortable with another language.

(37) Angel: The need to explain and get my message across so that no mistakes are made, especially regarding medicines dispensed.

(38) Manie: To get better understanding and to make colleagues at ease with acceptable accent.

(39) Huvan: If the person is more comfortable in using another language.

(40) Merk: If I cannot express myself in one language I will jump to another.

These answers indicate that communication is important in the daily discharge of HCPs' duties and that respondents see multilingualism as a resource. Knowing various languages, even at rudimentary level, facilitates communication and improves the quality of healthcare provision. Patients are more likely to get accurate information and also the right instructions regarding medication dispensed:

(41) BK: If I perceive that we are not understanding each other then I ask if the patient will be comfortable with another language.

Similar patterns of interaction are reported by Bischoff and Denhaeynck (2010), Sobane (2012), Ulrey and Amason (2001) and Sobane and Anthonissen (2013), who emphasise that language discordance between patients and HCPs results in compromised health communication. Where HCPs are prepared and capable of code-switching in response to patients' needs or preferences, there are good possibilities of offering improved healthcare marked by improved disclosure, collaboration, increased job satisfaction by the HCP and adherence to medication by the patient. Where code-switching does not succeed, interpreting services appear to be considered:

(42) Kura: If not well-versed I would rather make use of a third person as a translator.

It can therefore be ascertained that English plays a critical role in the Namibian healthcare context, but that other languages are also important and that, where verbal communication fails, HCPs use other means of communicating.

5. Summary and conclusion

This chapter focussed on the linguistic and communicative practices established in the work place that facilitate or inhibit the provision of quality health care. It also considered the use of English as well as of indigenous Namibian languages and/or other non-Namibian languages in professional communication. The 19 HCPs who participated in this study self-reported a wide range of linguistic biographies. Regarding their linguistic biographies, the respondents represented five countries as places of origin. The information they gave on early schooling and secondary education gave some insight into the variety of languages they encountered whilst growing up. Although none had English as an L1, all except one had been introduced to English from a very early age. Living in multilingual communities assured contact with and knowledge of linguistic variety, thus developing linguistic awareness, if not proficiency, in all the community languages with which they came into contact.

Other than the language of learning, the HCPs also indicated knowledge of Ndebele, Spanish, Swahili, Russian, Tamil, Hindi, French, Sepedi, Sesotho, Isizulu, Isixhosa, Isindebele, Setswana and Shona. These responses again indicated linguistic awareness within the communities where they lived and worked.

In addition, the HCPs mainly use English at the work place but they also use local Namibian languages like Oshiwambo, Afrikaans, Otjiherero as well as Portuguese. Yet the various languages they encounter in the healthcare context include Otjiherero, Silozi, French, Hindi, Spanish, German, Rukwangali, Chinese and Tswana. Given this pluri-linguistic body of clients, the HCPs expressed that there is a challenge to understand all of them but they try to speak the basics like greetings in order to cultivate intercultural interactions. Basic knowledge of the other languages acts as a communication approximation strategy as they are able to foster closer HPC/patient relationships. However, it was also found that patients from Francophone African countries who cannot speak English pose a challenge as French is not a commonly spoken language among the responding HCPs.

Furthermore, it appeared that knowledge of English in itself is not enough as there is also a need to manage the appropriate medical jargon. It was found that those who may lack in this respect still find it difficult to linguistically cope with the demands of a healthcare setting where the use of medical register is a reality on a daily basis. Of interest here is also the indication that locals who are not confident with English and find the HCP a foreign language speaker may prefer to seek assistance elsewhere (e.g. at another pharmacy), thus isolating the expatriate worker in his/her new work place.

The HCPs mentioned a variety of linguistic and communicative practices established in the work place to facilitate the provision of quality healthcare. Many did not seem to experience linguistic discord as a big problem, because they found that most patients knew enough English for the needs they had in the consultations.

Finally, the HCPs mentioned that they do often try to speak the patients' languages and also allow the patient to speak the Namibian local language if they can understand it whilst they will be using English. Another strategy is to use signs and gestures accompanied by some English explanations or alternatively by drawings to enhance communication. The study also found that knowing, using and encountering a variety of languages in a multilingual context like Windhoek is an enriching experience, though at the same time it is also a challenge. The study found that the expatriate HCP respondents find the use of many languages to be an engagement that broadens their professional, social and cultural views, and this ultimately results in improved work relations and improved HCP-patient relationships. The use of English, indigenous Namibian languages and other non-Namibian languages was found rather to improve than to prohibit efficient interactions with the patients, and multilingualism was found to be a resource, especially within the context of Windhoek, Namibia.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix. HCPs' linguistic repertoires

Pseudonym	Age range	Gender	Place of origin	Place of medical training	How long in Namibia (as of 2016)	Appointment	First Language	MoI (other than English)	Other languages
1. ATT	36–45	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	5 years	General Practitioner	Shona	Shona, French	Ndebele, Oshiwambo
2. Kura	36–45	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	7 years	General Practitioner	Shona	Shona	Oshiwambo, Afrikaans
3. TD	25–35	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	3 years	General Practitioner	Shona	None	None
4. RK	25–35	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	4 years	General Practitioner	Shona	None	Ndebele, Otjiherero, Afrikaans
5. Fay	25–35	Female	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	6 years	Pharmacist	Shona	Shona	Oshiwambo, Afrikaans, Portuguese
6. Mzaya	25–35	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	5 years	General Practitioner	Shona	Shona	Ndebele, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, Otjiherero
7. Doc	36–45	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	6 years	General Practitioner	Shona	Shona	Ndebele, Zulu, Oshiwambo
8. BK	25–35	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	8 years	Pharmacist	Shona	Shona	Oshiwambo, Portuguese
9. Nena	36–45	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	8 years	General Practitioner	Shona	Shona	Oshiwambo, Swahili, Portuguese
10. Angel	36–45	Female	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	2 years	Pharmacist	Ndebele	None	None
11. Shekih	36–45	Female	Zimbabwe	Harare Polytechnic	10 years	Pharmacist	Shona	None	Ndebele, Oshiwambo, Afrikaans

Pseudonym	Age range	Gender	Place of origin	Place of medical training	How long in Namibia (as of 2016)	Appointment	First Language	MoI (other than English)	Other languages
12. BZ	25–35	Male	Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	2 years	General Practitioner	Shona	None	Oshiwambo, Portuguese
13. Merk	+56	Male	South Africa	University of Pretoria	10 years	General Practitioner	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	German
14. Huvan	36–45	Male	South Africa	Stellenbosch University	5 years	Obstetrics & Gynaecologist	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	None
15. KG	36–45	Male	South Africa	University of the Western Cape	9 years	Dentist	Sesotho and Setswana	Sesotho	Sepedi, Isindebele, Isizulu, Setswana, Isixhosa
16. KSS	46–55	Female	Tanzania	Russia and Nairobi	1 year	Sonographer	Swahili	Russian, Swahili	None
17. Maggie	25–35	Female	Cuba	Cuba	8 years	Specialist	Spanish	Portuguese	Oshiwambo
18. Manie	25–35	Male	India	Ryzan, Russia	2 years	General Practitioner	Tamil	French, Tamil, Russian	Hindi
19. Ham	36–45	Male	South Africa	University of Pretoria	8 years	Specialist	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	German

The linguistic landscape and soundscape of Windhoek

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Both the pre-independence lingua franca Afrikaans and the post-independence official language English are used to communicate in public contexts in Namibia although most Namibians speak other languages at home. This article aims to find out which languages are used for communication in public spaces in Windhoek, Namibia's capital. It is based on linguistic landscaping and sound-scaping data and compares this contemporary data with the pre-independence linguistic landscape reported in Kleinz (1984) to assess the diachronic development of public language use. This investigation finds that English is the most frequent language used in written communication in the public sphere. English also seems to be favoured by non-White Namibians in service encounters, while many White Namibians select Afrikaans in these situations.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, linguistic soundscape, public language use, language and power

1. Introduction

Namibia is a highly multilingual and multiethnic nation and the various languages spoken by Namibians belong to different language families (cf. introductory chapter to this volume). Apart from Indoeuropean languages such as Afrikaans, German, and English, Namibia is home to Bantu and Khoesan speakers and most Namibians speak either a Bantu or a Khoesan language at home. The sole official language that was chosen upon independence is English, however, and this language is used in a range of contexts in public life, for example in the school system and for official purposes. Bantu and Khoesan languages are not mutually intelligible and are closely connected with particular ethnic groups, while English is, at least theoretically, learned as a second language by the whole population and can thus serve as a language of inter-ethnic communication. Afrikaans could also be used for this

purpose – it is spoken by different groups of the population, either as a first or as an additional language, and used to be the language of public life before independence.

Information on language use in post-independence Namibia generally comes from questionnaires that rely on self-reports of the population (Pütz 1995; Population and Housing Census 2011; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014), sociolinguistic interviews with speakers (Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Stell 2016), or on experimental studies (Stell 2014). The present study adds to these investigations by providing data based on ethnographic observations of written and spoken language use in the public sphere in Windhoek. Using linguistic landscaping and soundscaping to collect data, it aims to find out which role the different languages spoken in Namibia play in public spaces, which languages are preferred and dispreferred in which contexts and by whom. Windhoek is an ideal location for this, as many ethnic groups are represented there in relatively large numbers, so that both intra- and inter-group communication takes place. The results show that English is heavily favoured especially in written communication, both on formal and official signage and on informal and private signs. The linguistic soundscape presents a different picture, however, as many different languages are used in intra-group communication. In inter-group communication, English and Afrikaans are favoured, with Afrikaans occurring almost exclusively when one of the interlocutors is White and selects Afrikaans at the beginning of the conversation. As Afrikaans is connected with the dominance of South Africa prior to independence, language choice in public communication raises questions of power and prestige in present-day Namibia. This study suggests that English is the preferred language of inter-group communication for the majority of speakers in Windhoek, although an Afrikaans-speaking minority significantly influences the public linguistic landscape and soundscape.

I will present an overview of language use and language policy in Namibia, including a synopsis of previous linguistic studies relating to language use and attitudes in Section 2. Section 3 will briefly outline the main assumptions and techniques used in linguistic landscaping. Section 4 provides details about the data and methodology of the study as well as the results regarding the linguistic landscape and linguistic soundscape of Windhoek. A discussion and conclusion follows in Section 5.

2.   Public language use in Namibia

This section provides basic information on the language policies that have shaped public language use since Namibia's independence and how they have influenced speaker numbers. After a review of linguistic studies of language use in Namibia, I will turn to the consideration of the socio-political context.

2.1 Previous linguistic studies

A number of recent studies investigate language use and language attitudes in Namibia. I am going to focus here on those dealing with interethnic communication and public language use. Kleinz (1984) analyses language use in various domains in pre-independence Namibia and pays particular attention to the usage of German compared to Afrikaans and English. Other languages do not play a major role in this investigation. Both English and Afrikaans had constitutional support and could be used in all domains of public and private life, while German was an additional language that was recognized in some contexts but did not receive as much institutional support. Kleinz (1984) finds a predominance of Afrikaans especially in government and administrative contexts. English dominates in the entertainment sector, however, for example with regards to films shown in Namibian cinemas, and in the context of international trade. German tends to be used as a home language more than in public, even by native speakers in areas that have a large proportion of German speakers. Kleinz also conducts a linguistic landscaping study in various parts of the country, even if it is not overtly called that. He records the languages used on public signage in shops in a number of cities and towns (1984: 117–141). The area he investigates in Windhoek in November 1977 is on a central part of *Kaiserstraße*, which is now *Independence Avenue*. This is not the same section of *Independence Avenue* analysed in the present study, but it is comparable as both investigations concentrate on central and busy areas. Kleinz reports signage in Afrikaans, German, and English, and in bi- and trilingual combinations of these. English is the single most frequent language – it is used in 86% of all shops, while the use of Afrikaans and German is far below that (Kleinz 1984: 125). Kleinz distinguishes between shop signs as labels and factual information that may be displayed, e.g. opening times and current offers. He notes that English as the only language is most frequently used in a shop's name, and that its use as a language to communicate factual information falls behind that. Shops are more likely to display that kind of information in bilingual Afrikaans and English or trilingual signage, then including German. This suggests that English has high prestige in a business context in Windhoek, but owners might feel the need to supplement it with Afrikaans and, to a lesser extent, German to communicate information. Kleinz concludes that English is represented in public language use even in contexts where it is not spoken as a native language and is thus an important second language with high prestige used for public communication (1984: 141).

Pütz (1995) uses questionnaires to elicit data on language use and attitudes from a large number of speakers from different ethnic groups. His conclusions regarding the role of Afrikaans are of particular interest for the present study. Pütz shows that the Afrikaans-speaking community feels threatened by the new language policy;

it "seems to be in great fear of language loss and language identity and feels it is excluded from the new power-constellation" (1995: 267). He predicts that in spite of negative views towards Afrikaans from other population groups, the language will survive in Namibia due to the speakers' "strong attitudes towards maintaining and promoting [it]" (Pütz 1995: 271). Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) also use a questionnaire to elicit information on language use and status (see also Kautzsch & Schröder (2016), who use a modified version of the questionnaire in Buschfeld & Kautzsch (2014) and draw on considerably more data). They find a strong connection between ethnic groups and the use of heritage languages in the family context. In interethnic communication, including education contexts and public contexts, English is used most frequently by all ethnic groups except for Afrikaans speakers, who prefer Afrikaans but may also speak English in these situations. Buschfeld and Kautzsch thus assume that "English might be making inroads as a local identity carrier" (2014: 142), especially among younger Namibians. Buschfeld and Schröder (2020) discuss a larger dataset than Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) and focus on the use of and attitudes towards English, German, and Afrikaans. Almost all of their informants state that English is used for interethnic communication in Namibia, but almost 80% believe this function is also served by Afrikaans, while only one third think that German is used in this context (Buschfeld & Schröder 2020: 348). The use of English as the main language in interethnic communication "does not necessarily happen at the total expense of the other West Germanic languages in Namibia" (Buschfeld & Schröder 2020: 357).

A number of studies is based on experimental interview data gathered in Windhoek (Stell & Beyer 2012; Stell 2014; Stell & Dragojevic 2016). Students of Windhoek University were asked to interact in both ethnically homogeneous and ethnically heterogeneous small groups and were also interviewed afterwards. These studies provide interesting insights into the students' linguistic behaviour, especially code-switching, and connect that with sociolinguistic aspects of the communicative situation and broader considerations regarding language and power in Namibia. Stell (2014), for example, shows that the various ethnic groups behave quite differently when it comes to linguistic accommodation in interethnic communication. He observes that Afrikaans speakers sometimes dominate an interaction by choosing Afrikaans as the language of communication: "White Participant 2 – who evidenced a strong attachment to Afrikaans during the interviewing stage – ends up imposing Afrikaans as the medium of interaction by not accommodating in English his Herero interlocutors" (Stell 2014: 234). When Whites are part of a conversation being conducted in English rather than Afrikaans, non-White speakers tend to avoid discourse markers that can be constructed as typical of their linguistic usage. Stell (2014: 238) claims that this behaviour is a "linguistic reflection of a historical White/non-White socioeconomic dichotomy inherited from apartheid

in which whiteness is still invested with prestige and is as such perceived as worth converging to in the specific settings of interaction with Whites". But language choice in interethnic communication is also used as a means to take stances by other ethnic groups, for example "when a Coloured participant – who momentarily finds himself left out within an exchange mostly taking place between the two present White participants – tries to reclaim the floor by putting English questions to one of the White participants" (Stell 2014: 235). Both Whites and Coloureds generally speak Afrikaans natively and the conversation between them before this point had been conducted in Afrikaans. The impression gained from the experimental data is supported by the interviews conducted with the participants. Stell and Beyer (2012: 135) find that Coloureds are likely to accommodate to their White Afrikaans-speaking interlocutors by avoiding linguistic structures that are particularly ethnically marked, i.e. that show some English language influence. Afrikaans speakers, on the other hand, are unlikely to accommodate their interlocutors by switching to English or incorporating non-Afrikaans elements in their language production.

Stell (2016) discusses the language use of young Namibians based on interviews with university students in Windhoek. He shows that these students strongly identify with their respective ethnic groups and that these "[e]thnic boundaries have a linguistic dimension" (Stell 2016: 336) as speakers associate ethnic groups with languages or language varieties and vice versa. Stell assumes that Windhoek has developed into a triglossic speech community: English has the highest status and is most widely spoken in public and interethnic communication, Afrikaans has a somewhat lower status, but is still used by some speakers in public contexts, and the various indigenous languages have the lowest status and are largely restricted to private domains.

The studies discussed above show that English is an important language especially for interethnic communication in Namibia, but some ethnic groups also make use of English in intraethnic communication, for example through extensive code-switching. Especially White Afrikaans speakers, however, diverge from this pattern and are more likely to speak Afrikaans without extensive code-switching. They may also feel threatened by the dominance of English in official contexts, which is not reported for other ethnic groups.

The existing studies on language use in Namibia are based on experimental and interview data. This has clear advantages when it comes to recording and the number of informants that can be included, for example, but also some drawbacks. Questionnaires, for example, famously elicit information on what participants think they do or want the researchers to think they do, and a recorded conversation taking place in a university setting also does not represent language use in everyday situations for the informants. Hazel (2015: 155) has pointed out that "empirical

accounts of situated language practice can enhance our understanding of how language policy, language ideology and language attitudes play out in the field", and the observation data provided in the present study can therefore supplement the existing investigations and add a new perspective on language use in Namibia.

2.2   Language policy and census data

In 1991, one year after Namibian independence, English was one of the least spoken home languages in Namibia. Although the share of households who use English as their main language has since increased, English is still a minority language in the private sphere (cf. introductory chapter to this volume for an introduction to sociopolitical and linguistic characteristics of Namibia).

In spite of the limited knowledge of English in the general population, English was chosen as the sole official language of Namibia upon independence in 1990. Frydman (2011: 179) claims that many postcolonial African states are characterised by multilingualism and that this "came to be perceived negatively by governments as a significant obstacle to achieving national unity and cohesion". Stroud (2007: 509) points out that "colonial linguistics was a prominent tool in the colonial project of governmentality, where a politics of 'divide and rule' encouraged the multiplication of languages and the creation of unbridled linguistic diversity – an African 'Tower of Babel'". This situation influenced the post-independence government to adopt a monolingual language policy in order to achieve social unity (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir 2001). The autochthonous languages of Namibia were, and still are, largely restricted to particular ethnic groups, and none of them was seen as a suitable candidate for a unifying language for the whole country (Duggal et al. 1981). Afrikaans was not chosen because of its connection to the previous regime, while English was less connected with the colonial past and was at the same time an international language with high prestige: "If Afrikaans was the language of oppression, then English was the language of resistance and liberation" (Frydman 2011: 183).[1]

According to article 3 of the Namibian constitution, "[t]he official language of Namibia shall be English" (Constitution Art. 3:1). The constitution also states that the government will be able to pass legislation to allow the use of other languages for "legislative, administrative and judicial purposes in regions or areas where such other language or languages are spoken by a substantial component of the population" (Constitution Art. 3:3). Schools may, however, use other languages as a medium of instruction if they comply with the law (Constitution Art 3:2). Shortly

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1.   For further details see also Stell (this volume).

after independence the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a language policy for schools according to which primary schools had to gradually introduce English-medium education after grade 3 and secondary schools had to move towards English-medium education completely. The transition process was to be completed by 1995 (Language policy for schools 1993). This concentration on English as the only or main language of instruction in schools in the early policies was somewhat qualified in a discussion document circulated by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture in 2003. This document outlines an adapted language policy for Namibia, but this policy has not been enacted yet. It is evident that the ministry understands English to be a non-native language for most of the population. The value of the various native languages is strengthened compared to the earlier documents, e.g. through their use as a language of instruction for much of the primary school cycle, i.e. up to grade 7. The policy makers also clarify that they see a close connection between personal identity and native language:

> A person's identity is contained in the language and the culture you have inherited from your forefathers. […] Concurrently, the promotion of mother tongue use should not only be furthered evenly through a language in education policy, that is implemented nationwide, but also through a higher status of mother tongue/indigenous languages within every sector of Namibia.
>
> (Language Policy for Schools 2003: 2)

It is interesting that policy makers encourage indigenous languages as subjects in schools, but do not seem to promote learning these languages for non-native speakers. The only second languages mentioned are Afrikaans and English, while foreign languages include German and French (Language Policy for Schools 2003: 5).[2] A number of organisations and scholars have been critical of the sole focus on English. Some stress the ideological reasons behind Namibia's language policy that have outweighed practical concerns in the education sector (Jansen 1995) and contribute to a diminishing diversity in Namibia's linguistic landscape (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir 2001). Some scholars even recommend the language policy should be revised to strengthen home language education further, especially in primary education, as better literacy and numeracy in the first language is expected to have positive effects on second language learning (e.g. Frydman 2011; Harris 2011).

The Namibian government seems to legislate in favour of English as the only medium of interethnic communication and the language of wider communication in Namibia for official and formal purposes, while encouraging the use of

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2.   German is also included on the first language level, as it is spoken as L1 and main home language as well. For details on the use and attitudes towards German in Namibia, see Buschfeld and Schröder (2020).

indigenous languages, including Afrikaans, for private purposes. If successful, this would result in a diglossic situation with English as the default language in the public sphere and different languages used in non-public contexts. The actual sociolinguistic situation in Namibia seems to be closer to triglossia, however, as Afrikaans is used in addition to English in the public sphere (cf. also Stell 2016). The investigation of the linguistic landscape and soundscape of Windhoek in the following section will show how these different languages are used in the public sphere.

3.   Linguistic landscaping

Linguistic landscaping (LL) as a technique for data collection and analysis has often been used to investigate public language use, particularly in multilingual communities. The signs present in public spaces offer unique insights into linguistic aspects of multilingual societies, as they show which languages are used in which way by different actors. Language choice on signs erected by official bodies, for example, is related to official language policies, while signs displayed by companies or private persons may be less affected by official legislation but rather show which customers or audiences are addressed. Signs are multi-modal entities, and the analysis of their content and function is thus not limited to the language in which they are written. Researchers may also consider their production process, e.g. hand-written vs. professionally printed, the order and size in which different languages are used, the font(s) that are displayed, the exact place where they are shown (cf. e.g. Blommaert 2013; Kallen & Ní Dhonnacha 2010).

Traditional LL research asks questions about ethnolinguistic vitality, power, and linguistic prestige (Landry & Bourhis 1997; Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Ben-Rafael 2009). Depending on the research questions, individual studies may have a more quantitative approach, e.g. by counting the languages represented on signage in public space and being very exact about the specifics of data collection (e.g. Backhaus 2007), while others prefer a more ethnographic method of data collection and qualitative analysis (e.g. Blommaert 2013). Most LL research exclusively uses written signage as data. This has produced fascinating insights into a variety of multilingual settings around the world, but mostly on urban communities in industrialized societies. Using only written signs obviously limits the conclusions we can draw on language use in public spaces, as most of the language used by people in these spaces is spoken rather than written – at least when we are considering real-world rather than virtual space. This might be particularly important if the access to formal education, and thus the literacy rate, is not as high in the societies we want to investigate as in most industrialized countries. Banda and Jimaima (2015), for example, have shown how the semiotic landscape of the rural population in Zambia transcends what is

traditionally part of LL studies by incorporating faded signs, physical objects, and parts of the natural landscape into their analysis. Recent LL studies have therefore started to also consider the spoken language produced in the areas of investigation (e.g. Birnie 2018; Pappenhagen et al. 2016) and use additional data, for example interviews with members of the speech community (e.g. Schulte 2016).

The present study will analyse both the written LL of public places in Windhoek and the spoken linguistic soundscape (LS) in the same areas. The analysis of the LL is both qualitative and quantitative, while the LS focuses on qualitative analysis.

4. Language use in Windhoek

4.1 Data and methodology

Data for this study were collected on a field trip to Namibia from August to September 2017. The written signage in different public spaces in Windhoek was photographed for the investigation of the LL of the city. The signage in two areas of Windhoek is analysed here: on *Independence Avenue* in the city centre and in *The Grove Mall* on the southern outskirts of the city. Both are public areas that can be accessed by anyone and are frequented by a large number of people. *The Grove Mall* is in an affluent area of Windhoek and can be considered a relatively up-market shopping centre. The same is true for the central parts of *Independence Avenue*, where shops and cafés are often relatively expensive, but this changes outside of the centre. The shops then become less focused on clothes and restaurants, but include small repair shops and businesses that sell and repair furniture and home appliances. As the analysis below will show, these areas also contain notices and advertisements, sometimes hand-written, for cheap apartments in various parts of Windhoek, job offers, and advertisements for other services. These areas can thus be assumed to be frequented not only by tourists or the affluent middle class of Windhoek.

For the analysis of the LL, each shop front is considered as a single unit. If a shop displays advertisements in multiple languages, each language is counted once and the unit is considered to be multilingual. Some shops display welcome messages in a number of different foreign languages, including, for example, French, Spanish, and Chinese. These languages are subsumed under the category 'other', as they only appear on a small number of signs and are restricted to this context. Highly multilingual units of analysis like this are rare and these foreign languages only appear in two shops on *Independence Avenue*. The only language visible in the windows of two shops was the shop's name, which does not necessarily give a clue as to the language preferences of the owners or customers. These were classified as displaying

'no language'. Other permanent or semi-permanent signs visible from the footpath, e.g. posters or notices are also analysed. These are also not counted individually but as a unit if they are displayed on the same structure, e.g. on a bin or wall.

Soundscaping data were collected by regular and structured observation in the same places. Interactions between speakers in public spaces were observed by setting a time limit of an hour for each locality investigated. I went to cafés, restaurants, and other public spaces that encourage lingering and returned to these regularly at different times of the day. Extensive field notes providing details about the locations and the behaviour of customers and staff were made, but interactions were not recorded. Locations for both soundscaping and landscaping are marked on the map in Figure 1. Although I attempted to spread these observations across the city and observe different speaker groups, the locations tend to be in relatively affluent areas, because these were the most accessible ones for me. Ideally, future research should also be conducted in other parts of Windhoek and in other parts of Namibia as well.

In addition to these observations, around 20 unrecorded interviews with a variety of speakers were conducted. These range from short interactions with shop clerks regarding the languages displayed on signs in the shops to longer conversations with school teachers regarding language use and language policy in the
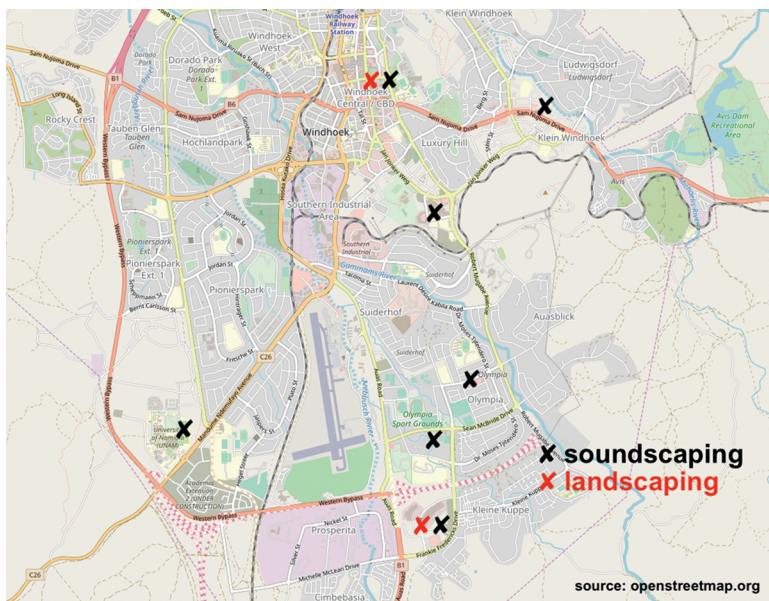
Figure 1. Map of Windhoek (city centre and south) with locations for landscaping and soundscaping

country. Interview partners were not asked for personal information that would be elicited in traditional sociolinguistic interviews, but they could all speak English well enough to communicate successfully as the interviews were conducted in that language. Some speakers chose to reveal personal information, e.g. their own linguistic preferences, in the course of the interview, while others did not. Extensive field notes were taken on the LL and LS of Windhoek both for structured observations and at different times during the day.

4.2   The linguistic landscape of Windhoek

Windhoek is the capital of Namibia and, with a population of about 320,000 people, it is by far the largest urban settlement in this sparsely populated country. The city centre of Windhoek is home to some government buildings as well as museums, hotels, the offices of international corporations, and a shopping district. Most of the shops are concentrated in various small to medium-sized malls.

Data on the LL of Windhoek city centre were collected on 12 September 2017 by walking a distance of about 500 metres on *Independence Avenue*, the main shopping street, from the corner of *Post Street/Independence Avenue* towards *Sam Nujoma Drive*. Pictures were taken of the outside of each shop and of permanent or semi-permanent publicly displayed signs like posters, graffiti, or street signs. Table 1 shows which languages are present on the signs.

Table 1. Languages present on *Independence Avenue* on 12 September 2017

Language	Number of units including that language
English	61
Afrikaans	7
German	2
Oshiwambo	1
Portuguese	2
Other	2
No language	2
Total	**63**

It is obvious from this distribution that English is the main language used on written signs in central Windhoek. English is present on all signs that use language, while Afrikaans only occurs on about 10% of all sings, and other languages are hardly ever found. All languages other than English occur only in connection with English and are never found on their own. Only 11 of the 63 units analysed here are multilingual, and most of them combine English with either Afrikaans or German.

The vast majority of units use English exclusively, but in spite of this concentration on English, it is still important to consider the signs that use other languages. Blommaert (2013: 46) claims that even "the statistically insignificant can be a sign of momentous change" and while the data presented here do not allow me to make any claims regarding linguistic change on their own, I agree with Blommaert's point to take even one-off signs seriously in the context of LL research. A comparison with Kleinz (1984) shows that English has become the most important single language in this context since 1977, when the language had high prestige but the majority of signs were multilingual in Afrikaans, English, and German. Languages other than English, German, or Afrikaans are not attested in the LL of inner-city Windhoek in 1977, however, so the sign in the indigenous language Oshiwambo that is present now might be an indicator for its higher status as a language of written communication in public. This could then be considered a very tentative indicator for future language change in this context.

Many of the highly multilingual units, which use three or more different languages, are windows of souvenir shops aimed at tourists and advertising their products and services in German, French, Spanish, Chinese, among other languages. They show that this area of Windhoek is frequented by foreign tourists as well as Namibians.

The bilingual English/Afrikaans signs are professionally produced and fixed to buildings or walls. They are clearly intended to be permanent signs, and are installed by the owners or administrators of buildings or parking spaces (cf. Figure 2 for an example).

Figure 2. Bilingual English/Afrikaans sign on *Independence Avenue*

These signs are generally found on private premises and are not official signs that are erected by government bodies. Official signage around *Independence Avenue*, for example street signs, is generally written in English, although there is a certain variability between English, Afrikaans, and German on street signs in Windhoek in general. It is, for example, possible to find an English version of a street name on one side of the road and an Afrikaans version of the same street name on the other, which might, of course, be due to older, not yet replaced, street signs being written in Afrikaans or German. This usually affects only the last part of the sign, i.e. English *street* vs. Afrikaans *straat*, but the spelling even on these official signs is somewhat variable in general. The similarity of English *street*, Afrikaans *straat*, and German *Straße* makes it possible that the final part of street names can be shortened to *St* or *Str* with the signs becoming conceptually ambivalent with regard to language choice. Not all street names end in *street*, however, and words like *avenue* or *drive* are also common, although adjacent signs sometimes offer different versions of these names. Based on my own observations in Windhoek, residents often give their addresses using only the first part of their street names, if street names are used at all and people do not just refer to larger units like estates.

The only example of an indigenous language used in the LL of inner city Windhoek is a poster advertisement for alternative health products that is available in two versions, one in English and one in Oshiwambo. Interestingly, even the Oshiwambo version (Figure 3) of this poster includes some English in the headlines for each product offered, i.e. in a prominent position on the poster, and also in the packaging details at the bottom.

Figure 3. Alternative health product poster (excerpt) in English and Oshiwambo and English

All other signs are exclusively in English. This includes official signage, but also posters, notices, and advertisements put up by shop owners, and semi-permanent signs and notices produced by private persons. Signs that are professionally produced

are generally written in standard English (e.g. Figure 4), while hand-written or home-printed notes are often more or less removed from an internationally accepted written standard (e.g. Figures 5–7). Such deviations include orthography and formatting conventions (Figure 6), but also non-standard grammatical constructions, as is evident in Figure 5 "He uses herbs from **(AMAZON (BRAZIL)** and African to be solve problems and sickness that has defeated many doctors and other herbalists" (emphasis in original) and the hand-written note in Figure 7 "We closed". In spite of such non-standard constructions, these notices are successful at communicating their purpose, even to outsiders. They are also good illustrations of the linguistic development of Namibia since independence. The speech community of inner-city Windhoek clearly presents a picture of itself as English-speaking. English is almost exclusively used for communication on formal and informal, official and non-official, permanent and semi-permanent, professionally produced and hand-written signage. This is true although the makers of these signs do not always have native-speaker-like proficiency in written English, which presumably also holds true for the intended readership.

Namibian English may currently be in the process of establishing itself as a national variety. Traditionally, English in Namibia has been described as similar to South African English, but recent studies have started to question that notion (Schröder & Zähres 2020). The future will show which of the non-standard constructions found on public signage will become a part of this emerging national standard (cf. also Dąbrowska 2017).

Figure 4. Faith conference advertisement
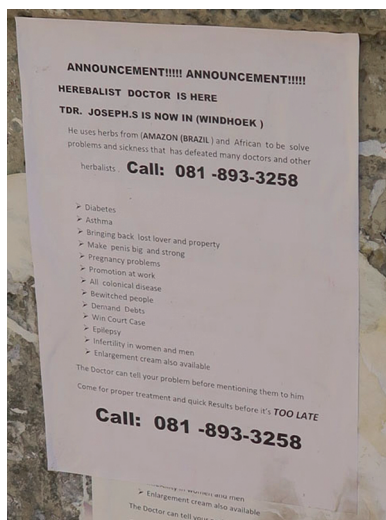
Figure 5. Herbalist advertisement

Figure 6. Job offer

Figure 7. Hand-written shop sign

Another site selected for fieldwork is *The Grove Mall* on the outskirts of Windhoek. The mall opened in late 2014 and was the newest mall in Namibia at the time of data collection. Data were collected on the lower ground floor on 2 and 16 September 2017. As on *Independence Avenue*, each shop window was counted as a unit, and each language is counted once for every unit it appears in. Table 2 shows the languages found in the shops and on signs erected by the mall administration.

Table 2. Languages present in *The Grove Mall* on 2 and 16 September 2017

Language	Number of units
English	50
Afrikaans	5
German	1
Oshiwambo	2
Portuguese	1
Other	0
No language	0
Total	**50**

All units exhibit written signs in English, but a small number of these signs are bi- or multilingual. The most commonly used language other than English is Afrikaans, which never provides information that is not also available in English and is thus used as an additional language for advertisement. A dentist's sign, for example, states that a resident doctor is a "General Practitioner" and an "Algemene Praktisyn", while a pharmacy has two identical posters advertising their products, one in English, one in Afrikaans. More official details about the shops like opening hours and contact details are provided exclusively in English. Portuguese is found on a money transfer advertisement, and German in a dentistry, where the qualifications of one doctor are given in English, Afrikaans, and German. The two occurrences of Oshiwambo are quite different: Oshiwambo appears once on advertisements in Checkers, a large supermarket, alongside other ads in English and Afrikaans, and once on a warning sticker on the outside of a shop, where potential thieves are informed in Afrikaans, English, and Oshiwambo that management and staff do not have access to the safe inside.

Signs in *The Grove Mall* are hardly ever hand-written and none have a private or informal purpose, which is more common on walls and fences in the city centre. This is, of course, in large parts due to *The Grove Mall* being private property and a shopping centre. The intended readership of the signs displayed in this space are customers who can afford to spend time and money here, while the streets in the city centre are also frequented by potentially less affluent people and the signs there are thus more varied. In both spaces, English is clearly the main medium of

communication, however. Some information is also provided in other languages, predominantly in Afrikaans, but the vast majority of written signs in both locations are exclusively in English.

While the LL of Windhoek is thus not English-only, it clearly shows that English is the dominant language in written public language use. Even Namibians who do not write with native-like proficiency use English, so that English is certainly the language of choice in written interethnic communication in Windhoek in 2017. As English is the only language shared by all ethnic groups in Namibia, its strong presence in the LL of the capital is not surprising. Previous linguistic studies on spoken language use have, however, pointed out that Afrikaans is the traditional language of interethnic communication in this part of Namibia and that Afrikaans is still used as a language of interethnic communication in some experimental set-ups even for young Namibians (Stell & Dragojevic 2016; Stell 2016). These results cannot be validated by the present analysis of the LL in public Windhoek, where Afrikaans plays only a minor role. The heritage languages of the various indigenous groups in Namibia are even more peripheral than Afrikaans. In contrast to Afrikaans, the appearance of Oshiwambo in the LL seems to be a recent development, as Kleinz (1984) does not report any use of indigenous languages in similar contexts. This could be a first tentative sign of language change and especially Oshiwambo might become more visible in the LL of Windhoek in the future. Based on the evidence of the LL alone, the speech community of Windhoek presents itself as using predominantly English. This impression is qualified by an analysis of the LS of the city, however.

4.3   The linguistic soundscape of Windhoek

The languages I observed to be used orally in public spaces are English, Afrikaans, Bantu languages, Khoekhoe languages, and German. English occurs frequently both in conversations of people who know each other already, e.g. groups of shoppers or people eating together, and in interactions between service staff and clients. Afrikaans is also used in both of these contexts, but the other languages are reserved for in-group communication and are not used between staff and clients in restaurants or cafés. Even at a first glance, the LS is thus more varied than the LL of Windhoek.

While this language use occurs in public spaces, it is not public in the same sense as the signage that forms the LL. The intended readership for the signs found in public spaces in Windhoek generally seems to be as large and general as possible – their makers mostly want to attract customers, visitors, or clients. Signs can, of course, also be aimed at a restricted audience: If a job offer is, for example, written in

a particular language, the knowledge of that language is a prerequisite for potential applicants. This is not the case in inner-city Windhoek or in *The Grove Mall*, where the vast majority of signs are in English and should thus, at least in principle, be readable by the whole population. This should also be regarded as a choice by the community of speakers in Windhoek. The use of heritage languages is possible for in-group communication, however, as the interlocutors know each other's linguistic competence and preference. The greater use of indigenous languages in oral than in written communication on the streets of Windhoek is thus not surprising, but highlights the need for an incorporation of the soundscape into investigations of public language use. Written and oral use of languages in public spaces might be, as in Windhoek, considerably different, and we cannot simply extrapolate from written language use to other usage contexts. The incorporation of the soundscape in public spaces in LL studies thus gives a more detailed and accurate picture of language use in those spaces.

The use of heritage languages in oral in-group communication is not at all surprising, as the vast majority of Namibians speak one of these languages as their primary home language (cf. Population and Housing Census 2011). If all members of the group share the same heritage language, communication in that language is thus the unmarked choice. If members of the group speak different indigenous languages, the group may turn to English or Afrikaans. It was striking that the use of Afrikaans was only observed in groups of Whites.[3] Although other ethnic groups also speak Afrikaans as their primary home language, I did not observe any use of Afrikaans that did not involve at least one White person. This may, of course, be different in other areas of Namibia or simply be due to me not having noticed it. All in-group communication that happened without a White person participating in it happened either in an indigenous language or in English. English thus seems to be the default choice for most Namibians if they choose a language other than an indigenous language as a medium of communication. Sometimes, this even seems to happen when all speakers in a group probably share a native language and do not speak English with native-like proficiency. For example, I observed the conversation of two women, one of them young and one middle-aged, who seemed to know each other very well. They were browsing in a shop and spoke English to

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3.   The distinction between White and non-White speakers I make in this study is, of course, problematic for a number of reasons. It relies solely on my own impression, as I did not approach language users for personal information as would be expected in the context of more controlled forms of data collection like sociolinguistic interviews or questionnaire-based studies. The distinction I make here is crude and speakers cannot self-identify, but it still seems to be an important correlate of linguistic behaviour, as the following discussion will show. I would like to point out, however, that I strongly reject apartheid-era race classifications that also use these labels.

each other for the whole time I could hear them (which was around 5 minutes). The younger woman spoke English rapidly and fluently, while the older woman spoke more slowly, less fluently, and used more non-standard constructions. Even though English was probably not her native language and she seemingly found it more difficult to use than another language, they chose English to communicate. English thus does not only seem to be the language chosen for interethnic communication if no other shared language is available to the interlocutors, it is sometimes the language of choice for intraethnic communication even for speakers who are not entirely fluent in it. Questionnaire surveys and experimental investigations have shown that the prestige of English in Namibia among certain ethnic groups, especially Ovambos, is extremely high (e.g. Pütz 1995). The observations in the present study provide further evidence that English is favoured especially by non-White speakers in Windhoek.

When it comes to out-group communication, different linguistic strategies can be observed. I witnessed a number of times that a side communication, for example with someone just passing by, occurs in a language different to the one used by the group that is currently talking. All languages observed may be used for this switch – a member of a group speaking a Khoe language may switch to English to communicate with someone else in a side conversation, or someone in a group speaking English might turn to someone else and speak a Bantu language with them. Such a switch from a more widely spoken language like English to one of the indigenous languages will probably only happen when the interlocutors know each other and their linguistic preferences. A good scenario to investigate which languages are chosen when the interlocutors do not necessarily know each other are service encounters.

In service encounters, the language of communication may be chosen by the client or by the staff member, for example by uttering a greeting in a particular language. Both strategies have been observed in other studies in multilingual contexts (e.g. Hazel 2015; Mondada 2018; Pappenhagen et al. 2016). Pappenhagen et al. show that the waiters in a Kurdish café in Germany choose the language of communication based on a number of strategies, which are familiarity with the customer, the languages used among a group of customers, the physical appearance of the customers, and a fall-back to German as a default language (Pappenhagen et al. 2016: 157). They believe that these strategies are quite successful, as "client-initiated 'corrections', as well as more profound misunderstandings related to language choice, occur only very seldom in our data" (Pappenhagen et al. 2016: 157). Interestingly, the strategies adopted by staff in cafés and restaurants in Windhoek are quite different from those observed by Pappenhagen et al. in Hamburg. Corrections with regard to language choice by the clients are also rare here, but this is probably due to the client rather than the waiter generally choosing the language of communication. In the

interactions I observed in Windhoek, waiters typically signal non-verbally that they are ready to take a customer's order and then align with the language chosen by the customer. Customers select either English or Afrikaans in these situations; I have not observed service encounters taking place in another language, at least in cafés and restaurants. This may be different in other parts of the city and, for example, in some supermarkets and grocery stores, where indigenous languages may be spoken, probably due to familiarity between staff and regular customers.

The choice between the two generally accepted languages in service encounters, English and Afrikaans, seems to be strongly connected with the ethnicity of the interlocutors, and especially with a dichotomy between White and non-White speakers. I often observed groups of Whites using Afrikaans among each other, and many of these customers also chose Afrikaans to communicate with staff in service encounters. White waiters may also initiate a conversation in Afrikaans with a White but not with a Black customer. I have not observed a Black waiter starting a service encounter in Afrikaans, even when they obviously know the language and use it with some customers. If a Black waiter chooses the language of communication by offering a greeting or asking about a customer's order, this language is generally English. If the customer chooses to change the language used in this encounter by switching to Afrikaans, the waiter will align with that choice and continue in Afrikaans. White customers tend to choose Afrikaans in service encounters, although I have also occasionally observed a White, Afrikaans-speaking customer using English to communicate with Black waiting staff.

The LS of public Windhoek contains a number of different language families that are also known to be primary home languages in Namibia. The observations made in Windhoek show that while indigenous languages seem to be limited to conversations between family, friends, and acquaintances, service encounters provide a good context for observing which languages are chosen for interaction between speakers who do not know each other. In these contexts, the language of communication is typically chosen by the customer, while the staff member uses non-verbal cues for greeting and signalling their readiness to take an order. Non-White Namibians prefer English in these scenarios, while White Namibians generally choose to communicate in Afrikaans.

5. Discussion and conclusion

With regard to language choice for interethnic communication, the LL and LS of Windhoek show different strategies. English is clearly the favoured language on written signage in public spaces in Windhoek, regardless of the level of formality of the sign and its intended audience. This can be understood as an inclusive strategy

and a success of language planning and policy: As English is the most widely spoken language across all ethnic groups in Namibia and has generally high prestige as a language of interethnic communication, the makers of written signage choose this language to address as large an audience as possible and do not restrict the number of people who can read their signs by choosing another language. A note of caution that might qualify that success somewhat is necessary here, however. A discussion document specifying a new language policy has existed since 2003. This document strengthens the role of the home languages of students in formal education (Language policy for schools 2003), but the policy has not been implemented yet. Some reports on language use in education suggest that it is difficult to find teachers who are qualified to teach (in) the indigenous languages in Namibia (Harris 2011). This might well result in a limited literacy in these languages even for their native speakers and restrict the use of indigenous languages in writing.[4]

A comparison with Kleinz' study on the LL in central Windhoek in 1977 (Kleinz 1984) shows that the use of English has increased since then. Although it already had high prestige and was used extensively on business signs in 1977, it mostly appeared alongside Afrikaans and German when it came to the communication of factual information, rather than a simple display of the language in shop names, for example. This has clearly changed, as English is used for this purpose now in both public and private signage. English now also occurs frequently as the only language – there is no indication that other languages are used to clarify factual information delivered in English anymore.

The LS is more diverse with different languages being used frequently in oral communication. Indigenous languages are often used between speakers who know each other. The only languages I observed in service encounters in cafés and restaurants, however, were English and Afrikaans. These languages are the only ones available to speakers of nearly all different ethnic groups, but a clear division in language choice for these service encounters still involves ethnicity. Afrikaans only seems to be chosen as the language of communication by Whites, while other ethnic groups prefer to use English. Pütz (1995) claims that Afrikaans speakers feel threatened by the increasing importance of English in Namibia and Stell (2016: 337) points out that White Afrikaans speakers "disapprove of the preponderance of English in the educational system, where Afrikaans should be better represented". When White Afrikaans speakers are in the role of the paying customer, they overwhelmingly choose Afrikaans as the language of communication and the staff align with their

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4.   This is supported by an email exchange with Andrew Harris. He and his wife Priscilla Harris have established a publishing business for language teaching materials in Namibia's indigenous languages. Mr Harris pointed out to me that many speakers of these indigenous languages have extreme difficulties to read and write in them (email communication 29 May 2018).

patrons' language choice. This alignment may not be restricted to service encounters, as Stell (2014) has demonstrated that all other ethnicities accommodate the presumed linguistic preference of White Afrikaans speakers in group interviews while White Afrikaans speakers show less accommodation to other groups themselves. The present study shows that this pattern of accommodation towards the linguistic choices of this historically dominant group can be observed in speakers' daily lives as well.

White Afrikaans speakers probably do not see this as an act of linguistic domination, however. Interviews conducted with White Afrikaans speakers suggest that they see both English and Afrikaans as interethnic languages of similar status in Namibia. The fact that they are the only group who initiates the use of Afrikaans and expect others to accommodate that choice, which was generally observed in this study, might either go unnoticed or be perceived differently. Non-Whites may well perceive language choice as a performance of power relations, as two examples show: Stell (2016: 340) mentions a Herero speaker who claims to use English in conversations with Whites "to tease them, because they are not good at English", and I observed an exchange between a White elderly woman speaking to a Black man in Afrikaans but him responding in English and telling her that she cannot order him to do things any more.[5]

The results of the present study support previous investigations. Questionnaires, experimental designs, interviews, and ethnographic observations thus all lead to the same conclusions: Both English and Afrikaans are used in interethnic communication in Windhoek but there are differences in the linguistic preferences between White and non-White groups. Most ethnic groups apart from White Afrikaans speakers had expressed a clear preference for English for these situations, and the LL and LS reflect this. White Afrikaans speakers insist on the use of Afrikaans, however, and other ethnic groups generally accommodate the linguistic choices of this historically dominant group of speakers. It is, of course, unknown what will happen to these two competing languages in the future. White Afrikaans speakers are a numerous and powerful minority, especially in the Windhoek area, even though they are not well-represented in the ruling party of post-independence, Ovambo-dominated SWAPO. It thus seems likely that their linguistic preferences for public interethnic communication will continue to be accommodated by other groups, at least in the short and medium term. Attitudes to this might change in the long-term, however. The changes regarding public language use in recent decades that become apparent in a comparison of Kleinz (1984) and the present study may help to make predictions about future developments. Afrikaans does

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5.   This observation was made in Swakopmund, not in Windhoek.

not have the same institutional support today as it did before Namibian independence, and English was even then already more common in the LL of Windhoek than Afrikaans. Kleinz also points out that Afrikaans was common on signage in Windhoek, but that its prestige was lower than its actual use (1984: 126). Speakers in pre-independence Namibia also reported that they were likely to choose Afrikaans to communicate with strangers they perceived as belonging to a lower social class while English was preferred with members of higher social strata (Kleinz 1984: 175), so there was a clear prestige difference between Afrikaans and English even in the late 1970s. Following years of English language education of the population there seems to be no need to rely on Afrikaans to communicate information anymore, and if it already was not generally prestigious before independence, it has certainly become even less so after independence. Buschfeld and Schröder (2020: 348) show that Afrikaans is still considered "a useful lingua France in interethnic communicative contexts" by a majority of Namibians, but almost all informants in their study "also believed English to serve this function". The prestige of English has thus markedly increased in recent decades, and if that development continues English is, at least in Windhoek, likely to be used as the sole language of interethnic communication in the future, while other languages will probably be largely restricted to private domains.

Windhoek is in many ways a unique area of Namibia – it is by far the largest urban settlement and home to a large number of people from different social and linguistic backgrounds. The data collected here is also limited to more affluent areas of Windhoek. The results obtained on the basis of this LL and LS study can thus not simply be extrapolated to all of Windhoek or even the rest of the country. More research in other areas of Namibia is necessary to learn which languages are used for which purposes in public encounters there.

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Linguistic features

The phonetics of Namibian English

Investigating vowels as local features
in a global context

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Namibian English (NamE) is frequently referred to as an offspring of (White) South African English (SAfrE), although more recently researchers have tried to describe it as a variety in its own right. In particular, Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) describe several phonetic features seemingly specific to NamE and un-attested in other (South) African Englishes. This paper takes up some of their findings and provides further evidence for Namibian-specific realisations of vowels by investigating a supposedly NamE-specific NURSE–WORK split and comparing realisations of the TRAP–DRESS merger attested in some varieties of SAfrE. The paper supports the claim that NamE should be considered a variety in its own right, further demonstrating that it should not be seen as a mono-lithic whole.

Keywords: World Englishes, Southern African Englishes, English in Namibia, Namibian English, phonetic variation, ethnic variation

1. Introduction

Namibia is marked by a high degree of linguistic and ethnic diversity: It is the home of almost 30 indigenous African languages, from both the Bantu and the Khoesan language families, as well as three Indo-European (Germanic) languages, namely English, German, and Afrikaans (cf. Simons & Fennig 2018). English was introduced for pragmatic as well as ideological reasons as the only official lan-guage on independence from South Africa in 1990. Thus, English in Namibia has a separate history from South Africa of almost 30 years,[1] yet it does not feature in

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1. For more details on the historical background to and the details of the present linguistic situation in Namibia, see the introductory chapter to this volume and Stell (this volume).

any of the many handbooks or volumes on varieties of English around the world published in the last two decades (e.g. Kortmann & Schneider 2004; Kachru et al. 2009; Kirkpatrick 2010; Schneider 2011; Filppula et al. 2017), while in others it is still described as an offspring of White South African English (WSAfrE) and mentioned only in passing (e.g. Trudgill & Hannah 2017: 35).[2]

More recently, however, starting with Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014), this variety of English has attracted the attention of a handful of researchers, who are contributing to its positioning in the field of World Englishes as a variety in its own right.[3] In this paper, we will provide further evidence for the specificity of Namibian English (NamE) by looking at Namibian-specific realisations of vowels. We will do so by investigating in more detail the supposedly NamE-specific NURSE–WORK split,[4] first described in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016), and by comparing these findings to realisations of the TRAP–DRESS merger, also attested in some varieties of South African English (SAfrE) (cf. Bowerman 2004; van Rooy 2004). With this we can demonstrate that NamE should be defined as a variety of English separate from SAfrEs, as it exhibits peculiarities not paralleled in any of the South African varieties thus far described. We also show that the pronunciation of English vowels in NamE appears to be ethnically conditioned and hence that, as has been observed for SAfrEs, several local sub-varieties need to be considered.

2.   On the characteristics of Namibian English (NamE): A focus on vowels

Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 143–146) were the first to describe features of NamE on several levels of linguistic analysis, although their findings are, as they acknowledge themselves, impressionistic and not empirically founded. Nevertheless, this "pilot study provides groundwork for the assumption that English in Namibia is at least moving towards structural nativisation and hence phase three of Schneider's Dynamic Model" (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 148). Among the phonological features noted, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 146) mention TH-stopping, word final consonant devoicing, and R-realisation as a trill or post-alveolar approximant in the speech of Afrikaners regarding the consonant system of NamE. As for the vowel system, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 146) note the frequent realisation of the KIT

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2.   See also the introductory chapter to this volume.

3.   See introductory chapter to this volume for details.

4.   The term 'split' in this regard refers to what is most likely an allophonic split instead of a phonemic split. This applies to both described splits in the present study, i.e. regarding both the KIT and NURSE vowels.

vowel as [ə] and consider the DRESS vowel to possess the quality of a rather raised [e], i.e. [ẹ], in the speech of White Afrikaans speakers. Furthermore, according to their findings, Oshiwambo speakers tend to produce the NURSE vowel as [e] and occasionally realise a CLOTH vowel as [a].

In somewhat more detail and more empirically founded, Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) describe several vowel mergers and splits. More specifically, they investigate vowel realisations in eighteen idiolects from eight ethnic groups and all three language families relevant in the Namibian context (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of speakers and language families in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) (adapted from Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 281)

L1 (self-reported)*	N	Language family	N
German	6		
Afrikaans (White)	1	Indo-European	9
Afrikaans (Baster)	2		
Oshiwambo	4		
Otjiherero	1	Bantu	7
Oshindonga	1		
Oshikwanyama	1		
Nama/Damara	2	Khoesan	2

* The labels in this column reflect the self-reported L1s of the individual informants. Both Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama are part of the Oshiwambo dialect cluster. Thus, four informants preferred to list the glottonym 'Oshiwambo' while two informants specified their L1 in this context (cf. also Simons & Fennig 2018).

Kautzsch and Schröder formulate as one of their aims "to test empirically if the pronunciation of English in Namibia differs by ethnicity and thus by L1 background" (2016: 280). By looking at the vowel realisations in the lexical sets TRAP, DRESS, NURSE, and KIT in two different speech styles (i.e. word list and text passage recordings) they are able to confirm some of Buschfeld and Kautzsch's (2014) findings.

Most notably, Kautzsch and Schröder find empirical evidence for the existence of a TRAP–DRESS merger, which "is strongest in the black population with a Bantu and Khoisan L1" as "it occurs in all speakers in the reading passage and in seven out of nine speakers in the wordlist" but can also be found in the speech of some Afrikaans and German L1 speakers (2016: 283). With this kind of distribution, Kautzsch and Schröder note (2016: 283) that the Namibian situation seems to be similar to the one in South Africa, where the same merger can be regularly observed in broad White South African English (WSAfrE) as well as in mesolectal Black South African English (BlSAfrE), whereas it occurs only variably in the BlSAfrE acrolect (cf. Bowerman 2004: 937; van Rooy 2004: 945–947).

Furthermore, Kautzsch and Schröder describe a NURSE–WORK split in the recordings of some Bantu and Khoesan L1 speakers, who "have a mid-back vowel [ɔ] in words of the NURSE set starting with /w/, in our case *work* and *worked*" (2016: 284), whereas it is fronted everywhere else (2016: 286). Since this split has not been described for any variety of SAfrE (or for any other variety of English in Southern Africa we know of),[5] this feature can possibly be considered to be a unique feature of NamE.

However, thus far the NURSE–WORK split and the TRAP–DRESS merger in NamE have only been analysed in recordings of what could be referred to as self-monitored formal speech styles. As Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 281) explain, their recordings of the word list involve "a high degree of monitoring", while they consider that the reading passage of 'Comma gets a cure' (Honorof et al. 2000) elicits a less monitored style, because of the text's perceived difficulty and the informants' paying less attention to the words of interest. However, "being unfamiliar with their (foreign) interviewer, the presence of a recording device in plain sight, and the scientific and official frame of the situation are further factors that imply the employment of a formal speech style by the interviewee" (Zähres 2016: 18). This is why in the following these two features will be re-examined on the basis of acoustic and auditory analyses of the same two formal speech styles as in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) plus one additional informal speech style, in the speech of an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous group of ten Namibian speakers of English.

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5.   A similar NURSE vowel split has been observed in varieties of West African and East African English (cf. e.g. Wolf 2010). Fronting the whole lexical set NURSE is indicative of West and Southern African Englishes, while the retraction of the vowel to a back quality with some fronted realisations is indicative of varieties in Central Africa (cf. Mesthrie 2012: 2101).

3. The TRAP–DRESS merger and the NURSE–WORK split in NamE revisited

3.1 Data collection and analysis

The re-analysis of these two phonetic characteristics is based on speech samples from ten Namibians, who were recorded during a field trip in 2014.[6] The recordings were conducted with teachers, lecturers, students, and pupils at several educational institutions, including the Namib High School in Swakopmund, the Otjikondo School Village, and the Polytechnic of Namibia (now Namibia University of Science and Technology) in Windhoek.[7] The informants were asked to read both a word list and a reading passage ('Comma gets a cure', Honorof et al. 2000), which assured the production by all speakers of vowels of all lexical sets (cf. Wells 1982) in a predominantly stressed phonological environment. Furthermore, the informants were interviewed in a Labovian type of semi-structured sociolinguistic interview, following the attention to speech model (Labov 1972; Meyerhoff 2006: 30; Thomas 2011: 192). The degree of formality decreases with each stage of the recording, providing us with the same two formal styles described in the previous section and an additional, more informal, less self-monitored speech style in the interview. The recordings were performed with a digital audio recorder on the premises of the different educational institutions, which, quite naturally and rather unfortunately, entailed the recording of ambient noise.[8] The whole sociolinguistic interview process, including both formal contexts as well as the semi-structured interview, lasted between 20 and over 60 minutes, depending on factors such as the talkativeness and the reading speed of the individual participants. Additionally, all informants filled out a questionnaire containing demographic data.

As illustrated in Table 2, the ten informants in this study represent a cross-ethnic and cross-linguistic section of the Namibian population, which allows for a closer examination of the merger and the split in the light of ethnolinguistic variation.

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6.   We would like to thank Sarah Buschfeld and Markus Bieswanger, who were part of the research team collecting the data in the framework of a larger project investigating usages of English in Namibia. We would also like to thank student assistants at Bielefeld University, most notably Jens Thomas, Daniela Kauschke, and Lisa Schumacher for helping us with the transcription of the interview data, as well as Saeb Sadek and Teresa Turnbull for their invaluable help with the segmentation of the recordings for the subsequent acoustic analyses.

7.   We would like to thank the many people who supported us during data collection, most notably Sarala Krishnamurthy, Ernest Olivier, Ronel Louw, Reiner Stommel, and Gillian Stommel.

8.   See De Decker (2016) for an evaluation of the effects of noise on LPC-based acoustic analyses in sociolinguistic research.

Table 2. Overview of informants

Speaker ID	L1 (self-reported)	Language family	Year of birth	Place of birth	Sex
Herero 1	Otjiherero	Bantu	1996	Swakopmund	M
Herero 2	Otjiherero		1994	Windhoek	F
Ovambo 1	Oshiwambo		1981	Windhoek	M
Ovambo 2	Oshiwambo		1996	Oshana Region	F
Damara 1	Nama-Damara	Khoesan	1997	Swakopmund	F
Damara 2	Nama-Damara		1979	Khorixas	F
Baster 1	Afrikaans	Indo-European	1957	Rehoboth	M
Baster 2	Afrikaans		1991	Rehoboth	F
German 1	German		1996	Windhoek	F
German 2	German		1994	Omaruru	F

With this set of informants, we were able to test further Kautzsch and Schröder's (2016) findings, as all relevant language families were represented. This allowed for an investigation of the supposed ethnic conditioning of the observed NURSE–WORK split. Furthermore, since the sample consists of two speakers for each L1, all L1s are equally represented and idiolectal differences could be more easily controlled. Other social variables, such as age, sex, educational background, or socio-economic factors could not be controlled, as the data did not allow for this. Thus, although we believe we can supplement previous studies of the phonetics of NamE, we nevertheless acknowledge that even our findings are preliminary and should be viewed with caution.

With three recordings for each informant, the present study is based on 30 recordings altogether. These were segmented both at the word and at the phoneme level for all vowel tokens. This, quite naturally, required a more elaborate preparation of the informal interview data than of the word list and reading passage, since the materials used for the formal recording contexts assured a relatively controlled and expected language output, whereas the informal part of the interview resulted in unpredictable data, which required orthographic transcription before segmentation. Due to varying interview lengths and the unpredictable nature of the data produced during the most informal part of the recording, the number of potential tokens for the lexical sets under scrutiny varied substantially. This was further influenced by the overall specificity of the lexical set NURSE, and hence its subset WORK, compared to the other two lexical sets of interest, DRESS and TRAP. While the materials of the formal reading-style contexts dictate the possible number of realisable vowel tokens (i.e. 1 to 2 tokens per vowel type in the word list context; 6 to 23 tokens per type in the reading passage; not counting subsets like WORK), these token numbers were not achieved by all of the informants due to, for example,

erroneous readings, accidental omissions by the speaker, or strong ambient noise during the recording, which rendered a certain word or vowel inaudible and subsequently impossible to analyse acoustically. Generally, from the recordings in the two formal contexts, all potential tokens of the lexical sets under scrutiny were segmented, while only 10 to 15 qualitatively good tokens[9] per type per speaker, if possible, were segmented in the informal speech style data, due to varying interview lengths and the overall number of available tokens (see also Table 3 below).

The word-level segmentation for the formal speech style data was conducted via the web-based forced alignment service *WebMAUS* (cf. Schiel 1999; Kisler et al. 2012), which automatically matches the orthographic transcript to the speech signals of a recording.[10] For the segmentation on the phoneme level, the data was segmented further with the phonetics software *Praat* (cf. Boersma & Weenink 2018) through the manual identification of the steady-state of each monophthong (cf. Di Paolo et al. 2011: 90–91; Thomas 2011: 172–174), i.e. a brief interval in which formant values are relatively stable and not affected by co-articulatory effects. The segmentation of the informal speech style data was conducted manually in its entirety, but otherwise followed the same principles. After the manual segmentation, the values of the first three formants for each token's steady state were automatically extracted with a Praat script (Hirst 2012) which automatically conducts several separate formant frequency measurements within a segmented vowel interval and then produces the mean of these measurements. The formant data was normalised with the vowel-intrinsic Bark Difference method, which yields good results when only analysing a speaker's partial vowel space (cf. Flynn 2011), to neutralise physiological inter-speaker variation for comparative vowel plots. Both normalisation and plotting of the acoustic evidence was conducted via the *vowels* package (Kendall & Thomas 2018) in *RStudio* (RStudio Team 2019). The acoustic data was triangulated with auditory impressions. This analysis approach closely mirrors the approach by Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) and thus aims at providing comparable results.

The following analyses are based on 1,105 vowel tokens altogether, although numbers vary considerably for individual lexical sets and/or speech styles (see Table 3).

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9. 'Qualitatively good' in this specific context naturally refers to the recording quality, i.e. the absence of ambient noise and co-articulatory effects, not the phonetic vowel quality.

10. The service is designed to deal predominantly with short recordings and thus only produced reliable results for the word-level segmentation of the word list and reading passage recordings, but not the most informal speech style. Also, with our data, the forced alignment at the phoneme level did not produce accurate results, which is why only the word level was automatically segmented and required little manual adjustment of the automatically set word boundaries afterwards.

Table 3. Number of vowel tokens across all speakers according
to individual lexical sets and speech styles

Lexical set / style	Word list	Reading passage	Interview	Total
DRESS	19	216	109	344
TRAP	21	109	131	261
NURSE	10	62	293	365
WORK	10	19	106	135
Total	**60**	**406**	**639**	**1,105**

3.2   The TRAP–DRESS merger revisited

As Table 3 and Table 4 show, 605 vowel realisations overall were segmented and
subsequently analysed to further investigate the hypothesised TRAP–DRESS merger.
Of these 605 tokens, 344 tokens belong to the lexical set DRESS while 261 tokens
belong to the TRAP set across all three speech styles. Overall, a relatively stable
number of tokens was achieved by the segmentation as shown in Table 4. Two
exceptions are the recording of the word list reading by speaker Damara 2, which
did not include any qualitatively good DRESS realisations due to ambient noise in
the recording, and all the recordings of speaker Baster 2, which were also charac-
terised by background noise as well as the general scarcity of DRESS tokens in the
recording of the informal interview.

Table 4. Number of DRESS and TRAP vowel tokens
across individual speakers and speech styles

Speaker / Tokens	DRESS				TRAP				Total
	Word list	Reading passage	Inter-view	Total DRESS	Word list	Reading passage	Inter-view	Total TRAP	
Herero 1	2	23	11	36	2	12	14	28	64
Herero 2	2	19	16	37	2	11	12	25	62
Ovambo 1	3	23	11	37	3	11	11	25	62
Ovambo 2	2	23	9	34	2	11	15	28	62
Damara 1	2	22	15	39	2	11	10	23	62
Damara 2	0	23	9	32	2	11	15	28	60
Baster 1	2	22	10	34	2	9	15	26	60
Baster 2	2	17	6	25	2	11	11	24	49
German 1	2	22	13	37	2	11	15	28	65
German 2	2	22	9	33	2	11	13	26	59
Total	**19**	**216**	**109**	**344**	**21**	**109**	**131**	**261**	**605**

Acoustic evidence for a partial or complete merging of realisations of the ᴛʀᴀᴘ and ᴅʀᴇss vowels was found in the data of eight out of the ten Namibians and 17 out of the 30 individual recordings. Regarding the three degrees of formality of the recordings, a merger can be found in three recordings of the most formal context, i.e. the reading of a word list, while it is realised in eight readings of a text, and in six recordings of the informal interview section (see also Table 6 in Section 3.4 below).

The varying realisations of the ᴛʀᴀᴘ and ᴅʀᴇss lexical sets by individual speakers are represented by Figures 1 to 4, which show four different idiolects: Figure 1 shows a distinct realisation of ᴅʀᴇss and ᴛʀᴀᴘ without any convergence by speaker Baster 1, while the other three figures show varying degrees of overlapping realisations by speakers Ovambo 1, Damara 2, and Herero 1, respectively, suggesting a merger – for speaker Herero 1 (cf. Figure 4), the mean values are nearly identical and the standard deviation ellipses overlap to a large extent and, thus, this speaker's realisation of ᴛʀᴀᴘ and ᴅʀᴇss comes close to a full merger of the two vowels.

The auditory impressions of the idiolects containing overlapping realisations of ᴛʀᴀᴘ and ᴅʀᴇss suggest that the ᴛʀᴀᴘ–ᴅʀᴇss merger clusters at a vowel quality approximating [e] or [ɛ].

1

DRESS - TRAP
Baster 1 Interview

2

DRESS - TRAP
Ovambo 1 Interview

3

DRESS - TRAP
Damara 2 Reading Passage

4
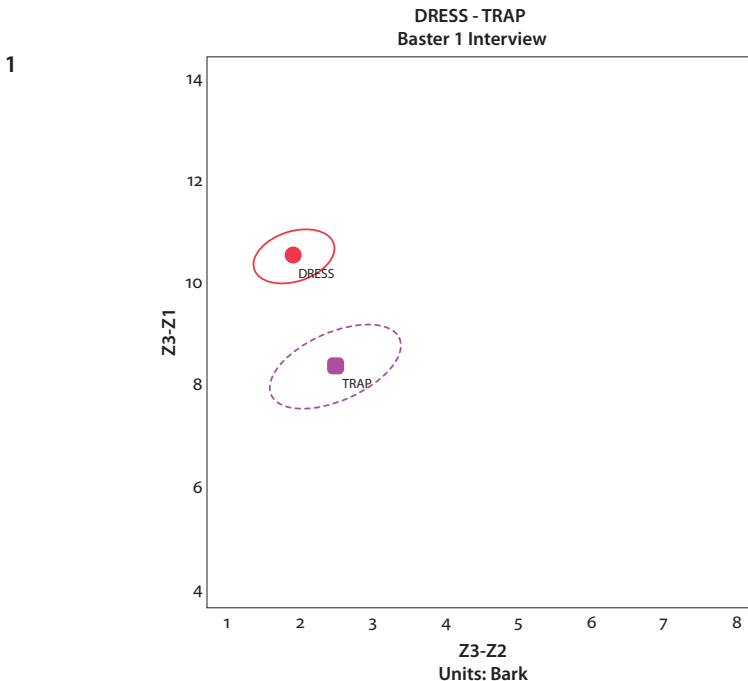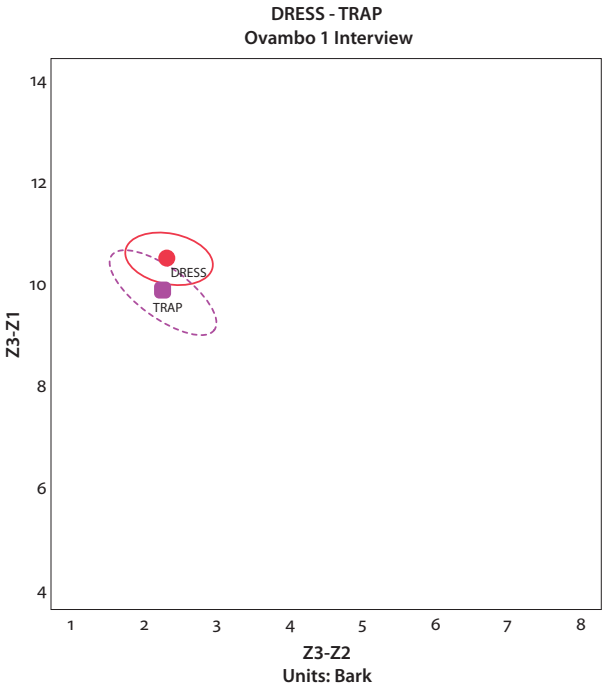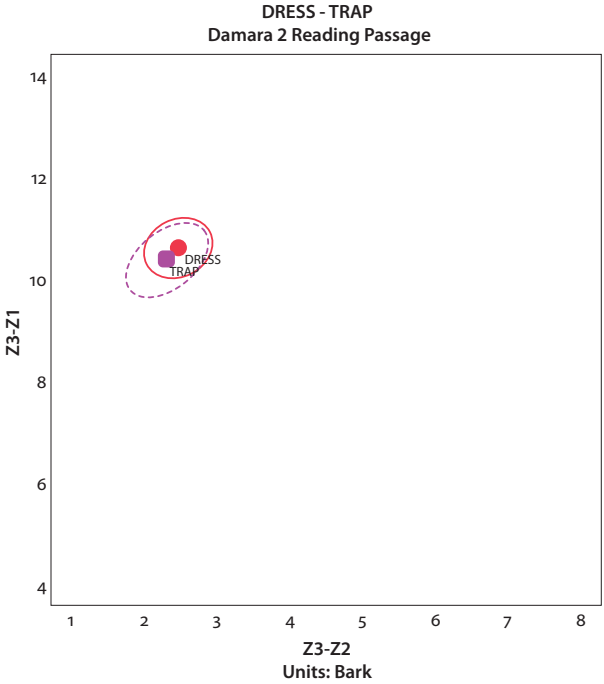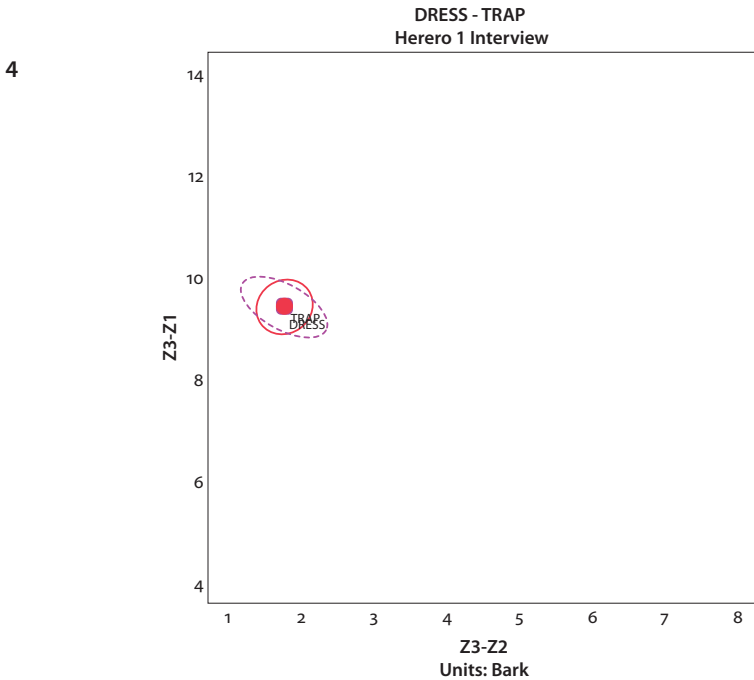
Figures 1 to 4. Bark-normalised vowel plots of the TRAP and DRESS lexical set tokens' respective mean values with ellipses signifying one standard deviation

3.3 The NURSE–WORK split revisited

To analyse the realisations of the lexical sets NURSE and WORK, 500 tokens were segmented across all speakers and speech styles. These consisted of 365 NURSE tokens and 135 WORK tokens (cf. Table 3 and Table 5). In contrast to the analysis of the TRAP and DRESS sets, the number of NURSE and, especially, WORK tokens varied between speakers to a higher degree. This was mostly motivated by the specificity of the NURSE lexical set and its subset WORK, which represents a comparatively un-common phonological context – hence the partial absence (cf. speaker Damara 2 in Table 5) and overall low number of WORK tokens in the data.

Table 5. Number of NURSE and WORK vowel tokens across individual speakers and speech styles

Speaker / Tokens	NURSE				WORK				Total
	Word list	Reading passage	Inter-view	Total NURSE	Word list	Reading passage	Inter-view	Total WORK	
Herero 1	1	7	30	38	1	2	10	13	51
Herero 2	1	7	28	36	1	2	7	10	46
Ovambo 1	1	6	25	32	1	2	15	18	50
Ovambo 2	1	5	27	33	1	2	9	12	45
Damara 1	1	7	15	23	1	2	7	10	33
Damara 2	1	7	17	25	1	2	0	3	28
Baster 1	1	6	48	55	1	2	12	15	70
Baster 2	1	3	18	22	1	2	17	20	42
German 1	1	7	37	45	1	2	10	13	58
German 2	1	7	48	56	1	1	19	21	77
Total	10	62	293	365	10	19	106	135	500

The acoustic analysis shows that seven out of the ten Namibians realise a variant of the hypothesised NURSE–WORK vowel split in 16 of the 30 recordings (see also Table 6 in Subsection 3.4 below). The split is realised by six individual speakers when reading the word list, by five individual speakers when reading the text passage, and, again, by five speakers during the informal interview.

If a speaker realises the hypothesised split, its form varies between either a fronted realisation of NURSE (together with a central realisation of WORK), a retracted realisation of WORK (together with a central realisation of NURSE), or a combination of both a fronted realisation of NURSE and a retraction of the WORK subset. These varying realisations are represented by the four idiolects in Figures 5 to 8 below, which illustrate the wide range, from the complete absence of the hypothesised split (but a fronted vowel quality of both NURSE and WORK by speaker Damara 1, cf. Figure 5) over slightly retracted realisations of WORK by speaker Herero 2 in Figure 6 and a more pronounced retracted quality of WORK, which does not overlap with NURSE at all, by speaker Baster 2 in Figure 7, to both a fronted variant of NURSE and realisations of WORK that include fronted, central, and retracted positions in the vowel space of speaker Ovambo 2 in Figure 8. This is also confirmed by the auditory impressions from the recordings.

5

DRESS - TRAP
Damara 1 Interview

6

DRESS - TRAP
Herero 2 Interview
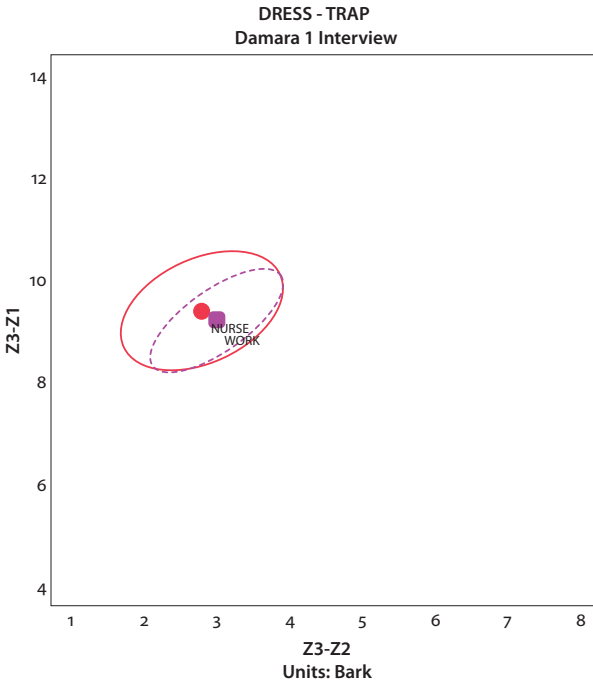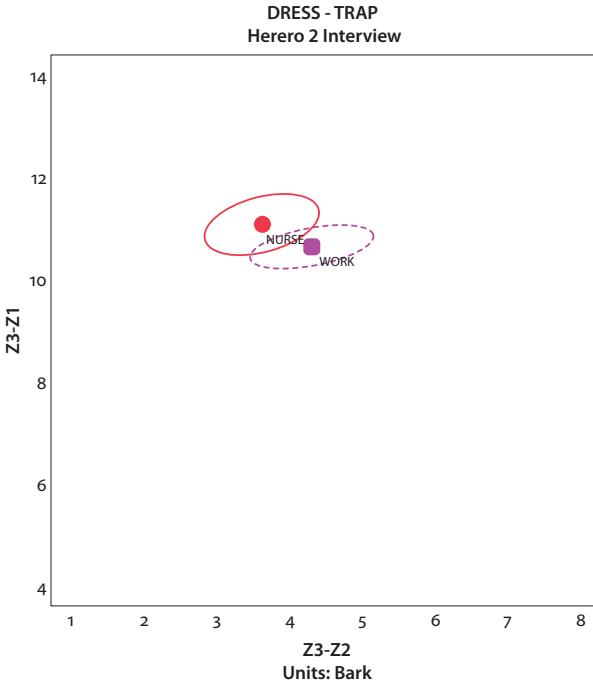
7
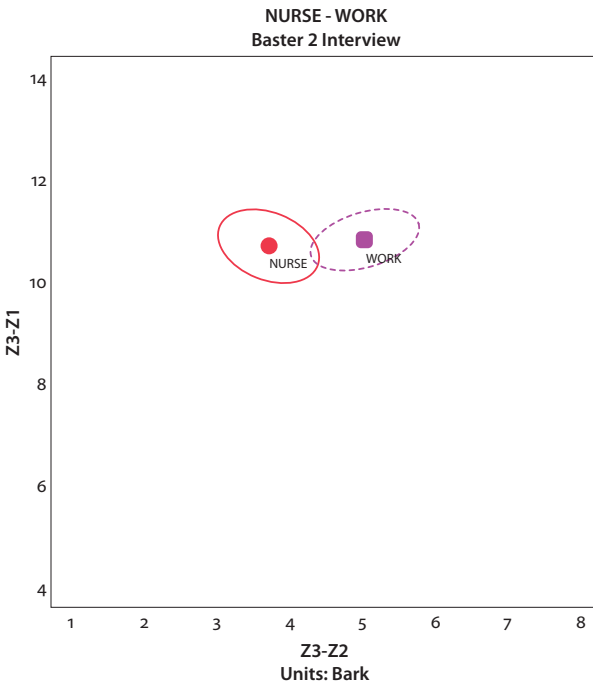
8
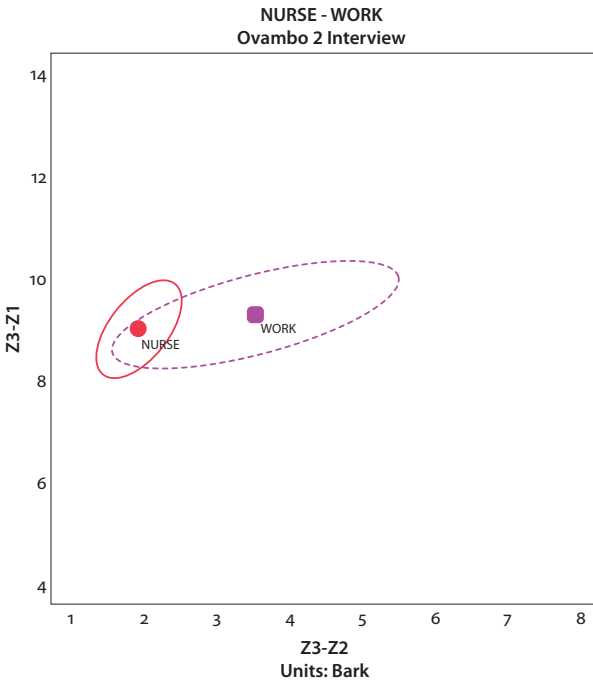
Figures 5 to 8. Bark-normalised vowel plots of the NURSE and WORK lexical set tokens' respective mean values with ellipses signifying one standard deviation

3.4   Discussion

As described and illustrated above, both the hypothesised TRAP–DRESS merger and NURSE–WORK split have been found in some of the ten acoustically analysed Namibian idiolects. The current data, which is exemplified by Figures 1 to 8, exhibit intra-speaker variation, but more particularly, an undeniable degree of inter-speaker variation. These results must be viewed with caution in some cases, because of the sub-optimal recording conditions and the limited possible number of tokens segmented within some of the individual recordings. Nevertheless, the data present further insights into the pronunciation(s) of English in Namibia with respect to speech style and the potential influence of the linguistic backgrounds of the individual speakers in the sample. A summary of the findings of the acoustic analyses can be found below in Table 6.

Overall, with respect to the four lexical sets under scrutiny, the ten speakers are fairly consistent in their pronunciations across the three speech styles. As Table 6 illustrates, there are two instances in which the acoustic data from the reading passage and the interview is not matched by the acoustic data from the word list reading. This exclusively affects the results of the analyses containing the lexical sets TRAP and DRESS. In both cases, the speakers realise the TRAP–DRESS merger in the less formal contexts, but not in the most formal context – or, as in the case of speaker Damara 2, there were insufficient data points to reach any conclusion. When comparing the acoustic analysis and the auditive impression, speaker Damara 1 does indeed pronounce all DRESS tokens with a vowel approximating [ɛ] while realising a distinctly lower vowel near [æ] for TRAP tokens in the most formal context. This resembles a Standard English pronunciation, but this distinction is not upheld in the less formal contexts, which could be an instance of style shifting. Of course, the number of tokens in this most formal context, the reading of a word list, is comparatively low and thus additional tokens and realisations of both TRAP and DRESS in the formal reading context would be necessary to confirm this statement. For speaker Baster 2, the acoustic evidence suggests that a TRAP–DRESS merger is realised, and a NURSE–WORK split is absent during the reading of 'Comma gets a cure', but not during the other recordings. The presence of the TRAP–DRESS merger is confirmed by the auditory impression, which makes this an unusual case of intra-speaker variation or, potentially, style shifting. This can also be observed in the data of speaker German 2. However, the acoustic analysis of the NURSE and WORK tokens in the reading passage recording of speaker Baster 2 is based on a comparatively low number of tokens and cannot be clearly confirmed by our auditory impressions of the recording, due to loud ambient noise in parts of the recordings. This is why this particular result must be regarded as inconclusive. Hence, in total, the data of the ten Namibian speakers under scrutiny does not exhibit a high degree of intra-speaker variation and/or style shifting regarding the lexical sets TRAP, DRESS, NURSE, and WORK across the three recording contexts.

Table 6. Results of acoustic analysis of all speakers across speech styles**

Speaker	Speech style	TRAP–DRESS merger	TRAP–DRESS-NURSE merger	NURSE–WORK split
Herero 1	W	+	−	−?
	R	+	−	−
	I	+	−	−
Herero 2	W	+	+?	+
	R	+	−?	+?
	I	+	−	+?
Ovambo 1	W	+	+	+?
	R	+	+	+
	I	+	+	+
Ovambo 2	W	+?	?	+
	R	+	?	+
	I	+?	?	+
Damara 1	W	−	−	−
	R	+	+?	−
	I	+	+?	−
Damara 2	W	?	−	−
	R	+	−	−
	I	+?	−	?
Baster 1	W	−	−	+
	R	−	−	+
	I	−	−	+?
Baster 2	W	−	−	+
	R	+?	−	?
	I	−	−	+
German 1	W	−	−	+
	R	−	−	+?
	I	−	−	+
German 2	W	−	−	+
	R	+	−	+
	I	−	−	−?

** The abbreviations in the column 'Speech Style' stand for the three different types of recordings of the same speaker: W = reading of a word list, R = reading of 'Comma gets a cure' reading passage, I = informal interview. Question marks in combination with plus or minus signify only a general tendency and/or that the data situation did not allow for a clear judgment. A single question mark signifies an inconclusive situation in the respective analysis due to e.g. a low number or absence of tokens.

Taking into account the self-reported linguistic backgrounds of the individual speakers, the following observations can be made: The TRAP–DRESS merger is almost exclusively realised by speakers who speak either a Bantu or a Khoesan language as their native language. The reading passages of speakers Baster 2 and German 2 are the exception here. This result closely mirrors the results in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 283), even with the addition of the more informal speech style.

Combining the results from the analysis of the lexical sets TRAP and DRESS with the observations made during the analysis of the sets NURSE and WORK, i.e. the fronting of NURSE in a number of cases, the present data confirm to some degree the observations from Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 146) and also Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 283). The latter describe a so-called TRAP–DRESS–NURSE merger for L1 speakers of a Bantu language. This hypothesised merger has been included into Table 6, which shows that the present results only partly agree with Kautzsch's and Schröder's description: While native speakers of an Indo-European language do not realise this particular merger at all, not all native speakers of a Bantu language consistently merge NURSE with TRAP and DRESS. Only speaker Ovambo 1 consistently merges all three lexical sets (while also splitting NURSE and WORK, cf. Figure 9 below for a clear representation of this in the speaker's reading of the text). While speaker Ovambo 2 fronts the pronunciation of the lexical set NURSE (as seen in Figure 8) to a position close to [ɛ], this does not overlap acoustically with the merged TRAP and DRESS sets, which seem to take a position closer to [e] rather than [ɛ] (cf. Figure 10). However, speaker Herero 1 does not merge NURSE with TRAP/DRESS in any of their recordings, and Herero 2 does it only during the reading of the word list, which is based on the analysis of one to two tokens per lexical set and thus must be regarded with caution. The present data also includes inconsistent realisations of the merger by a native speaker of a Khoesan language, which has also been observed in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016). While the TRAP-DRESS-NURSE merger seems to require a TRAP–DRESS merger, which in turn seems to be associated with speaking a L1 from the Bantu or Khoesan language families, the generalisation from Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) cannot be fully confirmed by the present data.

The NURSE–WORK split is realised by the majority of the native speakers of a Bantu language, except for speaker Herero 1, and by the majority of the native speakers of an Indo-European language, i.e. Afrikaans or German. Native speakers of a Khoesan language did not realise the split in the present data. Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 284) hypothesise an ethno-linguistic conditioning of the NURSE–WORK split (by the L1 Bantu and L1 Khoesan groups), which is not confirmed by the data at hand. The present analysis rather suggests that ethno-linguistic conditioning might not be the defining criterion for the realisation of the split and that other explanations should be considered. One motivation could be the influence of the specific phonological context of the subset WORK and/or the influence of English

9

DRESS - TRAP & NURSE - WORK
Ovambo 1 Reading Passage

10

DRESS - TRAP & NURSE - WORK
Ovambo 2 Interview
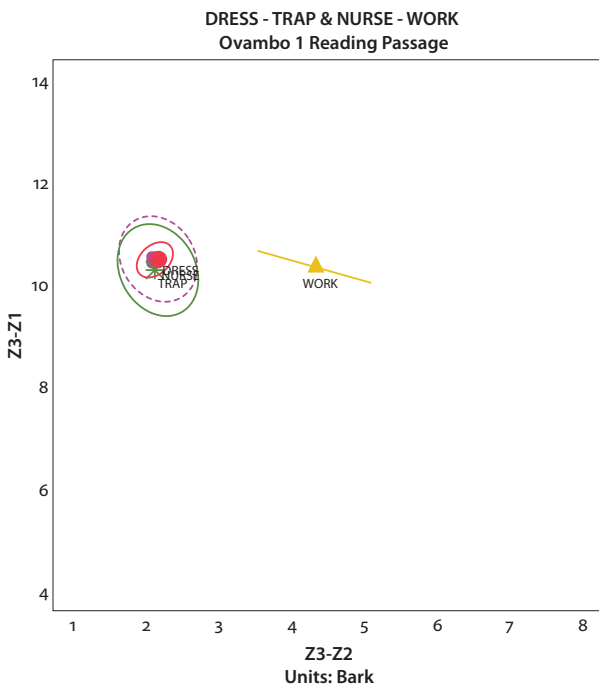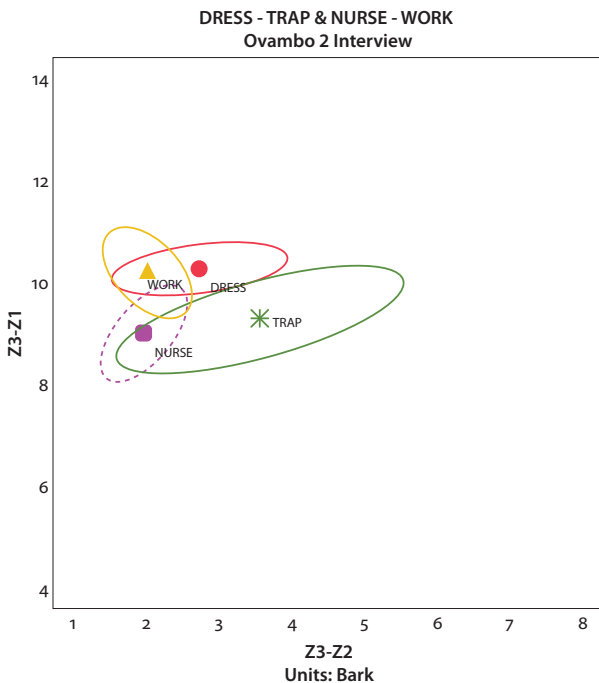
Figures 9 and 10. Bark-normalised vowel plots of all four lexical set tokens' respective mean values with ellipses signifying one standard deviation

spelling, which needs to be investigated with further, more specialised data. In any case, the retraction of WORK realisations towards a vowel quality approximating the mid-back [ɔ] is present in the analysed recordings and still constitutes a seemingly unique Namibian feature in the region of Southern Africa.

To enable clearer observations and discussions of phonological features of the variety, the whole vowel space should be taken into consideration. Due to the lack of anchor vowels in the present data, we can only gain the selective impressions we have presented. Also, for the lexical sets KIT, NURSE/WORK, and TRAP, the phonological context should be taken into closer consideration to receive clearer results on the behaviour of the observed splits as well as the potential presence of a TRAP split, which has been reported in the context of BlSAfrE (Mesthrie 2012: 2102).

4. Conclusion and outlook

In conclusion, the present study reinforces the impression that, based on phonetic evidence, English in Namibia cannot be simply regarded as a sub-variety of SAfrE(s) in the global context and that it exhibits potentially unique local features such as the NURSE–WORK vowel split, despite having some shared features with South African varieties of English like a TRAP–DRESS merger. Also, NamE must not be regarded as a monolithic variety, but as a set of varieties that show signs of differentiation, at least in terms of pronunciation. Whether this differentiation can be based mainly on ethnolinguistic criteria, or on further categories (based both on the language system and identities), must be investigated in more focused and less exploratory studies of English in Namibia[11] in the future and, of course, of further varieties in Southern Africa.

When considering recent studies of the phonetics of NamE, one can gain the impression of the use of (at least) two distinct varieties (as illustrated by Figures 11 and 12).[12] The first one, as illustrated in Figure 11, seems to be mostly used by speakers with an Indo-European L1 and partly resembles the pronunciation of Southern Hemisphere Englishes (cf. e.g. Gramley 2012: 288–291; Mesthrie 2012: 2097–2098). It is characterised by a potential split of the KIT vowel between vowel qualities approximating [ɪ] and schwa, which has been described in Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014), Kautzsch and Schröder (2016), as well as Schröder et al. (2020) – which is also a feature that has been extensively reported on for varieties of SAfrEs (cf. e.g. Bekker 2014; Bekker & van Rooy 2015). Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) have also

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11. For an analysis of ethnic variation in NamE focussing on the group of the Rehoboth Basters, please see Schröder et al. (2020) and Schröder and Zähres (2020).

12. The validity of these assumed varieties is currently being investigated in ongoing research (cf. e.g. Zähres (2018) and Zähres (this volume)).

observed the raising of the DRESS vowel, which has also been found in the acoustic analyses described in Schröder et al. (2020). Since the NURSE–WORK split seems to be a pan-Namibian feature, the retraction of the WORK subset could also be assumed for this variety. Further impressions from data analysed so far suggest the fronting of the GOOSE vowel as well as the raising of TRAP and a stable close-front realisation of FLEECE. However, these impressions still need to be confirmed through further analyses. Combining these findings, the presence of an upward chain shift of the front vowels for speakers of this variety of English in Namibia is suggested, which is also reported for Southern Hemisphere Englishes, including WSAfrE (Mesthrie 2012: 2097–2098).
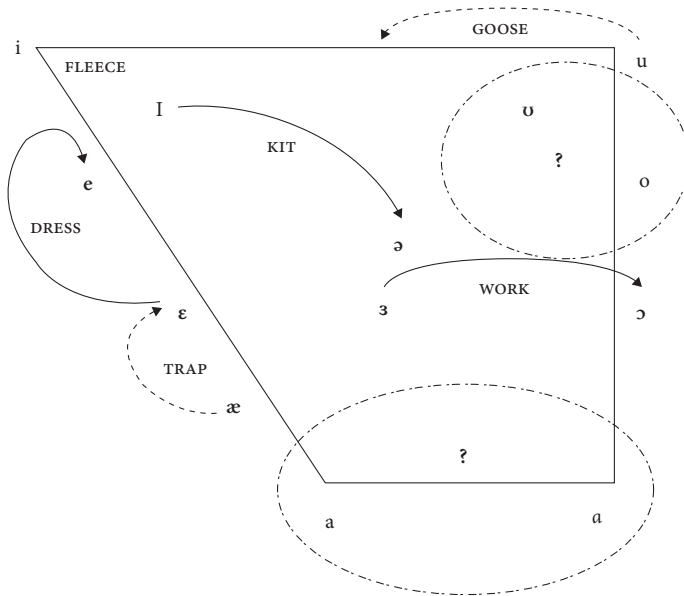
Figure 11. Overview of phonological impressions and evidence for the first of two hypothesised Namibian Englishes, showing similarities to Southern Hemisphere Englishes

The second variety, illustrated in Figure 12, would be spoken by Namibians with a Bantu L1 and seems to resemble phonological descriptions of West and East African varieties of English (cf. e.g. Gramley 2012: 317–320). The pronunciation includes the merger of TRAP, DRESS, and NURSE, as suggested by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) and Kautzsch and Schröder (2016).[13] With a NURSE–WORK vowel split present, the WORK subset would assume a position approximating [ɔ]. As

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13. There seems to be considerable overlap of these vowels in Botswanan English as well (Brato, in prep.).

mentioned above, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) have described their impression of realisations of the CLOTH vowel approximating [a]. Our own impressions of the data so far also suggest the same vowel qualities for FLEECE and KIT as well as GOOSE and FOOT, respectively, eliminating the contrast between lax and tense vowels, most likely related to the five or seven vowel systems of the Bantu / Khoesan L1s – as also reported for BlSAfrE (cf. van Rooy & van Huyssteen 2000: 21–23, 30; Bekker & van Rooy 2015: 294).
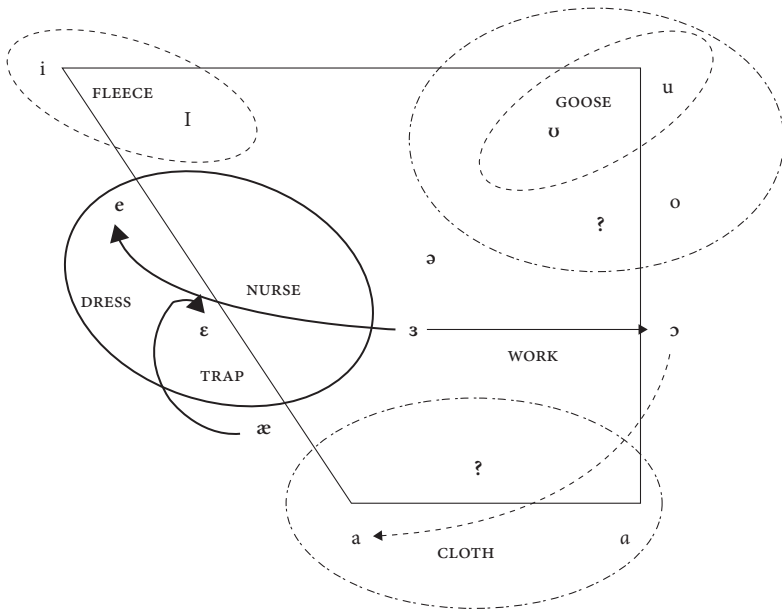
Figure 12. Overview of phonological impressions and evidence for the second of two hypothesised Namibian Englishes, showing similarities to West and East African Englishes

Again, these statements would need to be validated by further analyses. Further, none of the previous studies have systematically investigated low vowels, back vowels (as illustrated by the question marks in Figures 11 and 12), or diphthongs. To gain a complete picture of NamE phonology, whole vowel spaces, including both monophthongs and diphthongs, of more speakers must be assessed in the future, especially in combination with a fine-grained look at phonological contexts of specific lexical sets and also statistical methodology to receive a more decisive result on the observed allophonic splits and mergers. However, our analyses of additional data complement previous descriptions of NamE phonology and the generalisations provided and illustrated in Figures 11 and 12 certainly point to avenues for further research.

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Broadcasting your variety

Namibian English(es) on YouTube

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This chapter investigates the viability of YouTube data for the World Englishes research context by introducing a Namibian YouTuber community and presenting challenges and opportunities of this mostly uncharted medium. An acoustic phonetic case study of Namibian English is conducted with a small sample corpus of YouTube data from 2018, in which vowels relevant to the Southern African context (e.g. NURSE, KIT, DRESS, TRAP) of two groups of content creators are analyzed. While researchers face methodological challenges on YouTube during data collection and analysis, the results of the acoustic analyses presented show that the formal and informal speech styles found on YouTube constitute an accessible and rich type of data that can reaffirm and complement findings based on traditional approaches.

Keywords: YouTube, digital ethnography, phonetics, phonology, vowels

1. Introduction

When considering World Englishes (WE) frameworks and models, the modern dynamics of a globalized and technologically interconnected world as well as their effects on the respective societies and their contribution to WE must be studied as well (for example, in the EIF Model in Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017). Naturally, this raises methodological questions as new, less geographically-oriented territory is entered. When focusing on omnipresent digital media technologies and their affordances, seemingly new ground is broken despite these being recognized as potentially impactful factors in the development of varieties of English. As Mair (2020: 364) points out, if an item from the large body of WE research addresses a digital perspective, the focus usually lies on textual data, hence disregarding the large amount of audiovisual and multimodal language data that occupies a significant and ever-growing share of the global mobile Internet traffic. This type of

material, however, contains valuable and complementing data points – not just for the development of varieties of English around the world.

This chapter addresses this research gap by arguing for the feasibility of non-textual digital data in the WE context by presenting a digital ethnographic case study of the Namibian YouTube community and using a small sample corpus of YouTube data for acoustic analysis of segmental features of English in Namibia.[1] For this, current digital perspectives in WE research are summarized before a methodological discussion of the affordances and challenges of the chosen medium YouTube in variational linguistics research is presented, which is followed by an introduction of the Namibian YouTube community. Then, the acoustic analysis of segmental features based on the sample corpus of Namibian YouTubers is presented and discussed. The chapter closes with a final discussion and a methodological outlook.

2.   YouTube and World Englishes

Similar to English in Namibia (cf. introductory chapter of this volume), the digital perspective has been somewhat overlooked in WE research until recently. Thus, this section will first introduce and discuss current general approaches to digital media in WE research and then focus on the current role of the medium YouTube in that context.

2.1   Digital perspectives in World Englishes research

Regarding language data from media sources, traditional mass media are frequently consulted for diachronic and synchronic analysis. Examples for this include studies of broadcast media such as different types of radio formats (cf. e.g. Sand 1999; Hickey 2017; Westphal 2017) as well as forms of written and print media (cf. e.g. Hickey 2010; Schröder, this volume). The latter type of data is explicitly mentioned in the context of literary creativity in phase 4 of Schneider's Dynamic Model, endonormative stabilization, (Schneider 2007: 50) and further complemented by types of outdoor media in public spaces such as billboards and signage, employing the framework of linguistic landscaping (cf. e.g. Bolton 2012 as well as further papers from the same issue of *World Englishes*; Schulte, this volume). Non-textual modalities, e.g. audiovisual data from TV programs, are generally difficult to find in the scholarly literature, however. The same applies to various types of digital

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1.   For a discussion of the terms 'Namibian English' and 'English in Namibia', see the introductory chapter of this volume.

media that seem to be ubiquitous in the everyday lives of people all around the world but are nearly absent in WE discourse. Approaches to digital media and computer-mediated communication (CMC) have not yet found their footing next to manifold rather traditional angles and methods to approaching WE. But, as Mair (2020: 372) argues, "the World Wide Web and CMC have become domains that need to be included in any comprehensive study of the forms and functions of World Englishes today."

Of course, this is not an entirely novel insight as there are indeed attempts to incorporate a digital perspective into variational linguistic research. This includes studies of creole language usage in diasporic online communities (cf. Heyd & Mair 2014; Moll 2015) investigating digital ethnolinguistic repertoires and notions of (deterritorialized) identity, authenticity, and commodification. Further, corpora of digitally available language data are being compiled, be it from blogs (cf. Sand 2014) or online formats of newspapers (cf. Kautzsch 2019), to complement available corpora, such as the *International Corpus of English* (ICE),[2] with further text types or enrich corpora like the *News on the Web* (NOW) Corpus (cf. Davies 2013) with further peripheral varieties of English. Recently published edited volumes like Friedrich and Diniz de Figueiredo (2016) and Squires (2016) address a wide range of sociolinguistic questions across different digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, but also the Internet in general. While these are, without any doubt, valuable contributions to the field, it becomes fairly evident that the focus of the available literature almost exclusively lies on textual data. Audiovisual and multimodal platforms, such as YouTube, are barely used or mentioned – even when widening the scope from WE to a more general linguistic perspective. The rare studies that actually use data from YouTube (cf. e.g. Cutler 2016) also exclusively refer to its text-based contents, i.e. written comments by users of the platform, which are somewhat unrelated to the audiovisual affordances. This pattern virtually applies to the majority of CMC-related studies, whether they investigate discourse analytical notions, multilingual repertoires, or sociolinguistic aspects (cf. also Mair 2020). Textual data is unquestionably a major component of the Internet and has spawned new text types and styles. But during the last decade, audiovisual and multimodal data has taken a significant share of the total Internet traffic and is continuously rising (cf. Schneider 2016: 256–257; Mair 2020: 362–364). However, "[u]nfortunately, this wealth of audiovisual data tends to elude linguists who search the Internet for written forms" (Mair 2020: 364).

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2.   Cf. https://www.ice-corpora.uzh.ch/en.html.

2.2   YouTube and World Englishes

Schneider (2016) is one of the few exceptions to the above-described situation and provides a first assessment of the usefulness of audiovisual data on YouTube in the context of WE research. His chapter describes the medium YouTube and its (technical) affordances and limitations – both generally but especially regarding the WE context – and proposes a basic typology for linguistically-relevant YouTube videos produced by professional and amateur content creators. Schneider distinguishes two major types of "linguistically interesting YouTube clips" (2016: 262): (a) *metalinguistic clips* and (b) *natural clips*. The former video type, as the name suggests, is characterized by the creator's awareness of a certain linguistic variant or variety which is being explicitly addressed and presented in the respective video (Schneider 2016: 262). When a *metalinguistic* video contains imitation or mockery of a linguistic variant or variety, often for comedic effect, Schneider classifies this as an intermediary type called *metalinguistic-mocking* (2016: 262). The second type of YouTube video, the *natural* video, typically features speakers who naturally and unconsciously use their own language variety whilst addressing any type of topic in their clip, usually unrelated to language (Schneider 2016: 263). The intermediate type of this category is named *natural-functional* and refers to YouTubers employing a particular language variety to address a specific audience and, thus, showing a substantially higher linguistic awareness than the uploaders of regular videos within the *natural video* category. Apart from this basic typology and exemplifying presentation of linguistically interesting YouTube videos, Schneider concludes that with its large variety of raw and polished types of audiovisual data YouTube can be a valuable resource for linguists from diverse fields. Despite some of the medium's limitations and challenges (cf. Section 3 below) one should "go ahead and have a look, go out and play with it" (Schneider 2016: 280), especially when interested in investigating the *metalinguistic* videos, e.g. with regard to language attitudes. He also predicts that YouTube data will be "useful for research on pragmatic, stylistic, discourse-related, or psycholinguistic issues" (Schneider 2016: 280).

To the best of my knowledge and as of early 2021, Schneider's basic typology of YouTube videos and assessment of usefulness in linguistic research is the first and only meta-approach to an online audiovisual medium in the WE context. Thus, it serves as a useful and somewhat comprehensive introduction to the medium and offers a tentative overview of what WE researchers can expect from the platform. The proposed typology of YouTube videos is fairly broad and "basic", as Schneider himself concedes (2016: 262), and should therefore be expanded upon in the future. The category label *natural* seems particularly problematic in the context of YouTube as a medium, as the choice of wording does not seem entirely plausible:

> In a sense, thus, natural clips avoid the familiar "observer's paradox" in sociolinguistics, when speakers being observed (e.g., interviewed) by a linguist modify their speech and monitor their performance knowing that they are being recorded. Such clips are thus seen as offering simply natural, i.e., unreflected and unmonitored, usage in the sense defined here. Fundamentally this is independent of style levels, though in the YouTube context clips typically represent a style level which oscillates somewhere between relatively formal and colloquial; they are not necessarily fully vernacular […].   (Schneider 2016: 263)

Interestingly, following up on his typology, Schneider predominantly names and describes professionally-created formats from traditional mass media such as news programs, documentaries, TV interviews, and films and TV serials uploaded to YouTube as prime examples for his *natural* videos category (Schneider 2016: 266–270). However, these formats hardly represent a major aspect of the platform YouTube, i.e. its participatory culture (cf. e.g. Burgess & Green 2018) as represented by the company's former motto *Broadcast Yourself*. In addition, these videos usually undergo elaborate editing processes and can even, partly or completely, consist of scripted and, thus, non-spontaneous speech. Further, all of the discussed examples exclusively represent contexts in which all speakers are aware of being recorded. The label *natural* video thus seems somewhat counter-intuitive. Moreover, while previously describing YouTube as a space for "vernacular creativity" (Schneider 2016: 259) and stating that "[q]uite a number of the clips that I find interesting for this purpose are material produced and uploaded by layperson individuals" (Schneider 2016: 259), Schneider does not embed exactly this into his second category of videos. However, the amateur content creators that broadcast vast amounts of gaming videos, make-up tutorials, unboxing videos, challenges, shopping hauls, product reviews, or somewhat random video blogs (vlogs)[3] seem to fit a *natural* video categorization of YouTube videos much better than the professional content proliferated by traditional mass media. Of course, said videos potentially also undergo scripting and editing processes before being produced and broadcast to the public, but to a regular amateur YouTuber fewer resources are available (for example, but not limited to, finances, training, and equipment). Furthermore, individual YouTubers are often the only person being involved in the production and editing process – as compared to professional mass media content creators who employ specific personnel for separate steps of production processes. However, Schneider mentions amateur formats briefly in a later discussion on style by generalizing that:

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3.   Just to name a number of popular YouTube video types that can be identified through a simple Google query; cf. e.g. this list: <https://mag.octoly.com/here-are-the-top-10-most-popular-types-of-videos-on-youtube-4ea1e1a192ac>

> Natural videos representing rather vernacular styles are usually fictitious media products (movies, TV shows / serials, and so on). Amateur videos focusing on some topic (those for teaching music, reviewing gadgets, personal channels or blogs, among many others) tend to be intermediate in terms of style: *basically, they aim for a near-acrolectal style but add a personal performance and accent component, to come across as authentic.*   (Schneider 2016: 277, my emphasis)

There is little doubt that, for example, amateur vlog style videos do have a performative component (cf. also Androutsopoulos 2013; Frobenius 2011, 2014). A study on style-shifting in YouTube vlogs (Lee 2017), however, might suggest that Schneider's impression is not differentiated enough as different video formats (viz. solo vlogs vs. collaborative vlogs vs. gaming videos vs. live videos) involve varying degrees of spontaneity and, thus, varying degrees of attention being paid to speech, which eventually leads to fewer realizations of local variants in scripted contexts as compared to rather spontaneous formats. Additionally, it does not seem entirely plausible that professionally-produced traditional mass media video formats, like TV serials uploaded to YouTube, would have less of a performative character than amateur vlog style videos – or that one category would be significantly more or less impacted by the observer's paradox. Hence, the category of *natural* videos would need to be revised in further work, especially regarding finer differentiation of video types and with less fuzzy category labels. Nonetheless, Schneider's (2016) framework, so far, provides the only overview of the medium YouTube as a potent resource for WE researchers and hints at scenarios in variational linguistics in which the analysis of YouTube content could complement more traditional perspectives. One such scenario will be described in the following sections.

3.   Navigating YouTube for linguistic research

The following section describes the data gathering process on YouTube with both an explanation of challenges, but also perks of this, so far, relatively uncharted process. Conducting a systematic, comprehensive, and replicable data collection process on YouTube is challenging, even when possessing a certain familiarity with the medium. Schneider (2016: 256–260) already condensed the technical affordances of the platform in a comprehensible manner – and there has not been substantial change to it since his account, except the addition of live streaming functionality that allows for synchronic, spontaneous, direct interaction with viewers of a video, which potentially constitutes a more informal and less monitored style.

During or after uploading a video, creators have the possibility to add subtitles or transcripts to their videos – which only a minority of users consistently does.

However, YouTube itself creates automatic captions[4] for new videos: Orthographic transcripts are automatically generated through speech recognition technology. The results for English are reasonably accurate,[5] somewhat depending on the quality of the video and factors like speech rate of the speaker or audio editing by the creator of the video. A collection of orthographic transcripts can thus be compiled relatively quickly.

What a user can also add to a video are various types of metadata including location and language. Interestingly, YouTube's regular search function does not offer an option to efficiently filter a video search according to this kind of metadata. However, YouTube's application programming interface (API) allows for searching for metadata – which requires interested users to program software that requests the desired data from the API.[6] As this type of metadata is optional, though, a substantial percentage of relevant videos would not be captured by this fairly laborious method in the first place. In addition, YouTubers might choose to deliberately include a false location in their channel and/or video metadata. This becomes evident when, for example, searching the social media statistics website *Socialblade.com* for the top 50 YouTube channels in Namibia (based on subscriber count), as some of the highest ranked channels in that list have no relation to Namibia at all as of February 2019 – which cannot always be deduced at first glance. Hence, choosing reliable search terms constitutes a key element to finding suitable data – which can be a trial-and-error process at times. After that, following Schneider's (2016: 276) idea of accumulating data that is being automatically suggested by YouTube seems to be a worthwhile approach.

This latter function is a black box, however, as it is based on an algorithm that seems to consider a large variety of factors such as the viewers' watching history, their location, trending videos, etc. This makes the data collection process potentially non-replicable as search results and/or further video and channel suggestions might appear differently to individual researchers. Of course, some researchers are

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4. Automatic captions for YouTube videos are "generated by machine learning algorithms" and are available in ten different languages. They are automatically generated for every video if the algorithm detects one of the available languages. Cf. <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6373554?hl=en>

5. See Kim et al. (2019) for a comparison of online automatic speech recognition technologies, which suggests that YouTube performs favorably to its competitors.

6. During the initial research stage of this project, the "Geo Search Tool" (cf. <https://youtube.github.io/geo-search-tool/search.html>) offered exactly this functionality. Unfortunately, as of late 2018, the search based on location data does not work anymore as Google / YouTube has made changes to their API.

trying to decode YouTube's opaque algorithm and, in the process, have created a tool that can optimize the mentioned approach of searching and accumulating data. Thus, the *YouTube Data Tools* (YTDT) (cf. Rieder 2015) could be used to gain insights into YouTube's algorithm[7] (cf. Rieder et al. 2018), because the tool can scrape large amounts of metadata (including data such as video name, channel name, video description, upload date, number of views, etc.) in a short time, based on, for example, search terms, playlists, or channel names. The tool also visualizes networks of videos that are automatically suggested by YouTube's algorithm, if desired. All of these functions can assist a corpus compilation process as a high amount of search queries and video suggestions can be quickly assessed by checking, for example, whether the scraped metadata contains enough of the expected results or whether a search query returns the desired type of data. Thus, instead of clicking oneself through YouTube, as Schneider (2016: 276) suggests, one could employ this set of data tools to save some time in the search process.

4.   Namibia on YouTube

4.1   YouTube in Namibia and Namibian YouTubers

> If you're a Namibian YouTuber […] and if you are a creator [and] you think we are not as fortunate as all the other creators in other places like Europe or America or Australia, where we don't think, like, we don't get as much advantage or take much, uhm, out of the YouTube society, make sure to watch this video.
>
> (*Dewald Black* 2018)[8]

The quote above is taken from the opening monologue of a YouTube video called "Dear Namibian Youtubers…" that was uploaded in January 2018 by an adolescent Namibian going by the username of *Dewald Black*. In the video, he expresses his idea of organizing an event to gather all Namibians who create content on social media similar to *VidCon*.[9] Not even half a year after the publication of the video, the first *NamCon* was held in Windhoek and assembled approximately two dozen Namibian amateur YouTubers and further Namibians generally interested in social media who shared their individual experiences as digital content creators in one

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7.   Of course, YouTube / Google could always alter their algorithm(s) and API, which might make applications such as YTDT and some of the gained insights obsolete.

8.   Cf. <https://youtu.be/OWLkrSgr0lY>.

9.   *VidCon* is an annual US American conference for creators and viewers of online videos that attracts thousands of attendees from all over the world. Cf. <https://vidcon.com/>

of the least densely populated countries in the world. While *NamCon* certainly signifies a key moment in the establishment of a Namibian YouTuber community, Namibians have used YouTube as their creative outlet much earlier – as evident by a number of articles called "Youtube'ing It!" (Titus 2015), "The Vlogger Nation" (Nekomba 2017), and "Vlogging It" (Nekomba 2018), which were published in *The Namibian*, Namibia's largest daily newspaper (cf. Kautzsch 2019: 235–237). The articles showcase a selection of Namibian YouTube channels featuring content ranging from beauty tutorials over comedic skits to fitness vlogs. In the earliest of the three articles, a Namibian YouTuber iterates similar ideas as *Dewald Black* does in 2018: "[A]s Africans, we should support each other's work, instead of just subscribing to international channels because there are some great YouTubers out there" (cf. Titus 2015). However, even with a growing national supporting network, the figures of North American and European YouTubers[10] seem far out of reach – especially since the numbers are not in the Namibians' favor: At approximately 2.6 million people, Namibia has a small population compared to the country's size. While the general Internet penetration rate in the Southern African region lies at 51%, only about 31% of Namibians are connected to the Internet.[11] Further, as Namibian YouTuber Monick Brendell (now inactive) stated in 2017, "[t]he community does not really know about vlogging just yet, which deters them from actually learning about it. Once they get to know about it, it will become common" (cf. Nekomba 2017). Nonetheless, when querying YouTube, one can access a quite large number of YouTubers and diversity of uploaded videos from Namibia – even though it is difficult to obtain exact total numbers regarding both individual creators and videos uploaded.

Following Schneider's (2016) typology, examples for both types of videos, *metalinguistic* and *natural* clips – from both professional and amateur creators – can be found, even though the *metalinguistic* videos seem to only make up a small share of the available data, which matches Schneider's impression of availability of Southern African *metalinguistic* clips (2016: 277). Still, entering queries such as *Namibian accent (tag), Namibian dialect*, or *Namlish* into YouTube's search bar reveals a relatively small collection of videos that showcase samples of Namibians'

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10. As of May 2020, Swedish amateur-turned-professional YouTuber *PewDiePie* owns the (non music-related) channel that counts the most subscribers at about 105 million (cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_subscribed_YouTube_channels>). The Namibian YouTube channel with the most subscriptions is called *Namibian gospel music* with a little over 27,000 subscribers (cf. <https://socialblade.com/youtube/top/country/na/mostsubscribed>).

11. As estimated by a report called "DIGITAL IN 2018 IN SOUTHERN AFRICA" by the agency WeAreSocial (cf. <https://digitalreport.wearesocial.com/> or <https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/digital-in-2018-in-southern-africa-86865907>).

attitudes and awareness regarding the English spoken in Namibia, both prompted and unprompted. Some of these clips fulfill the criteria for Schneider's (2016) *metalinguistic-mocking* category as *Namlish* is presented as a basilectal mix of English with Afrikaans and/or indigenous Namibian languages for humorous purposes. When searching for *natural* videos from Namibia, the YouTube channel of the public *Namibian Broadcasting Corporation* (NBC)[12] can hardly be overlooked. Numerous videos from their news program on public television have been uploaded to YouTube on a daily basis since 2015. They offer a large variety of professionally created *natural* videos that are available in decent quality, i.e. a consistent video resolution of at least 480p with comparatively clean audio tracks. As of June 2020, the channel has about 50,000 subscribers, uploaded over 17,000 unique videos, and exhibits a consistent daily upload rate of 5 to 15 new videos with the majority of videos ranging between two and three minutes in length. The Namibian amateur YouTubers are represented by numerous channels with substantially fewer videos and a much more erratic uploading schedule. There is a high degree of heterogeneity observable, for example, in terms of video contents and length, but also regarding video production and quality – a quick glimpse of this can be gained by entering *Namibian Youtuber* into YouTube's search bar. The uploaders themselves are quite diverse as well, most notably in terms of ethnic and linguistic background. There are a number of relatively consistent factors, however: (a) the language used in the videos, (b) the location of the uploaders, and (c) the YouTubers' age range. English is consistently used as the major language of the uploaded videos with only a small number of videos featuring instances of code-switching to Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, or further Namibian languages. Videos that use languages other than English as the video's main language have not been found at all – even when experimenting with search terms in Afrikaans,[13] which is often described as Namibia's major lingua franca (cf. e.g. Stell 2016). The majority of the Namibian YouTubers record their videos in urban locations, usually the country's capital Windhoek, the coastal cities of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, or the somewhat smaller coastal town of Lüderitz, which can be asserted from landmarks seen in the respective videos or through explicit mentions in the clips and/or comments on the video. Most speakers are either high school or university students, or recent graduates thereof. Thus, it seems safe to state that the majority of Namibian amateur YouTubers have been born after Namibia's independence and the then official implementation of the de jure monolingual language policy (cf. Frydman 2011). Hence, they are part of the

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12. Cf. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvQbrQHNdcofvya0aG7jEjA/>

13. Due to the lack of proficiency in Namibian languages such as Oshiwambo or Nama/Damara, search terms of these languages have not yet been experimented with.

born-free generation, which has been raised under the novel language policy that has probably most directly been noticeable in the educational sector with English as the medium of instruction in many schools. Especially this latter point poses a strong contrast to the professionally created *natural* videos from Namibia available on YouTube as, for example, mostly Namibian government officials and people from the private sector from an older generation are featured during the reports and interviews by the NBC.

These are the chief reasons why I believe that *natural*, amateur-produced videos on YouTube provide a valuable resource for studying the under-researched varieties of English spoken in Namibia with a type of data that is not yet commonly used in WE research – both in terms of modality and style. A perspective on (computer-) mediated linguistic data is underrepresented in the current research on Namibia (cf. Zähres 2016, 2018), which is why this type of data will lead to a more comprehensive descriptive account of the variety and its overall status. Thus, in the following, I will provide a first sampling of available data. Additionally, I will exemplarily use a small corpus of such data as a basis for an acoustic analysis of segmental features that have been described in previous research (cf. Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume).

4.2   A sample corpus of Namibian YouTuber data

For the collection of *natural* YouTube videos that are created by amateurs, the search term *Namibian YouTuber* has proven to return a fairly high number of videos via YTDT which do not require excluding a lot of videos from the results as the amount of false positive results (e.g. YouTubers of other nationalities vlogging about themselves travelling to Namibia) is very small. Furthermore, this search query almost guarantees the exclusive finding of self-recorded vlog video formats, in which English constitutes the main language. For triangulation of search results, the articles from *The Namibian* (Titus 2015; Nekomba 2017, 2018) mentioned above as well as the social media statistics service *SocialBlade.com* have been consulted. Scraping the metadata of all videos found with the search query *Namibian YouTuber* that have been uploaded in 2018 returns 294 results from 80 unique YouTubers – two videos from one uploader need to be excluded as they are South African instead of Namibian. Of the remaining 79 Namibian YouTubers, 41 YouTubers have uploaded only one single video during the whole year that can be found by the above search query while the remaining Namibians have uploaded up to 29 videos, resulting in over 51 hours of video material with an average duration of 10.5 minutes per video. As Table 1 below illustrates, almost two thirds of these videos are grouped into the category *People & Blogs* by their creators, which fits very well to the self-designated label of Namibian YouTuber in the videos' titles.

Table 1. Distribution of YouTube videos in the sample

Category	Count
Comedy	13
Entertainment	43
Film & Animation	2
Gaming	37
Howto & Style	11
People & Blogs	183
Travel & Events	3
Total	**292**

To receive a first impression of popular contents of the Namibian YouTubers' videos, the titles of the respective videos can be consulted. The word cloud in Figure 1 shows the results of this regarding the sample data from 2018, which very well reflects the popular video formats mentioned in Section 2 of this chapter. The word cloud contains the 100 most common words from the video titles of the 292 videos – with the exception of common function words. Except for the keywords that have been explicitly searched for, i.e. *Namibian* and *YouTuber*, terms that are often featured within the sample are *vlog, vlogmas, challenge*, and *tag* as well as the more uncommon words *storytime, unboxing, review, tutorial*, which describe the different, mostly eponymous, types of self-recorded video formats. *Cassiejessica* refers to the actual name of an active Namibian YouTube channel. Two fairly specific categories are highly represented in the sample: first, the category of beauty and make-up tutorials and/or reviews, as illustrated by the terms *natural, makeup, braids, GRWM* (short for 'get(ting) ready with me'), *hair, product, facial*, and (potentially) *everyday*. The other category that heavily featured in the sample is gaming videos, as illustrated by the keywords *streamer, Fortnite, farm, solo(s), duos, lobbies, battle*, and *season* as well as combinations of these words, which are almost exclusively uploaded by one very active Namibian YouTuber who describes himself as one of the top Namibian competitive players of the popular online game *Fortnite*.

As evident from this first glance, the Namibian amateur YouTuber community covers a large variety of topics and categories that seem to be universal for the YouTube platform, despite broadcasting from a somewhat peripheral situation, e.g. in terms of geography, but also regarding digital infrastructure. When taking a closer look at the videos, the contents, unsurprisingly, often deal with this type of peripheral identity. A central aspect of the gaming videos, for example, is often the sub-standard Internet connectivity, which makes international competition challenging as response times (i.e. pings) of the international game servers are significantly higher in Namibia as compared to North American and European contexts

Figure 1. Word cloud depicting the 100 most common words within video titles of a sample of 292 Namibian YouTube videos[14]

and, thus, competitors from Namibia need to develop strategies to overcome these technological obstacles.

As illustrated by this example, the majority of the Namibian YouTube videos emulate internationally established video formats but never lose their Namibian identity. Whether consciously or not, this also correlates with language use. The following section follows up on this by investigating phonetic realizations of segmental features by a selection of Namibian YouTubers.

5.   Case study: Acoustic analysis of Namibian YouTube data

To show that YouTube data constitutes a viable option for traditional variational linguistics methodologies, this section will introduce and discuss a phonetic case study based on data taken from the sample corpus of Namibian YouTube data described in the previous section. Additionally, the data set will be compared to data from a rather traditional mass media format of news report from NBC.

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14. This figure was created using <https://www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/>.

5.1 Data collection

A small sample of videos has been taken from the above-mentioned selection of videos for the phonetic analysis. In the following, an exemplary acoustic analysis of eight speakers will be presented, focusing on vowels that were investigated in earlier phonetic analyses of English spoken in Namibia (cf. e.g. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020).

The data of the eight selected speakers[15] has been collected from two different types of videos: (1) four different Namibian amateur YouTubers who upload vlog-style videos and (2) four different speakers from the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation YouTube channel who produce news reports that are broadcast on national television and uploaded to YouTube afterwards. The videos from both speaker groups can be sorted into the *natural* video category established by Schneider (2016). There are two major differences between the two groups, however. First, the videos produced by the NBC are not explicitly created for the YouTube platform itself, but for national television and, thus, represent a video type associated with traditional mass media. As such, the videos are formally homogenous. The YouTubers create their videos specifically for the YouTube platform, which is reflected in the multi-faceted vlog format that is often directly associated with YouTube. Second, the language that is used in the videos: The NBC reports are non-spontaneous, rather formal written reports read out aloud by the individual speakers, while the vlog videos contain relatively spontaneous and informal speech.

The Namibian YouTubers (in the following, NAM1 to NAM4) that have been selected for analysis within the scope of this paper are two men and two women around the age of 20 and over 18 – which has been established through the assessment of video content and/or further social media profiles of the YouTubers. They have been randomly chosen from the middle of the list of metadata of all 2018 Namibian YouTuber videos – the only filter was the requirement of having a video length of a minimum of five minutes to ensure the presence of an adequate amount of potential vowel tokens for phonetic analysis. Three out of the four speakers have an Ovambo background, speaking one or several varieties of the Oshiwambo dialect cluster as a native and/or home language, which they state explicitly either in the respective video or in further videos on their YouTube channel. The fourth speaker has not disclosed this type of personal information in any of his videos reviewed for the present analysis.

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15. For ethical reasons, I have decided not to include direct links to the speakers' uploaded videos.

Table 2. Overview of speakers from the category of YouTubers

Speaker	Sex	L1	Place	Video category
NAM1	f	Oshiwambo	Windhoek	Entertainment
NAM2	f	Oshiwambo	Windhoek	People & Blogs
NAM3	m	Afrikaans?*	Lüderitz	Entertainment
NAM4	m	Oshiwambo	Windhoek	Travel & Events

* While this is neither explicitly stated nor does the speaker use Afrikaans in a video, two observations suggest that the speaker's L1 is Afrikaans: (a) his accent (see also below), most notably an alveolar trill when realizing /r/, and (b) his appearance that suggests a Coloured ethnic background. Thus, this classification is only impressionistic.

The four speakers from the videos uploaded by NBC (NBC1 to NBC4 in the following) are more anonymous since the speakers themselves are not featured in the videos – only their voice is played over video footage linked to the respective report's contents and their name is shown at the end of each report. Thus, from the limited information available, only sex could be established with relative certainty – a glimpse at the speakers' social media profiles suggest that all four speakers are native speakers of an Oshiwambo dialect and are located in Windhoek, but this could not be verified. As in the previous sample, two NBC speakers are female while the other two are male. The videos were also randomly selected from the time of mid-2018. Interestingly, the NBC's videos are all categorized under the category *People & Blogs* rather than *News & Politics*.

Table 3. Overview of speakers from the category of NBC reporters

Speaker	Sex	Video category
NBC1	f	People & Blogs
NBC2	m	People & Blogs
NBC3	m	People & Blogs
NBC4	f	People & Blogs

5.2   Methodology

The acoustic analysis was conducted in a similar fashion as in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) and Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (this volume): Based on orthographic transcripts,[16] tokens for the monophthong types under investigation

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16. I want to thank Jonas Wagner for producing and editing these and further transcripts of Namibian YouTube videos based on the automatic captions or from scratch.

were identified within the respective videos and segmented on the word level in the phonetics software *Praat* (Boersma & Weenink 2019). Then, the steady state intervals of each vowel were manually identified and segmented as an interval on the sound level. Within all the segmented steady state intervals, the first three formants were automatically measured at several points and the means were calculated via a Praat script. Further, the data was normalized according to the vowel-extrinsic Lobanov method (cf. Flynn 2011) and plotted via the *vowels* package (Kendall & Thomas 2018) as well as the *ggplot2* package (Wickham 2016) in *RStudio* (RStudio Team 2019).

The following eleven types of monophthongs were investigated, adhering to the concept of lexical sets (cf. Wells 1982): DRESS, TRAP, NURSE, WORK,[17] and KIT, as these five lexical sets seem to be realized as exclusive variants in the Namibian and/or Southern African context (cf. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014; Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020). The sets FLEECE, GOOSE, FOOT, START, STRUT, and THOUGHT have also been considered, if available, to receive a clearer picture of the speakers' vowel spaces. Unfortunately, due to lack of sufficient tokens, further lexical sets could not be implemented. For each vowel type, a number of approximately five qualitatively good[18] tokens has been analyzed. With the normalized formant values, vowel plots for each speaker have been created by plotting the mean points. For individual vowel spaces, ellipses illustrating vowel tokens within one standard deviation have been included.

The analyses of the individual vowel spaces of the respective speakers of the Namibian YouTubers data set will be presented in the following before a summary of the phonetic analysis of the NBC reporter data set is shown and a subsequent discussion of the overall approach and the phonetic analyses is given below.

5.3   Results

5.3.1   *Speaker NAM1*
The video created by this speaker was the longest from the small sample with around 15 minutes runtime and, more importantly for the analysis, featured the least amount of sound effects and music added in the editing process. Overall, it seems as if only a minimal amount of scripting had occurred in preparation for the

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17. Cf. Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 284) for a definition of the WORK subset of the NURSE lexical set.

18. 'Qualitatively good' in this context does not refer to the vowel quality but to the recording quality, especially regarding the absence of background noise or music.

speaker to record the video as NAM1 speaks very freely and somewhat erratically jumps from talking about one of her life experiences to the next without any perceivable cuts or other editing work after the intro section of the video. Thus, this video can be considered a good example of a typical vlog.

For NAM1, a total of 56 tokens have been analyzed. The subset WORK could not be taken into account due to the complete absence of this vowel type in the data. As Figure 2 shows, a certain degree of intraspeaker variation is noticeable, especially regarding the sets FLEECE and KIT, NURSE and DRESS, as well as DRESS and TRAP. These three pairs are involved in a partial vowel merger. However, the majority of the realizations of tokens belonging to these three respective pairs are recognizable as distinct vowels – even though, at times, the tense-lax distinction between FLEECE and KIT seems to be non-existent. GOOSE set realizations vary between back and central qualities with the back realizations consistently overlapping with the lexical set FOOT, hence blurring the contrasts between both sets.
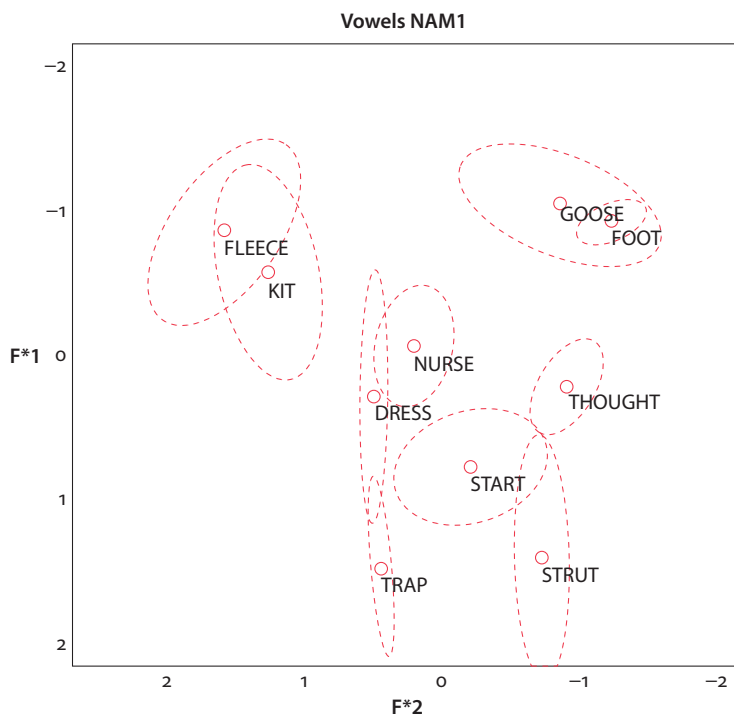
Figure 2. Vowel space of speaker NAM1

5.3.2   *Speaker NAM2*

NAM2 has uploaded a ten-minute-long video that constitutes a strong contrast to the previous speaker: It is heavily edited with cuts, sound effects, and almost constant background music. The content of the video appears to be mostly scripted and aims at creating a comedic effect as the speaker is constantly changing her voice to switch to different personas or enacting short skits between different segments of the video. Thus, this video almost seems like a parody of typical vlog style videos.

This was the most challenging video to analyze not only because of the overtly performative character of the video, but also due to the high amount of sound effects and background music, which rendered a number of potential vowel tokens useless for acoustic analysis. Still, 53 tokens have been acoustically analyzed and their distribution in the vowel space is illustrated in Figure 3. As indicated by the comparatively big ellipses, the substantial amount of background noise leads to a high degree of variation in the formant data. The most striking observations in NAM2's vowel space is the partial overlap of DRESS and TRAP as well as the overlap of GOOSE and FOOT, which are also perceivable via auditory analysis. However, the high amount of variation of FLEECE, the lowered and fronted KIT vowel, backed
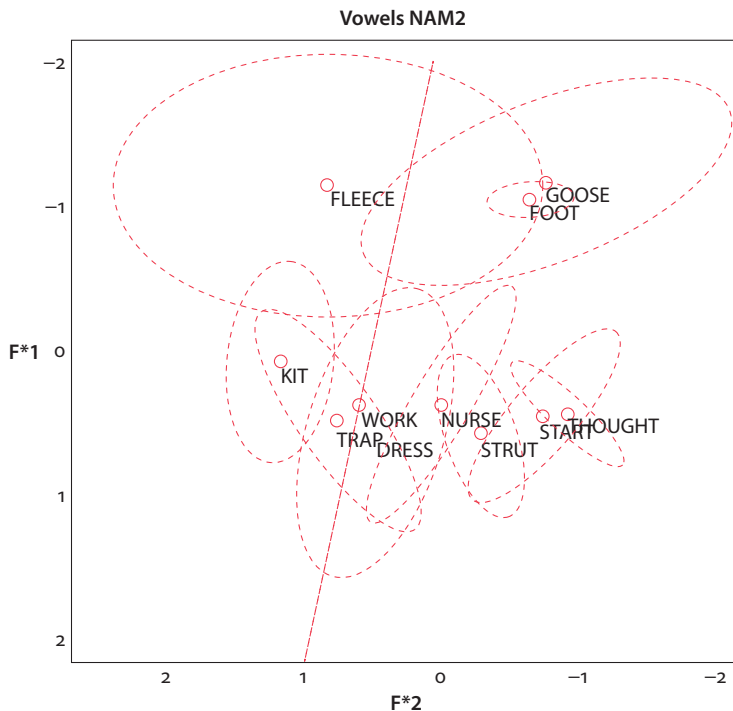
Figure 3. Vowel space of speaker NAM2

realizations of START, and the fronted WORK realizations are not perceivable audi-
torily and, thus, are most likely measurement inaccuracies or errors due to back-
ground noise.

5.3.3 *Speaker NAM3*

The analyzed video of NAM3 deals with the above-mentioned *NamCon* and sums
up his experience there. It also features a number of different speakers, which is why
only 40 overall tokens have been analyzed for the speaker despite the video length of
approximately six minutes. In addition, since some parts of the video were recorded
during the event, they were quite noisy, which also impacted the overall number
of tokens obtainable from the video. Similar to the first video of this sample, this
video seems mostly unscripted and includes a lot of spontaneous interaction with
other Namibian YouTubers, which would place this video in a much more informal
category than the previous one. As the different parts were shot at different points
in time, however, the video was thoroughly edited to construct a narrative.

NAM3's vowel space shows a number of interesting variants: Firstly, the NURSE–
WORK split, which has been found in previous phonetic analyses of English in
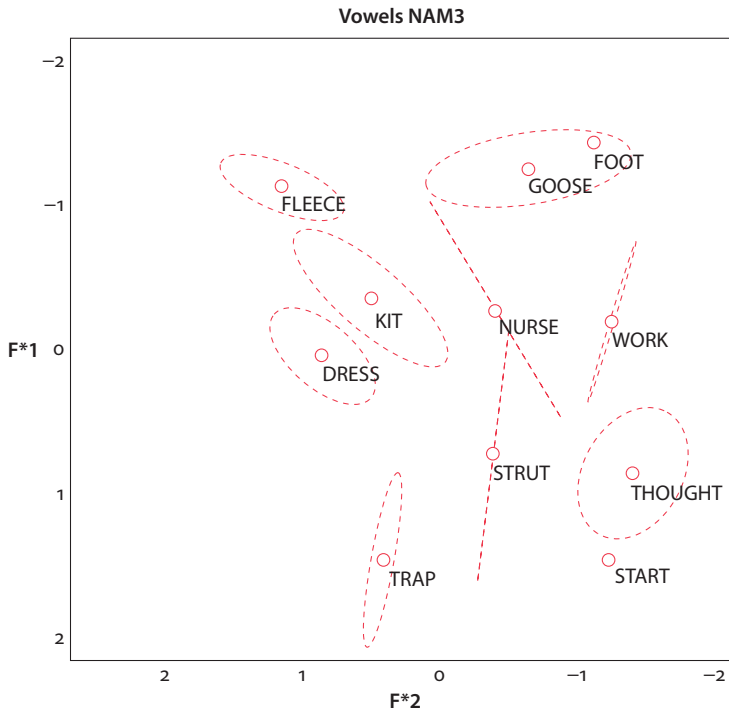
Figure 4. Vowel space of speaker NAM3

Namibia (cf. e.g. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 284–285), can also be found in this recording with realizations of NURSE being realized centrally whereas realizations of WORK can be found further back in the vowel space with F2 values close to THOUGHT. Secondly, the realizations of DRESS and TRAP are clearly distinct, i.e. there is no evidence for a DRESS–TRAP merger. Moreover, DRESS seems to have a somewhat raised position in the speaker's vowel space approximating realizations of KIT, which describes a variant that has also been found in other data sets (cf. Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020: 207, 210; as well as Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume). The same applies to realizations of the KIT vowel, which is split between realizations in the front and centralized realizations as the ellipsis illustrates. This has previously been described as a KIT split for Namibian English (cf. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 285–286) as well as in descriptions of South African English(es) (cf. Bowerman 2008: 170; van Rooy 2008: 183). Finally, some of NAM3's realizations of GOOSE exhibit a centralized quality.
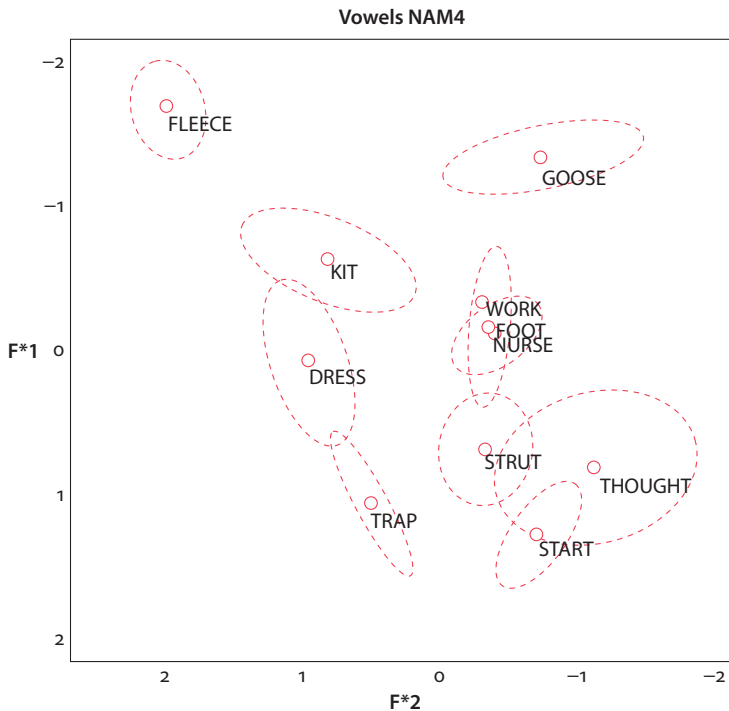
Figure 5. Vowel space of speaker NAM4

5.3.4   *Speaker NAM4*

NAM4 has uploaded a vlog that is similar to the NAM1's video: There are only few instances of video and audio editing and the content of the recording seems spontaneous except for the video's general topic, which revolves around recent events in the uploader's life. In the middle of recording the video, NAM4 even gets interrupted by a phone call, which he answers using an Oshiwambo dialect before returning to the video after about a minute. This sequence could easily have been cut from the video, hence minimal editing before uploading the video can be assumed. What is noticeable, however, is background music that accompanies the video for its entire duration of about eleven minutes.

After the analysis of 54 vowel tokens, NAM4's vowel space also shows a variant of the KIT split, in which some realizations of KIT are slightly centralized – even though they are still not approximating the central quality of NURSE. Moreover, some realizations of DRESS are close to realizations of KIT, which again suggests a raised quality of DRESS. However, other realizations of DRESS approximate realizations of TRAP. Further, NURSE and WORK both occupy the same space in the speaker's vowel space, and, hence, there is no evidence for a NURSE–WORK split. Figure 5 also illustrates that GOOSE is realized in a more centralized position while FOOT is pronounced with a central quality, partly merging with NURSE.

5.3.5   *Summary of results of NAM data*

When comparing the results of all speakers of this data set (cf. Figure 6 below), the following observations can be made:

1. Speaker NAM3 realizes a clear NURSE–WORK split with a central realization of the NURSE set and a retracted realization of the WORK subset, while the data for the other three speakers is either inconclusive or suggests that they do not exhibit this split in the NURSE vowel set.
2. Except for speaker NAM2's partial fronting of the set, the NURSE vowel is consistently realized with a central quality.
3. NAM2 is the only speaker who has great overlaps in her realizations of the DRESS and TRAP sets, suggesting the presence of a TRAP–DRESS merger. For the remaining three YouTubers, the DRESS and TRAP vowels exhibit fairly distinct qualities.
4. For two speakers (NAM3 and NAM4), variation between front and centralized qualities of KIT can be observed, suggesting the presence of a KIT split. Moreover, speaker NAM3 exhibits raised qualities of the DRESS set approximating qualities of KIT.
5. Every speaker of the NAM data set fronts some realizations of GOOSE. Speaker NAM2 also does not realize a tense/lax distinction between FOOT and GOOSE.
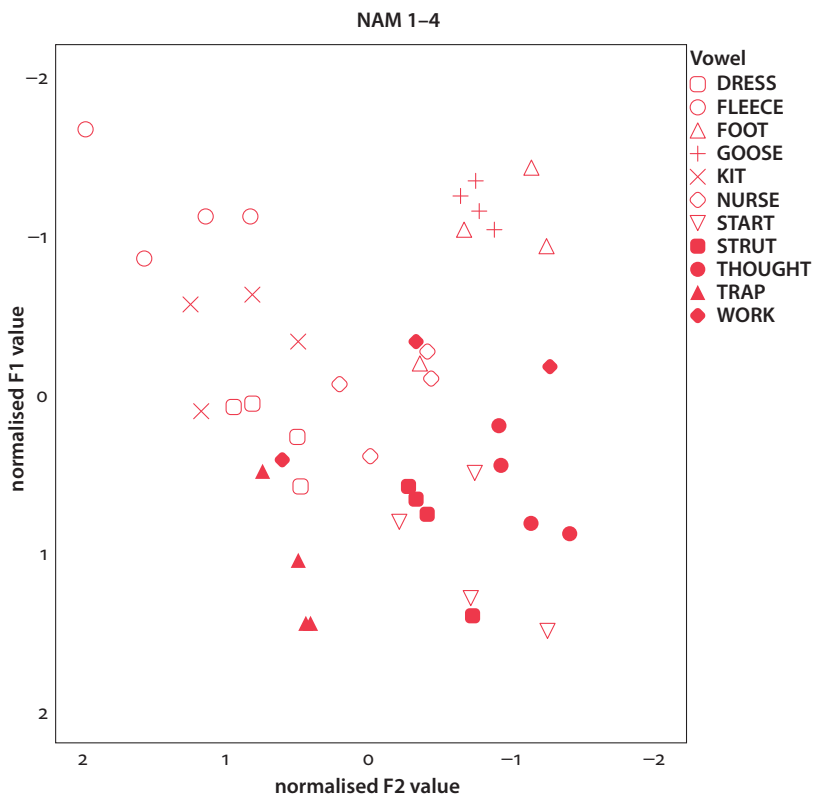
Figure 6.   Vowel space of speakers NAM1 to NAM4

5.3.6   *NBC reporters*

The NBC videos are rather homogenous in presentation and length, ranging between three and five minutes each. To receive enough tokens for acoustic analysis, two separate videos of each speaker were analyzed. Overall, 193 vowel tokens' formant values were measured, with a total number of tokens per speaker ranging between 47 and 51 based on availability. Due to the homogeneity of the videos, the results from the analyses of the NBC data is presented collectively in the following. Figure 7 shows the resulting vowel spaces of the four speakers. With regard to the lexical sets under scrutiny for the Namibian context, the following observations can be made for the NBC news report videos:

1.   Only speaker NBC1 realizes a clear NURSE–WORK split with realizations of WORK having a back quality while NURSE realizations have a central to somewhat fronted quality. Speakers NBC2 and NBC4 do not seem to distinguish between both lexical sets and realize both sets with central to fronted qualities.

Speaker NBC3 did not produce any WORK tokens, but also realizes the NURSE vowel oscillating between a fronted and a central position in the vowel space.

2. When looking at the position of DRESS in relation to NURSE (and WORK, if merged), speakers NBC2, NBC3, and NBC4 exhibit a varying degree of overlap between both vowel qualities suggesting a partial DRESS–NURSE merger.

3. Speakers NBC1, NBC2, but especially speaker NBC4, realize a number of tokens of the set TRAP with a quality approximating the higher DRESS position in the respective speaker's vowel space, hinting at a partial TRAP–DRESS–NURSE merger. The other cluster of realizations overlap with lower and more centralized qualities, overlapping to a high degree with the lexical sets of STRUT and START, which is how speaker NBC3 consistently realizes the lexical set of TRAP.

4. While KIT and DRESS do not overlap for any of the speakers of the NBC sample, realizations of KIT oscillate to varying degrees between overlaps with FLEECE and somewhat centralized qualities, suggesting the presence of a KIT split. However, the split is not as pronounced as with speaker NAM3 as the centralized realizations of KIT still have a relatively high quality and are not lowered to qualities approximating [ə].

5. Speaker NBC3 does not make a tense/lax distinction between FOOT and GOOSE. The other three speakers do not produce any FOOT tokens in their short videos. Moreover, only speaker NBC2 realizes centralized qualities of GOOSE.

6. START and STRUT vowels closely approximate each other for all speakers of the sample.

5.4 Discussion of acoustic analyses

When comparing both sets of data – especially Figure 6 and Figure 7 – the YouTubers exhibit a higher degree of intra- and interspeaker variation than the NBC news reporters. As Figure 7 illustrates, in the data of the latter group, the eleven lexical sets under scrutiny cluster around five different points in the vowel space: (a) high front, (b) mid front, (c) low central, (d) mid back, and (e) high back. This resembles a five vowel system typical for Bantu languages in southern Africa such as the Oshiwambo dialects (cf. e.g. Maho 1998: 60–62) and, thus, could be a sign of L1 transfer to the English spoken by the NBC reporters of this sample. This observation cannot be made for the data of the YouTubers (cf. Figure 6) despite the majority of the speakers identifying as L1 speakers of an Oshiwambo dialect. Of course, both data sets consist of fairly different types of videos, viz. the YouTuber data representing a rather informal and spontaneous register while the NBC news report data represents a fairly formal and highly monitored reading style that is often associated with acrolectal variation. Thus, these two data sets are not necessarily directly
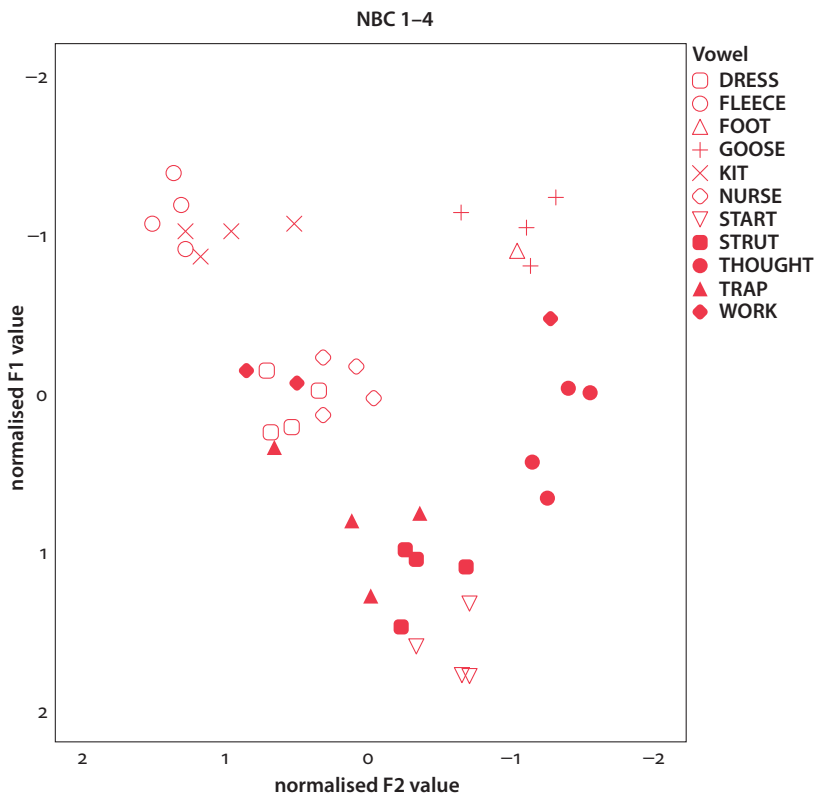
Figure 7. Vowel space of speakers NBC1 to NBC4

comparable, but they shed light on variation in English in Namibia: Through the approximation to the five vowel system, the English that is broadcast to national television and via the NBC's YouTube channel sounds fairly 'African' in comparison to the English used by the amateur YouTubers. Whether this is influenced by the degree of formality, the medium itself and potential audience design, or the age of the respective speakers are questions that the present study cannot appropriately address and these need to be investigated with further research.

Besides that, the results of the phonetic analyses of the small random samples have shown similar results as previous phonetic analyses of English spoken in Namibia (cf. Figures 11 and 12 in Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume) which were mainly based on recordings of formal reading-style data from sociolinguistic interviews within a similar age group. This includes the presence of a NURSE–WORK split as well as the KIT split, and DRESS raising in parts of the data – most prominently in the data of NAM3, whose assumed L1 is Afrikaans, which would fit results from the analyses of the English spoken by Rehoboth Basters who

are predominantly native speakers of Afrikaans (cf. Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch 2020). However, the TRAP–DRESS(–NURSE) merger relatively consistently described for native speakers of Bantu languages (cf. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 282–284) seems to be nearly absent in the present data.

An explanation for the divergence from previously described pronunciations in the YouTuber sample could be a form of dialect levelling that has been observed in the YouTube context elsewhere (cf. Lee 2017) and is hinted at explicitly in a YouTube user's comment on another Namibian YouTuber's video,[19] which states: "Why are u using a different accent [cry-laughing emoji]". Perhaps, for a potentially international audience, certain regional features might be disfavored by Namibian speakers – or, perhaps, these features are part of a more monitored and formal reading style, which does not seem to be backed up by the NBC reading style data from this study, however. This would need to be investigated with a much larger sample and more tokens of relevant vowel types as well as the inclusion of different types of speech data, i.e. formal reading parts of a sociolinguistic interview, readings of news reports, and speech from different types of YouTube videos, perhaps even of the same speaker. This could serve as triangulation for describing the phonology of English in Namibia and could also shed light on the role of the language within different levels of the Namibian society.

A major limitation of the present phonetic analysis is the heterogeneity of both data sets. Further, the small samples and token numbers are not unproblematic, especially when there is a high degree of background noise present in the recordings as in the case for NAM2. However, NAM2 presents a relatively rare worst-case scenario for acoustic analysis and most other videos of the sample corpus are much less problematic. This study also does not aim at providing a comprehensive description of a Namibian YouTuber variety of English but serves as proof of concept that this type of data can be used for variational linguistic research and complement investigations using other data sources. Disregarding this type of data, which is widely available and fairly diverse in contents and contexts, because it predominantly features a performed speech style or is generally difficult to handle, seems like a missed opportunity. This notion, with a more general view on mass media, is also shared by Westphal (2017: 17–18), who goes on to say that

> rather than rejecting media talk as inauthentic sociolinguists need to turn to the unique opportunities to study how and which existing linguistic resources (e.g. conversational styles or vernacular variants) are used in performances and how mediated stylistic variation connects to higher level variation.
>
> (Westphal 2017: 10)

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19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWLkrSgr0lY&lc=UgzdulFV8Zc5TkaVo894AaABAg>.

6.   Discussion and conclusion

6.1   Discussing YouTube and World Englishes

After having discussed the role of digital media in current WE research and having presented a tentative approach to collecting and analyzing YouTube video data with the example of English-speaking Namibian YouTubers, I can conclude that Androutsopoulos' statement from over 10 years ago still holds today, especially in the WE context: "Much language-focused CMC research to date is based primarily on log data and methodological reflection on its combination with other types of data is lagging behind" (2008: 16). As has been argued, a major share of the Internet's traffic is not only text-based anymore, but is represented by platforms like YouTube, which constitute a type of data that is both consumed and created by regular users. Since this activity has spread to peripheral countries like Namibia where, despite its multilingual and diverse setting (or precisely because of that), content creators consistently use English when recording their performances and interactions, YouTube should indeed be considered a "treasure trove" (Schneider 2016: 253) for WE research. This is mainly uncharted territory and best-practice models for approaching this kind of data do not seem to exist yet, which might be a result of the overall hesitance towards the use of audiovisual data from mass media contexts in variational linguistic research, possibly due to its performative character. The data available on YouTube, however, should not be regarded as a monolithic text type: A basic typology for differentiating between types of content on YouTube was developed by Schneider (2016). However, this study has shown that the typology for *natural* videos needs to be more nuanced as a substantial amount of variety can be found regarding this type of YouTube videos – both in terms of video formats or genres and linguistic variation. Moreover, performative styles similar to traditional mass media can certainly be found – both by professional and amateur content creators – but more spontaneous formats are available as well, especially now since users have the possibility to start interactive live broadcasts. While the performative element of YouTube videos cannot be disregarded completely, the data is voluntarily released to the public by the users, without a researcher being present during the recording – which makes this type of data a speech style that could complement more traditional types of data.

Of course, a number of challenges and pitfalls can and will be encountered in the process of dealing with this type of data, which is why the expertise of media linguists and digital ethnographers will be very beneficial in this context. This will be especially relevant for ethical questions regarding YouTube and further digital and social media platforms as data sources, which have not been comprehensively addressed thus far in the literature. For example, when dealing with publicly accessible

data on YouTube and further social networking services, can we as researchers just compile, analyze, and publish the data without informed consent? Can we still use data in our analyses that has disappeared from YouTube, either because it has been deleted by the user or by the platform itself? In the future, these and further questions should be addressed more thoroughly, consciously, and consistently, developing best-practice models based, for example, on guidelines by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)[20] (cf. also Pihlaja 2015).

Some challenges for linguistic analyses regarding YouTube videos' contents are related to core aspects of the Internet's participatory culture: for example, intertextuality and the embedding of multimedia content. Many videos feature embedded background music, snippets of other videos, and/or various sound effects – to name just a few possibilities of today's video editing. While this might promote the popularity of a video, this type of editing is problematic not just for phonetic analyses, as some YouTubers, for example, do not find a sensible balance between the volume of their background music and their speaking volume. This might render intervals or complete sequences of speech useless for phonetic analyses – especially considering forced alignment approaches. Other than that, most vlogs are relatively similar to non-lab field recordings regarding ambient noise. Moreover, and potentially frustrating for phonetic and phonological approaches, the language data that YouTube users produce is, of course, unpredictable, which can lead to a substantial over- or underrepresentation of phonological contexts and segmental features. Further, it can be generally quite challenging to gather sociolinguistically relevant information about the speakers from YouTube videos as not every YouTuber discloses much personal information about themselves. At times, the YouTuber's further social media accounts can give insights into this type of data, but this information must be taken with a grain of salt as it might not necessarily reflect the truth. In addition, YouTube videos and channels can be somewhat ephemeral as users or the platform can delete them for various reasons.

What is still missing from this current approach, however, is a contextualization of the video, most importantly of the text type and style of the content. As illustrated in Table 1 (cf. Section 4), uploaders can assign a category to their video. While the majority of the YouTubers of the sample above classified their self-recorded videos under the category *People & Blogs* which seems like a sensible choice, others self-categorized their videos of the same type in one of the other 15 categories that YouTube offers, e.g. *Entertainment*. Hence, the YouTube categories do not necessarily constitute a helpful indicator for the videos' contents. Consulting the transcripts can be a valuable approach to get a first impression of a video's contents, but they

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20. Cf. <https://aoir.org/ethics/>

will not provide the full picture as certain nuances such as satirical content or the parody of a certain video type might not become obvious to the reader when just focusing on text-based material. Thus, dealing with the actual video material will be vital as well as understanding the affordances and challenges of YouTube and its typical video types that are uploaded by non-professional content creators because these do not just mirror formats that are well-known from traditional mass media – as also suggested by the acoustic analysis above. This is crucial to the investigation of new mass media technologies, as the audience, and hence the speaker follow-ing notions of audience and speaker design, takes a much different position and empowered role (cf. Frobenius 2014), which would suggest that this type of data constitute different types of performative styles than, for instance, performances on television programs. Other than just having the two categories or *metalinguis-tic* and *natural* YouTube videos, it would be useful to include two further gradual continua for categorization of YouTube data: *professional* vs. *non-professional* as well as *spontaneous* vs. *scripted.* This could probably incorporate a majority of the prevalent video types on YouTube while also encoding information about style and potential implications for the Labovian (1966) attention-paid-to-speech model (cf. also Lee 2017), thus contributing to receiving a more comprehensive picture of language varieties in use and complementing the common text-based styles as well as experimental reading styles. While the latter have the advantage of being more regular than self-recordings, they are also "artificially constrained, extremely cir-cumscribed, and decidedly not 'everyday' in the scope of variation" (van Hofwegen 2016: n.p.), which is not necessarily the case for YouTube formats. However, fur-ther research would need to address in how far performed YouTube formats are stylistically different from each other and from other mass media formats as their significance for style shifting models.

The question of how relevant data can be consistently found on YouTube is quite difficult to answer in a satisfying way (as also pointed out by Schneider 2016: 275–277). YouTube itself does not provide a transparent search environment with consistently working filters for metadata such as location of the YouTuber or language – even though this data is available for a number of videos and can be accessed via the API by self-programmed or third-party software (cf. Section 3). As this type of metadata is optional anyway, strategies for optimization of search strings must be developed and tested for the purpose of accessing relevant data in the first place. External services, such as the social media statistics website *Socialblade.com* or the *YouTube Data Tools* (Rieder 2015) can be potentially valuable tools when first approaching the data gathering process.

After having overcome these obstacles, researchers gain access to a wealth of text-based and audiovisual data that is rich with opportunities. YouTube data can be used to complement traditional types of data, both regarding speakers and linguistic

variation, and can be subject to traditional feature analyses on all descriptive levels of linguistics. However, the medium's affordances have led to the creation of video formats and genres that are different from other mass media formats, which opens the door to new insights on stylistic variation and multimodal aspects of language, especially regarding networks of YouTubers.

6.2   Conclusions for the Namibian context

In the Namibian context, the above analysis of YouTube data has revealed vowel qualities that have been reported upon in previous research (e.g. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume): There is evidence for instances of the NURSE–WORK split, the KIT split, DRESS raising, and NURSE fronting in the data. However, a consistent TRAP–DRESS–NURSE merger for speakers of a Bantu language could not be found in either sample of the present data. The analysis has also shown that speakers of the NBC news report sample approximate a five vowel system in their reading style pronunciation while speakers of the YouTuber data sample make more vowel quality distinctions in their informal speech, resulting in two distinct patterns. This observation also resembles patterns found in previous research (Stell & Fuchs 2019; Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume), but due to the study's limitation does not allow for any further explanation.

Similar to research available on English in Namibia, the Namibian YouTuber community is a recent establishment – search results for *Namibian YouTuber* on YouTube only go back until 2016. While the Namibian YouTubers are fairly heterogeneous in preferences for video contents and personal backgrounds, three homogeneous factors are maintained: being born after the country's independence, living in urban areas, and using English as their main language for YouTube videos, even though their home language is usually a different one. Hence, this group presents a potentially interesting cohort to study the undoubtedly growing influence of English in the country. The described data sample from 2018 with the search term *Namibian YouTuber* already contains a large variety of young Namibians who passionately share their creative output publicly with the world. By using further search strategies, the number of speakers and also the types of video content can certainly be expanded upon.

6.3   Outlook

If all of this is possible for a peripheral country like Namibia – in terms of sub-standard Internet penetration and its status in the WE discourse – there must be plenty of data available for other varieties that are relevant in the WE context. Moreover,

some YouTubers have been consistently uploading videos for several years, which creates the possibility of conducting real time, diachronic studies that could even include perspectives of migration and diasporas when individuals leave their country of origin. The voices for including further types of data are generally becoming louder, not just in variational linguistics. For example, in phonetics, it is argued by Wagner et al. (2015) that not only using one type of data, i.e. data recorded in speech laboratories versus data recorded in the field, will be the most advantageous approach in linguistic research, but its meaningful combination and methodological awareness are the key to promoting research progress. In the area of linguistic landscaping, Schmitz (2018) proposes to include digital media into the scope of the concept – which is echoed by Mair (2020), who prefers the concept of *languagescapes*, but invokes the similar idea that digital language data is as much visible and a part of a linguistic landscape / *languagescape* as non-digital data. Similarly, variationist linguistics should approach this type of data and include YouTube and further types of digital media into its stylistic and methodological repertoire.

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The question of structural nativization in Namibian English

Some answers from extended uses of the progressive

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The question of whether the English as spoken in Namibia can be considered a (second-language) variety or should rather be considered a learner English was first addressed in Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014). The present study approaches this question from a quantitative perspective, focusing on the use of progressive morphology (i.e., VERB+*ing*) in Namibian English (NamE). The findings suggest that NamE is characterized by local and innovative, extended uses of progressive marking. I discuss whether these can be considered nativized features and conclude that this is a complex question in which a variety of factors have to be considered, most importantly the fact that NamE is not a monolithic whole but stratified along the lines of speakers' ages and ethnicities.

Keywords: Namibian English, structural nativization, EFL, ESL, progressive marking

1. Introduction

The global spread of English has resulted in multilingual repertoires and the emergence of different varieties of English. Many of these fall within the traditional categories 'second-language' or 'Outer Circle' Englishes in postcolonial contexts or 'learner' or 'Expanding Circle' Englishes in non-postcolonial contexts. However, recent research suggests that boundaries between these distinctions may be fuzzier than previously thought (e.g., Buschfeld 2013; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017; Laporte 2012).

The process of structural nativization, and thus "the emergence of locally distinctive linguistic forms and structures" (Schneider 2007: 71), plays a central role in determining the status of a particular variety of English and can also occur in non-postcolonial Englishes (non-PCEs). For the case of Namibian English

(NamE),[1] Buschfeld and Kautzsch conclude on the basis of an attitudes and use survey and a preliminary qualitative feature analysis that, even though Namibia was never an English colony, "English in Namibia is at least moving towards structural nativization" and "has been developing from learner English to second-language variety status in recent years" (2014: 148). Meanwhile, at the phonetic and the pragmatic level some Namibian-specific realizations have been investigated with a broader and more empirically robust data set (see Kautzsch & Schröder 2016; Zähres 2016; Kautzsch et al. 2017; Schröder et al., this volume; Schröder et al. 2020; Schröder & Schneider 2018). However, an empirical investigation of morphosyntactic structures of NamE still remains a desideratum.

The present study sets out to validate parts of Buschfeld and Kautzsch's (2014) earlier morphosyntactic observations, drawing on extensions of progressive marking in NamE (referred to as 'NamE progressive'). The results of this analysis will eventually be placed into a broader perspective.

To contextualize the use of the progressive aspect in NamE, I begin by reviewing some of the relevant findings on the development of the progressive system in the English language and its many varieties (Section 2). In Section 3, I begin with some remarks on the issue of structural nativization in World Englishes (Section 3.1), then introduce the methodology of data collection and analysis (Sections 3.2 and 3.3) and present the results of the study (Section 3.4). In Section 4, I discuss the results and ultimately return to the question of whether we can assume that NamE has been undergoing structural nativization.

2.   Contextualizing the progressive: Diachronic and synchronic perspectives

The tense/aspect system of English, and the changes it has undergone in the course of the development of the language have been addressed repeatedly in the literature. In particular the progressive (auxiliary *be* + present participle) has received considerable scholarly interest. Most of the studies on this topic are corpus-based, often investigating either British English (BrE) alone or BrE and American English (AmE) in comparison; many focus on written language, and only a few include both written and spoken data (for further details, see, for example, Collins 2008: 227–228). Progressive structures have also been investigated for Celtic Englishes, partly contrastively with their Celtic contact languages Irish and Welsh (e.g. Filppula 1999; Paulasto 2006) and language contact and structural transfer have been argued to play a role in the extensive use of progressives in these varieties.

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1.   I use the label 'Namibian English' (and thus 'NamE') for reasons of terminological ease, without making any implications about the variety's status in the sense of Schneider's (2007) distinction between 'English in X' and 'X English' (e.g., Schneider 2007: 50).

There are a number of reasons for this immense interest in the progressive aspect, the most important of which for the current context is its "meteoric increase in frequency in the Modern English [ModE] period" (Leech et al. 2009: 118) – a trend that has continued to this day (e.g., Hundt 2004; Leech et al. 2009: 141; Mair & Hundt 1995; Mair & Leech 2006).

Whereas earlier studies mainly focused on increased frequencies and extended functions of the progressive (especially the non-aspectual ones) in BrE and AmE, a number of more recent studies have investigated the progressive in contact-induced varieties (e.g., Collins 2008, 2015; Fuchs & Gut 2015; Hundt et al. 2020; Kirk 2015; Ssempuuma et al. 2016; Salles Bernal 2015; Sharma 2009; Schilk & Hammel 2014; van Rooy 2014; van Rooy & Piotrowska 2015). Even more recently, though still to a more limited extent, research has also looked into 'Expanding Circle' varieties and learner Englishes (e.g., Hundt & Vogel 2011; Meriläinen 2017; Meriläinen et al. 2017). It has generally been argued that "[n]ew varieties of English seem to play an important role in the development of extended uses of the progressive form" (Salles Bernal 2015: 88) and in its increased frequencies, especially in the spoken domains and in colloquial usage (e.g., Salles Bernal 2015: 103; see also Collins 2008).

The two non-standard extended uses widely investigated and reported in these 'new Englishes'[2] are the extension of the progressive to stative verbs, as in *I'm having ten fingers* (e.g. Schmied 2006; see also Collins 2008: 235–236) and the extension to habitual contexts, as in *I am always watching TV on Sunday mornings* (e.g., Collins 2008; Sharma 2009; Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2013; Paulasto 2014). The former has been identified as a feature of African varieties of English in general (e.g., Schmied 1991: 67) and of Black South African English in particular (e.g., de Klerk & Gough 2002: 362; see also van Rooy 2006), a variety that might be similar to Black varieties of NamE[3] due to shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Beyond such direct proximities, these two types of 'overuse'[4] are also considered 'angloversals', viz. non-standard features that occur across a range of otherwise unrelated, typologically distant varieties of English (Mair 2003; Kortmann &

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2. The use of quotation marks here is meant only to relativize the label 'new Englishes', as these Englishes are, in fact, of very different ages. I use the term simply as a neutral way to refer to those Englishes that are relatively more recent in their development than the two older standard varieties.

3. I use the term 'Black NamE' in analogy to 'Black South African English', without any racial or apartheid-era implications.

4. Many earlier publications use the term 'overuse' to refer to extended usage patterns of the progressive found in many other new Englishes. As rightly pointed out by one of the reviewers, this term sounds rather normative. I therefore refer to the NamE usages of the progressive that go beyond what can be found in the traditional native speaker varieties of English as 'extended uses' and 'NamE progressive'.

Szmrecsanyi 2004; Kortmann 2010), including both second-language as well as learner Englishes. However, several studies point towards clear differences between learner Englishes and second-language varieties when it comes to the use of the progressive. In that respect, it has been shown that while second-language speakers extend the progressive to non-standard semantic contexts, learners do not; the latter do show increased frequencies, but usually remain within the confines of native-speaker norms (e.g., van Rooy 2006; Hundt & Vogel 2011). This may constitute an interesting observation, and also a point of reference, for the objective of the study at hand.

However, in her 2017 article, Meriläinen addresses the contested boundaries between so-called learner Englishes and second-language varieties with recourse to the realizations and use of the progressive in second-language varieties of English and learner Englishes. In contrast to the earlier studies, her study convincingly shows that such differences do not occur along the second-language variety/learner English divide, but rather can be traced back to factors such as mode of acquisition (formal/instructed vs. natural/uninstructed) and L1 influence.

Research on the topic is extensive and partly inconsistent. This cannot all be presented in detail, but I will return to some selected findings on the progressive in the discussion of the results below (Section 4).

3.   Progressive marking and the question of structural nativization in Namibian English(es)

3.1   Some remarks on structural nativization

The notion of structural nativization is a very important aspect to consider in the discussion of variety status – viz. whether a certain type of English can be considered a second-language (L2) variety or a learner English. According to Schneider (2003, 2007), structural nativization entails aspects of cultural assimilation and identity (re)construction, as well as an important structural component that finds expression in the occurrence of local linguistic characteristics used on a societal level. Still, it remains unclear when a linguistic feature can be considered nativized and when it is still to be considered a learner's error.[5]

Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) were the first to discuss this question for Namibia (see Section 2.1) and identify "some potential candidates for structural nativisation" (2014: 134–147). However, looking into the exact frequency distributions of potential NamE characteristics – as the present study sets out to do on an

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5.   See Buschfeld (2013) for a comprehensive discussion.

exemplary basis – raises the questions of when structural nativization sets in and whether there is a numerical benchmark for feature nativization.

Buschfeld (2013: 63–66, 68) suggests a 30% usage rate of the local variant within the speech community as a rough starting point for feature nativization and a usage rate of 50% of the local variant as a numerical benchmark for step two, i.e., development "into a habit, used most of the time and by a rapidly increasing number of speakers" (Schneider 2007: 44). However, it seems questionable that the same benchmark can be applied to all linguistic features alike. In this respect, Hundt et al. argue that "frequency of use is not necessary for a feature to be perceived as typical of a variety or group of varieties: despite their low discourse frequency, these patterns are obviously still salient" and that "it is typically infrequent phenomena that stand out against the backdrop of the expected and thus are noticed" (2020: 100).

For this reason, the present paper combines quantitative and qualitative perspectives on the question of structural nativization in NamE (see Section 4).

3.2   Data collection and participants[6]

The data for the present study come from a data base compiled in Namibia in 2014. The study draws on the spontaneous speech component of the set,[7] which was collected by means of semi-structured, Labovian-style sociolinguistic interviews (e.g., Labov 1972).

The data come from 60 participants, 35% ($n = 21$) of which are male and 65% ($n = 39$) are female; they were between 13 and 80 years old at the time of recording (year-of-birth range: 1934–2001). The participants were categorized according to the ethnicity they indicated on their demographic questionnaire.[8] As Table 1 illustrates, the sample represents the major subgroups of the Namibian population.

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7.   This set also includes spoken data from a reading passage as well as a word list.

8.   Participants did not choose from a predefined list of ethnicities but had to label their ethnicities themselves. This clearly reduced the risk of Euro-centred perspectives and labelling on the side of the researchers.

Table 1. Distribution of participants according to ethnicity (self-identified)

Ethnicity	Number of participants	Percentage
Ovambo	16	27%
Damara	7	12%
Herero	6	10%
Other	6	10%
Rehoboth Basters	5	8%
White Afrikaner	5	8%
German	3	5%
Tswana	3	5%
Kawango	2	3%
Nama	2	3%
Caprivian	1	2%
Coloured	1	2%
Kwangali	1	2%
Setswana	1	2%
N/A	1	2%

Aditionally, I take into consideration the first language (L1) spoken by the participants and investigate how L1 background interacts with ethnicity. Despite the historico-political, ideological problems that may arise from classification according to ethnicity, I have decided in favor of categorization along ethnic lines. Grouping the speakers mainly according to their L1 background would gloss over important ethnic and identity-related aspects clearly interacting with L1 background in the complex sociolinguistic realities of Namibia. Afrikaans, for example, is not only spoken by the White, Boer/Dutch-descending part of the population but also by the Rehoboth Basters and, for example, by some of the Damara, Nama, and Tswana.

Most participants come from the metropolitan area of Windhoek, the northwest of Windhoek, or the coastal region west of Windhoek, in particular Swakopmund.

3.3   Data analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, and particularly to make the data more robust in terms of token numbers for the statistical analyses, I grouped the participants into three age groups and eight 'ethnicities' (and three for the statistical ctree analysis).

Age group 1 contains those participants born in or before 1980 and constitutes 18% ($n = 11$) of all participants. Group 2 participants were born between 1981 and 1989 and constitute 15% ($n = 9$) of all participants. These participants were born before Namibian independence but experienced the first traces of the sociolinguistic changes towards English in their upbringing and the education system. They are

thus the 'transitional group' between those who grew up and were educated with Afrikaans as the lingua franca of the country (Group 1) and those who have been fully immersed in English, viz. have had more or less stable and regular input from birth (Group 3). Participants in Group 3 were born in or after 1990 and make up the majority of the participants of the study at hand, viz. 67% ($n = 40$). They are the driving force in, and the main recipients of, the sociolinguistic changes in Namibia, viz. the change towards English as the main lingua franca of the country and – for an ever-growing number of children – even as a home language.

The eight ethnic groups considered in the study are the following: Ovambo ($n = 16$), Damara ($n = 7$), Herero ($n = 6$), Rehoboth Basters ($n = 5$), Afrikaners ($n = 5$), German ($n = 3$), Tswana ($n = 3$), Others ($n = 15$). The latter group includes those groups with less than three participants and those with unclear/missing data on ethnicity. Furthermore, I report the distribution of the results according to the speakers' L1, also simplified into Afrikaans ($n = 16$), German ($n = 5$), English ($n = 2$), Bantu ($n = 29$) and Khoesan ($n = 6$)[9] to increase token frequencies in the individual groups to strenghthen the validity of the quantitative results.

The data were analyzed for extended uses of the progressive, i.e. progressive marking where one would normally expect simple verb phrases. On the one hand, the data were therefore coded for the realization of the progressive aspect, viz. all verbs morphologically marked by -*ing* that indicate progressive aspect. Imperatives and non-finite simple VPs as well as -*ing* forms other than progressives were excluded from the analysis (e.g. future time *going to* expressions, adjectival present participles, gerunds; see Hundt et al. 2020 for a similar approach). At the same time, the data were also coded for non-progressive verb forms to investigate the exact relationship between progressive and simple forms and thus the potential increase of the former. I focus on those -*ing* progressive forms that are 'non-standard' and thus extensions to what can be found in standard BrE and AmE.[10] These might be the product of, and at the same time signs of, emerging structural nativization in NamE. Relevant for the present analysis were simple present and simple past contexts as these are where most of the extended uses of the NamE progressive were found (for a similar observation for Ugandan English, see Ssempuuma et al. 2016). The token frequencies of the NamE progressive structures were measured against the simple realizations in the two contexts to determine relative frequencies of the extended use of progressive marking in NamE (in percentages). The data

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9. Note that the total number does not amount to 60 since I exclude one speaker of unknown L1 background as well as the Portuguese L1-speaker from the analysis as these were not meaningful for the analysis.

10. It has to be noted that I am not following a prescriptive linguistic approach here. BrE/AmE are only used as points of reference to facilitate the analysis and description.

were coded by a native speaker of AmE,[11] supervised and double-checked by the present author. Her native speaker judgments on what is 'standard' progressive use or extended use were established as a yardstick for the present analysis. According to Biber et al. (1999: 462), "AmE strongly favors the progressive in comparison with BrE". This is an observation that should be kept in mind for the later interpretation of the results, as the coder herself might already have a greater inclination towards progressive structures than a BrE speaker.

In Section 3.4, I first illustrate the whole range of potential NamE progressive forms that occur in the data set. I subsequently present the percentages of the extended NamE forms as compared to the standard representations. In addition to stratifying the data according to ethnicity, L1 background, and age group, I also look into the influence of sex and intra-linguistic effects, particularly the influence of the particular verb or semantic verb class, in the ctree analysis. Following the verb class classifications employed in Biber et al. (1999: 360–364), I categorized the verbs as

1. activity verbs (e.g. *bring, buy, carry, come, give, go*),
2. communication verbs (e.g. *ask, announce, call, discuss, explain, say, speak, write*),
3. mental verbs (stative: e.g. *believe, know, remember, understand, love, suspect, want*, and dynamic: e.g. *calculate, consider, decide, discover, examine*),
4. causative verbs (e.g. *allow, cause, enable, force, help, let, require*),
5. verbs of simple occurrence (e.g. *become, change, happen, develop, grow*),
6. verbs of existence or relationship (e.g. *be, seem, appear, exist, live, stay*),
7. aspectual verbs (e.g. *begin, continue, finish, keep, start, stop*).

According to Collins (2008: 234–237; see also Biber et al. 1999: 471–472), the above verb classes can be summarized as follows in terms of their readiness to take the progressive aspect: In general, and across all seven classes, verbs that express activities or are durative more readily combine with the progressive than those that denote instantaneous actions or states. Many activity verbs and communication verbs take the progressive aspect quite readily (though there are, of course, differences among individual verbs). Occurrence verbs are also readily compatible with the progressive. Causative and aspectual verbs, on the other hand, rarely take the progressive. Existence verbs and, in particular, mental verbs are split into two classes, dynamic and stative, with the latter being much less inclined to take the progressive than the former.

Lastly, I statistically modelled the relative importance of a number of predictor variables on the realization of the progressive (dependent variable): VERB/VERB

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11. I would like to thank Jill Mazzetta for her help in the coding process and for sharing her native-speaker expertise and judgments.

TYPE as intralinguistic predictor, AGE, ETHNICITY, SEX, and L1 as extralinguistic predictors. To analyze the impact of these predictors I modeled a conditional inference trees analysis (ctree) using the package *partykit* in R (Hothorn et al. 2006; R Development Core Team 2014). A conditional inference tree (ctree) analysis (for previous applications of this technique, see, for example, Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012) applies recursive partitioning algorithms to the data set in order to "classify / compute predicted outcomes / values on the basis of multiple binary splits of the data" (Bernaisch et al. 2014: 14). In other words, a ctree analysis investigates a data set in a recursive fashion "to determine according to which (categorical or numeric) independent variable the data should be split up into two groups to classify / predict best the known outcomes of the dependent variable" (Bernaisch et al. 2014: 14). As one of their major advantages, ctrees can handle small sets of data characterized by small numbers of observations but large numbers of predictors – a situation not uncommonly encountered in linguistic research. What is more, ctrees are not overly sensitive to outliers (see Levshina 2015: 292).

For the construction of classification rules, I combined two original features, namely the VERB underlying the token and the corresponding VERB CLASS (as defined above). In order to reliably represent the verb and to avoid verbs with very small token frequencies, I only took those verbs which appeared in more than 2.5% of the tokens and aggregated the other verbs by means of their verb class. This way, seven original verbs were included in the present tense (*be, have, think, speak, know, like, do*) and six in the past tense analysis (*be, have, go, get, come, grow up*).

Unfortunately, the present classification problems are heavily unbalanced. In the present tense, simple present has 6,435 and the Namibian progressive 127 tokens. In the past tense, simple past has 1,941 tokens and the Namibian progressive 65 tokens. Therefore, the smaller class contains between 2% and 3% of the number of tokens in the larger class.

In such cases, the baseline classification rule is "always take the larger class", with an accuracy rate of around 97–98% and without any token of the smaller class correctly classified. To counteract this tendency and find adequate classification rules that are also able to classify the smaller class, an evaluation measure will be used that considers both the accuracy in the larger and the smaller classes. This is realized by means of the so-called balanced accuracy defined by the means of the accuracy scores of the small and large classes.

In order to construct a classification rule with acceptable balanced accuracy, I apply the method of undersampling. Undersampling takes a random small sample of the larger class together with the full sample of the smaller class as the training sample, on which the chosen classification method constructs the rule (e.g. Weiss 2004). Undersampling was repeated 151 times, with 2.5% samples of the large class in the present tense and 4% of the large class in the past tense. These repetitions

ensure that all tokens of the large class in the data set get the chance of being se-
lected for analysis.

The overall balanced accuracy rate is then computed by means of the accuracy
on the complete classes, i.e. for the smaller class on the training sample and for the
larger class not only on the training sample, but also on the part 'hold out' from
rule construction. This way, rules from different training samples can be adequately
compared and the best rule maximizes the balanced accuracy. This measure was
repeated 151 times.

The sample size of the larger class used for training can be varied. I evaluated
different sample sizes. Figures 7 and 8 in Section 3.4 illustrate the classification
trees with the best, balanced accuracy scores. For the present tense analysis, the
best classification rule found comes with a balanced accuracy rate of 84.5%, the
best past tense accuracy score amounts to 82.3%. These values are very high for
problems with such differences in class size. Note that the baseline rule has a bal-
anced error rate of 0.5.[12]

3.4   Results

The qualitative part of the data analysis has revealed that NamE is characterized
by a number of local progressive structures, mostly extensions in use (in the fol-
lowing referred to as 'NamE progressive'), viz. the use of progressive morphology
in contexts in which the standard varieties of English would require simple aspect.
Examples (1) to (5) illustrate the most prominent occurrences and contexts:

(1) […] I'*m having* four brothers and one sister.

(2) […] and then borders were demarcated which *were*, # erm, # *dividing* local
     people.

(3) R(esearcher):   What was your childhood like? Did you grow up here?
     I(nformant):   Yeah, I'*m growing up* here.

(4) So much discrimination, we would still be, like, erm, wouldn't be allowed to
     do certain stuff and […] it *would* later *be leading* to war […]

(5) R: In what way? They said you [/] you're not allowed to do this or you're not
          allowed to do that?
     I: Yeah, you are not allowed to do this if you do it […] you *will be cleaning*
          the home XXX, yeah.

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12. I am grateful to Claus Weihs for his invaluable support with the statistical analysis and for
providing major parts of the scripts.

The quantitative part of the analysis reveals the following results: The rate of extended use of progressive marking in the present tense ranges between 0% for the Afrikaner group and 5.2% for the Damara group; the grand total across all groups amounts to 1.9%, including the Others group (who overuse the progressive at a rate of 1.3%). However, the latter group is excluded from the visual representations and the decision trees (Figures 7 and 8) because it is not interpretable in terms of ethnicity due to its mixed and partly unclear composition.
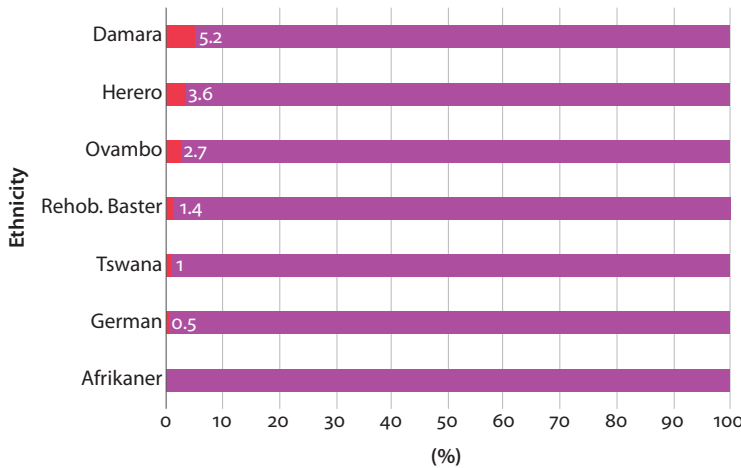
	Afrikaner	German	Tswana	Rehob. Baster	Ovambo	Herero	Damara
🔴 pres>prog_nam		4	5	15	31	28	27
🟣 pres_simple	631	754	499	1062	1132	758	495

Figure 1. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by ethnicity (present tense)[13]

The results in Figure 1 suggest that, in general, the extended use of the progressive seems to be a feature of Black NamE, with the Ovambo (2.7%), Herero (3.6%), and especially Damara (5.2%) groups leading the way. The White study participants overuse the progressive only to very limited extents.

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13. The abbreviations in the Figures 1 to 6 translate as follows: *pres*=present; *prog*=progressive; *nam*=specific NamE use of the feature. Here is a list of tags and what they indicate: *pres>prog_ nam*: speakers use a NamE progressive (i.e. extended use) where in standard BrE/AmE a present simple form would be expected; *pres_simple*: speakers use a present simple in present simple contexts; the labels *past_simple* and *past>prog_nam* relate to the same uses but in past tense contexts; *pres_nam>prog_nam*: speakers use a present tense progressive where in standard BrE/ AmE a simple past form would be expected.

Figure 2, which illustrates the extended use of progressive structures in present tense contexts according to L1, confirms this finding since the NamE progressive is mostly used by speakers with a Bantu (B) and a Khoesan (K) L1 background (2.5% and 6.7%, respectively). It is barely used by speakers of West Germanic (Afrikaans (A), German (G), and English (E)) L1 background. Typological differences between the languages and language families and resulting L1 influence as well as an interaction between L1 influence and identity conceptions related to ethnicity are potential explanations for these findings (see Section 4).

	E	G	A	B	K
🔴 **pres>prog_nam**		4	22	67	34
🟣 **pres_simple**	279	921	2151	2613	471
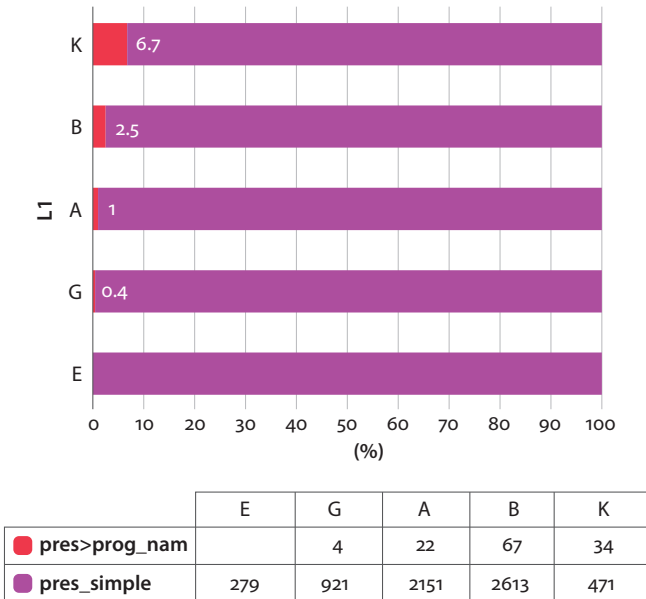
Figure 2. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by L1 (present tense)

A very similar picture emerges in terms of the results for the past-tense contexts. As illustrated in Figure 3, the NamE progressive once more occurs mainly in the African-descendent groups. Again, among the African-descendent groups, the rate of extended use (this time represented by two options, i.e. the use of the past progressive instead of simple past and the use of present progressive instead of simple past as illustrated in Examples (2) and (3) above) is highest in the Damara group (7.5%)[14] and lowest in the Tswana group (2.2%). Once more, the two

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14. Here and in the following, I conflate the two NamE progressive options as used in simple past contexts for reasons of easier accessibility.
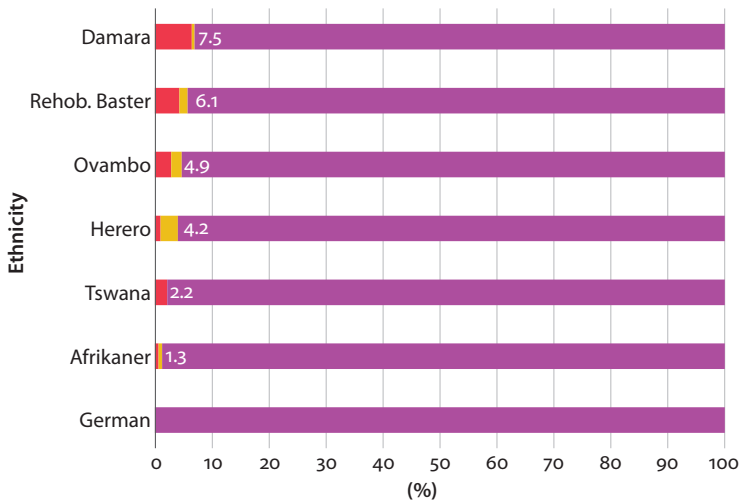
	Afrikaner	Afrikaner	Tswana	Herero	Ovambo	Rehob. Baster	Damara
🔴 **pres>prog_nam**		1	3	2	11	9	13
🟡 **pres_nam>prog_nam**		1		6	7	3	1
🟣 **pres_simple**	430	155	136	191	366	197	187

Figure 3. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by ethnicity (past tense)

European-descendent groups (Afrikaners and Germans) overuse the progressive to only a very limited extent.

This is once more confirmed by the results according to L1 (Figure 4): Again, the L1 Khoesan-speaking participants use the NamE progressive most frequently (7.9%), followed by the Bantu-speaking participants (3.7%). This time the L1 Afrikaans group is not far behind (3.6%), surprisingly followed by the L1 English-speakers (1.4%), and the German group (0.7%).

In general, extended usage of the progressive is stronger with past-tense reference than in present-tense contexts. The grand total across all groups amounts to 3.2%. The earlier general observation that the extended use of the progressive is mainly a feature of Black NamE is confirmed here.
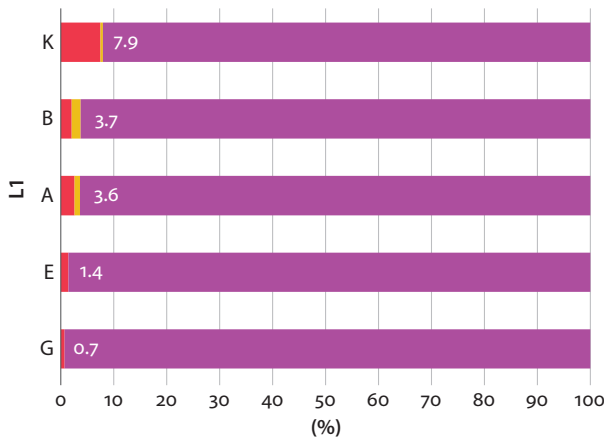
	E	G	A	B	K
🔴 past>prog_nam	4	1	10	16	16
🟡 pres_nam>prog_nam			4	13	1
🟣 past_simple	552	70	372	750	197

Figure 4. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by L1 (past tense)

Categorizing the results according to age group reveals that with present-tense contexts (as shown in Figure 5), the extended use of the progressive is stronger in Groups 1 and 2 (viz. those born in or before 1980 and those born between 1981 and 1989, each with a rate of 3.6%), than in Group 3 (those born in or after 1990, with a rate of 0.9%).
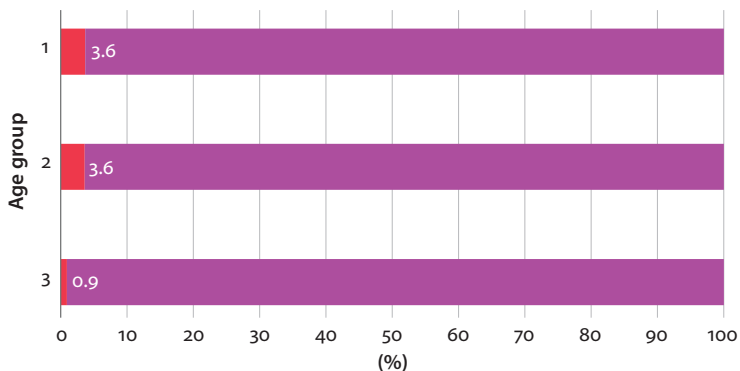
	3	2	1
🔴 pres>prog_nam	39	50	40
🟣 pres_simple	4358	1354	1056

Figure 5. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by age group (present tense)

The same phenomenon can be observed for extended progressives with past-tense reference (see Figure 6), though here, the results are even stronger. The oldest group (Group 1) overextends the progressive at the highest rate, viz. in 6.1% of the cases. Groups 2 and 3 make use of the extended progressive at a rate of 4.4% and 1.4% respectively.

	3	2	1
🔴 **pres>prog_nam**	13	8	27
🟡 **pres_nam>prog_nam**	2	12	4
🟣 **pres_simple**	1035	451	512
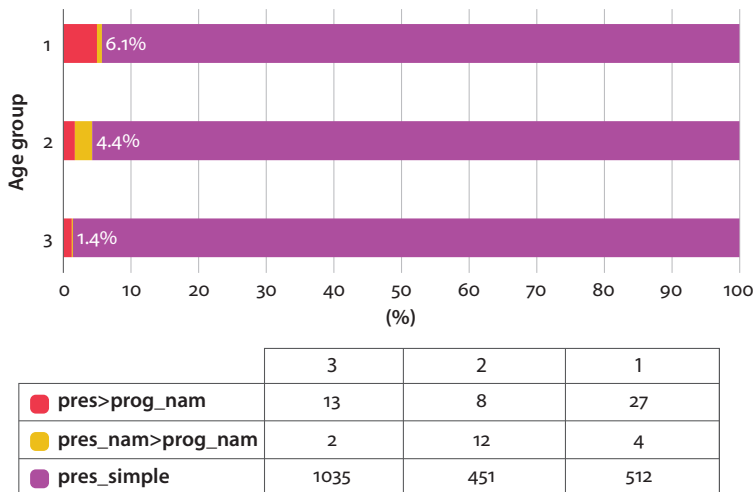
Figure 6. The (extended) use of the progressive in NamE by age group (past tense)

The finding that the younger participants (Group 3) clearly make less frequent use of the progressive than the older participants (Group 1) comes as a surprise. When a country experiences growing entrenchment and local use of the English language, the language normally also develops characteristic features which would experience increased usage frequencies in the younger population. I took a closer look at the distribution of ethnicities among the three age groups which confirmed that the findings are not the result of unequal distribution. The ratio of participants making strong use of the NamE progressive is nearly equal between Groups 1 and 3; the percentage of speakers of what can be subsumed under Black NamE amounts to approximately 78% in Group 1 and 81% in Group 3. We are therefore clearly confronted with an age effect across ethnicities, rather than an unequal distribution of participants.

The distribution of different verbs and verb types with which extended uses of the progressive most commonly occur will be accounted for in the statistical models presented in the following (Figures 7 and 8). As Figure 7 illustrates, the ctree for the present tense context selects VERB/VERB TYPE as the strongest predictor for the realization of the NamE progressive (node 1). The existence verb *be*, the mental dynamic *think*, the mental statives *know* and *like* as well as the class of mental statives in general clearly prefer the standard, non-progressive realization of the verb. All other verbs and verb types enter into more complex interactions of predictors,

branching off to the left side of the tree. Here, the next statistically significant split is L1 (node 2) indicating a clear difference between those speakers with a Germanic language as their L1 and those who speak an African (i.e. Bantu or Khoesan) L1. As already observed in the descriptive statistics, the former generally select the NamE extended progressive at a significantly lower rate than the latter group. In the Germanic group, two further splits can be observed. The first occurs for the remaining verbs and verb types (node 8).[15] Unfortunately, the tree itself cannot display this degree of detail, but the specification of rules coming with the tree indicates that communication verbs (including *speak*) and mental stative *have* do not take the NamE progressive marking at all in the group of speakers of Germanic languages. All others enter into yet another interaction with ETHNICITY (node 9). For activity (including *do*), existence, mental dynamic, and occurrence verbs the use of the NamE extended progressive is significantly higher in the African and mixed groups (i.e. the Rehoboth Basters) than in the European group.

In the Bantu- and Khoesan-speaking groups, AGE plays a significant role (node 3). In line with the descriptive part of the analysis, Groups 1 and 2 clearly prefer the NamE realization (viz. the progressive form) whereas Group 3 is split by SEX (node 5); the male informants select the NamE progressive more readily than the female ones.

On the one hand, these findings clearly confirm the observations in the descriptive statistics (see Figures 1 to 6). On the other hand, they illustrate how much more complex the picture is and that results for the individual factors influencing the use of linguistic features only provide parts of the overall picture. The exact manifestations and interactions of predictors are of crucial importance for determining the use of local characteristics. The most frequent use of the NamE extended progressive, for example, can be found for *do* and the general group of activity verbs, mental stative *have*, aspectual, causative, communication, existence, occurrence, and mental dynamic verbs, in the L1 Bantu- and Khoeasan-speaking groups, with those participants born before 1989 (viz. participants in age groups 1 and 2; node 4).

In the past tense analysis, ETHNICITY has turned out to be the strongest predictor (node 1). Again, the group of informants is split into those of African and mixed descent on the one hand and those of European ancestry on the other. The latter make use the NamE progressive to a significantly lower extent. The two other groups enter into more complex interactions of predictors. The next split (node 2) is

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15. Note that aspectual and causal verbs do not occur in this specific constellation, viz. this far down in the tree. If a rule does not cover an entry of a feature, the tree randomly assigns a class according to the frequency of the class in the node where the missing appears. In the tree for the present tense, this applies to 42 tokens with the combinations VERB = "asp" or VERB = "caus" and L1 = "G", in the tree for the past tense, this applies to 15 tokens with the combination VERB = "md" and not (ETH == "e") and not (AGE == "3") and SEX == "f".
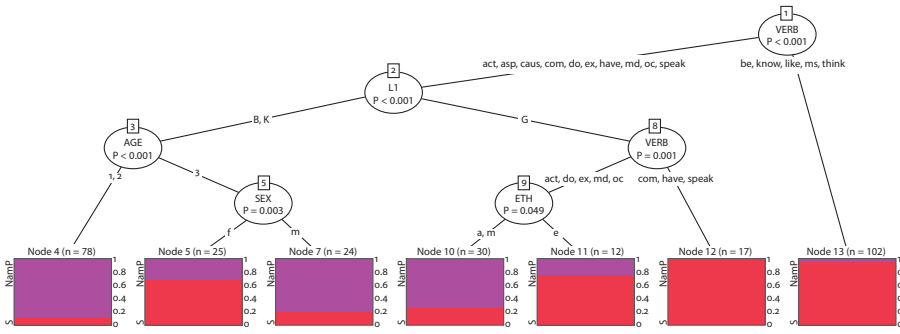
Figure 7. Ctree for present tense contexts

determined by age group and again we observe a significant split between Groups 1 and 2 on the one hand and Group 3 on the other. Group 3 is split by L1 into the Bantu- and Germanic-speakers on the one hand and Khoesan-speakers on the other (node 8), with the latter showing a significantly stronger inclination to use the NamE progressive. This is in line with the descriptive statisctics in Figure 4 which clearly shows the strongest use of the NamE for the Khoesan group.

This time, age groups 1 and 2 are split by SEX, with the male participants again leading the way in the use of the NamE progressive. The female participants are then split by VERB/VERB TYPE. The split is similar to the general first split in the present tense tree in that existence verb *be* and mentals statives less readily take the NamE progressive (the individual verbs *know, like* and *think* where not part of the past tense analysis). The remaining verbs in this particular rule (with mental dynamic verbs missing; see footnote 18), this means as used by African and mixed descent speakers of age groups 1 and 2 and female sex, combine with the NamE progressive marking quite readily. Again, this shows how the ctree analysis adds an important layer of complexity and detail to the analysis, which helps unveil the exact manifestations and usage contexts of the NamE extended progressive.
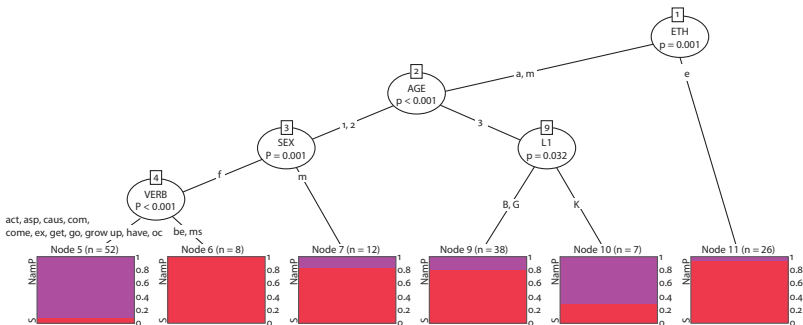
Figure 8. Ctree for past tense contexts

4.   Discussion of results

These results raise a number of interesting questions and also allow for some important conclusions. As Figures 1, 3, 7 and 8 show, differences exist between ethnic groups in Namibia when it comes to the extended use of the progressive. The results suggest a significant difference between White and Black speakers of NamE. In addition to that, L1 background has a significant influence on the use of the NamE progressive. In general, speakers of one of the indigenous languages of Namibia show a much higher inclination towards NamE uses of the progressive, in particular speakers of Damara/ Nama.

In this respect, the following typological considerations may be relevant in the context of the present study: All L1s in the informants' linguistic repertoires formally express progressive aspect – except for standard German – but in different ways than English. Afrikaans (similar to Dutch) marks the progressive periphrastically by means of one of two general strategies (V_{COP} *besig om te* V and the V_{COP} *aan die* V constructions), illustrated in the following examples:

(6)   Honde is   oral   rond *aan die*   aas.
      dog.PL be.PRS everywhere around on   ART.DEF scavenge
      'Dogs are scavenging everywhere.'

(7)   Jy   is   *besig om* jou   vakgebied te   bemeester.
      2SG.SBJ be.PRS busy to   2SG.POSS subject.area PRTCL master
      'You are mastering/starting to master your subject area.'   (Breed 2017: 317).

Some German dialects employ a periphrastic construction similar to the ones found in Afrikaans (the *am*-Progressive; e.g. van Pottelberge 2004), as illustrated in Example (8) (for a discussion of further colloquial and dialectal constructions that express progressivity in German, see Blevins 2018).

(8)   Ich habe   keine Zeit, ich *bin*   *am* Lernen.
      1SG have.1SG.PRS no   time, 1SG be.SG.PRS at   study.
      'I don't have time, I am studying.'   (example my own)

This type of progressive marking has been making inroads into many dialect areas recently.

Haacke presents examples of aspect marking in Namibian Khoekhoe (Damara/ Nama). In an early publication (Haacke 1976), he classifies the marker *ra* as present inchoative. Later he classifies it as progressive (see Example (9)).

(9)   Ao+b+Ø   ge   tara+s+a   ra mû
      man+III.M.S+NOM IND woman+III.F.S+OBL PR see
      'THE/A MAN is seeing the/a woman.'   (Haacke 2006: 106)[16]

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16.   The gloss 'III.M.S+NOM' stands for 3rd person, masculine, singular, nominative case; 'III.F.S+OBL' denotes the same type of person information for female in oblique case.

Marking progressivity in the Bantu languages is a complex issue which cannot be fully accounted for here. What appears most relevant in the present context is that "the temporal logic in Bantu languages does not conceptually distinguish the view of present time in terms of habituality and progressiveness" which "implies that the habitual and progressive times are viewed as a continuous whole, not as discrete segments as the case may be in English" (Makalela 2004: 359). Makalela (2004: 359) provides the following example from Sepedi:

(10)   Monna o   a ja[17]
       Man   SM1[18] HABITUAL/PROGRESSIVE +eat-PRESENT
       'A man eats/is eating.'

With reference to Herero, one of the main languages spoken in Namibia, Möhlig and Kavari (2008: 183) state (with reference to the present tense) that "[t]he tense describes an action or process that, at the time of speaking, is either in progress or will start immediately". The following example illustrates the use of the tense marker *má*|- in first person singular and plural:

(11)   Mé| rú.[19]
       1stpl+are   fighting.
       Má|tú   rú.
       1stsg+am   fighting.
       'I am/we are fighting ~ about to fight.'
                                      (Möhlig & Kavari 2008: 183; glosses are my own)

What is more, "[t]he grammars of these languages allow their speakers to emphasise the ongoing quality of a situation whether the situation is a dynamic one or not", i.e. there is no principled restriction depending on verb types when it comes to indicating ongoing actions (van Rooy 2006: 62).[20]

The question how these observations relate to the differences in the use of extended NamE progressives between L1 West Germanic speakers of English on the one hand and the L1 Bantu- and Khoesan-speakers on the other can be approached from two perspectives, taking into consideration acquisitional issues and local language teaching practices.

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17. The verbal form *ja* denotes either habituality or progressiveness, depending on the context of use; the preverbal emphatic marker *a* emphasizes habitual events (Makalela 2004: 359).

18. The gloss SM1 stands for "Subject Marker of Nouns in Class number 1" (Makalela 2004: 359).

19. The diacritics in the examples indicate that the person/tense markers and verbs bear a high tone which is followed by a down step (Möhlig & Kavari 2008: 183).

20. Note, however, that this is an oversimplified classification of a very complex matter. A more detailed account of the grammatical structure of the African languages is unfortunately not possible within the framework of this paper. For a brief account of the relationship between the progressive construction and the persistive aspect in the Bantu languages, see, for example, van Rooy (2006).

As the brief typological excursion and Examples (6) to (11) illustrate, the informants' L1s all express imperfectivity but in clearly different ways than English does. Standard German is an exception here but it can be assumed that the general principle of progressivity is still known to the German participants, either via one of the German dialects that realize the progressive or via Afrikaans, the longstanding lingua franca of the country.

From an acquisitional perspective, the multiple options of how exactly imperfectivity is expressed morphologically in the learners' L1(s) and L2(s) and the strong differences in morphological representation between English and in particular the African languages very likely create an ambiguity for the learner, which manifests in the existence of the general form (progressive aspect), which comes with completely different realizations and distributions. According to Hulk and Müller's (2000) structural overlap/ambiguity hypothesis, this facilitates cross-linguistic transfer, especially at the syntax/semantics interface, and might create a high degree of insecurity, in our case particularly for the Bantu- and Khoesan-speakers. This 'insecurity' and the lack of the dynamic-stative distinction in the distribution of progressive forms in the native languages might then lead to overgeneralization (see also Makalela 2004: 358) and thus an increased use of progressive marking in English. The analyses of individual verbs and verb types (Figures 7 and 8) corroborate these observations as they are not necessarily in line with what previous studies such as Collins (2008) or Biber et al. (1999) report about the general readiness of verbs and verb classes to take the progressive. In both the present and past tense analyses of my study, aspectual and causative verbs as well as the mental stative verb *have* cluster with those verbs that readily take progressive marking.

This extended use of progressive marking, in particular to be found in the African-descended group and the Rehoboth Basters as well as with speakers of indigeneous African languages, is further reinforced by an overemphasis of the progressive in teaching, in particular by Black teachers as observed by the author during data collection in the classroom context. Related to this, even though quantity and quality of education have certainly improved in more recent times, the White segments of the population have long been advantaged by the education system and have had much better access to native speaker oriented foreign language teaching.

However, even if crosslinguistic influence boosted by overgeneralization and teaching practices seems to be a reasonable explanation here, the results for the Rehoboth Basters group, who all have Afrikaans as their only L1, clearly show that L1 influence alone cannot be the reason for the interethnic differences observed. Even though they share a language with the Afrikaner group, their results do not cluster with this group. In both ctrees (Figures 7 and 8), they (m) clearly cluster with the African group (a) and show a significantly higher use of the NamE progressives than the European-descended informants. As the bar charts in Figures 1

and 3 illustrate, the Rehoboth Basters can be considered an 'in-between' group (see Schröder & Zähres 2020 and Schröder et al. 2020 for a similar observation). Overall, I interpret these observations as suggesting that L1 influence can be overruled by issues of identity, or, in more general terms, that L1 influence and issues of ethnic identity strongly interact in the Namibian context.

The analyses have further revealed that the participants' sex plays a role for the realization of the NamE progressive in that male speakers in the African groups (or speakers of African L1s) show a stronger inclination towards the extended progressive than female speakers. This cannot be interpreted in full detail in the context of this paper and requires more research into Namibian communities of practice.

The results for the influence of age come as a surprise, as ongoing feature nativization would imply stabilization and the further spread of the characteristic. The finding that the younger generation less readily extends progressive marking runs counter to this assumption. This can be interpreted in three ways: (1) contrary to the earlier conclusions, NamE is not undergoing feature nativization; (2) the NamE use of the progressive is not part of the nativizing feature pool; (3) the notion of feature nativization is so complex that we must look into it in much more detail and discuss some of its underlying assumptions and principles.

The latter assumption can clearly be affirmed; assumptions (1) and (2) would be too drastic to be made on the basis of a single study and of only one feature.

Perhaps the best explanation is a combination of assumptions (2) and (3): Given the relatively low frequencies of the NamE progressive, I would argue that thresholds such as those suggested in Buschfeld (2013) are indeed relative and depend on the characteristic under observation. The sociolinguistic context and the specific feature under consideration, as well as perceptual saliency and language attitudes may overrule "probabilistic indigenization" (for the term, see Szmrecsanyi et al. 2016: 133) for "low-frequency, salient patterns" (Hundt et al. 2020: 78, 100).

In the present case, the influence of age and the interplay of ethnicity and L1 play crucial roles in answering the nativization question for the NamE progressive. I would further argue that the frequencies of 7.5% and 5.2% for the Damara group, and similarly of 6.1% of all NamE (extended) progressive structures for Group 1 in past contexts, are quite high percentages, in particular when compared to the overall low frequencies in the other ethnicities and age groups, and when taking into consideration the above observations on the nativization of low-frequency phenomena.[21] The results for the different verb types as presented in Figures 7 and 8 must also be considered, as the results presented for the different ethnicities, L1s,

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21. I deliberately neglect a comparison of frequencies with other varieties of English. This would go beyond the scope of this paper and is of no particular relevance here.

and age groups in the descriptive part (Figures 1 to 6) do not take verb type differences into consideration. For some specific semantic types, such as activity verbs, results would of course be much stronger. Fine-grained interactions of ethnicity, age, sex (or any other relevant sociolinguistic variable), and intra-linguistic criteria such as semantic verb class should therefore always be taken into consideration when looking into the complex realities and developments of varieties of English, as has been done by the ctree analyses. These have revealed that specific groups of speakers prefer the NamE progressive with specific verbs.

Finally, the declining frequencies in the NamE progressive in the younger generation allow for another interesting interpretation, namely increasing quantity and quality of formal schooling for all ethnic groups and could be interpreted as a positive ethnopolitical finding, viz. some linguistic evidence for the degeneration of racial segregation and, potentially, linguistic accommodation.

5.   Conclusion: Structural nativization in NamE?

In summary, the present study suggests an extension of the progressive paradigm in NamE, in particular for Black speakers and for aspectual and causal verbs as well as mental stative *have*, all of which, in the standard varieties, do not readily take progressive marking. If van Rooy (2006) and Hundt and Vogel (2011) are correct in their assumptions that a qualitative difference exists between speakers of second-language and learner Englishes, this would suggest that NamE qualifies as a hybrid but more closely aligned to the group of second-language (Outer Circle) varieties of English. At the same time, this observation corroborates Meriläinen's (2017) conclusion that differences in the realization of the progressive aspect do not occur along the second-language variety/learner English divide, but rather can be traced back to other factors such as mode of acquisition and L1 influence. The present study additionally raises the question what impact identity constructions have and whether they have the potential to overrule L1 influence.

When it comes to the question of structural nativization in NamE, there is, unfortunately, no clear answer the chapter can offer. Still, it sheds some light on the overall concept of feature nativization and the character of NamE. The chapter has shown that the notion of structural nativization is a complex phenomenon and that factors other than feature frequency play a role in this context, most importantly sociolinguistic issues, questions of language attitudes and identity as well as perceptual saliency of a local characteristic.

Furthermore, interethnic differences and differences between speakers of different L1s and age groups indicate that NamE is by no means a homogeneous variety (see also Schröder & Zähres 2020). The singular label NamE therefore appears misleading. It seems more adequate to refer to the linguistic realities in Namibia

as Namibian Englishes. If emerging structural nativization implies linguistic homogeneity, it cannot be observed for the Namibian context in general. However, is has recently been argued that homogeneity as envisaged in the late phase 3 and phase 4 of the Dynamic Model is a misconception, at least for contexts historically characterized by racial segregation (e.g. Hackert et al. 2020).

The findings of the present study are complex and the data set is small, which is why the results have to be taken with a pinch of salt. Usage frenquencies of the extended progressive are comparatively small, but it seems justified to conclude that such numbers and percentages are of secondary importance and must be interpreted against the intra- and extra-linguistic background of the specific study. Still, it would be promising to increase the data set for such and similar investigations, and look into further linguistic features in future work on NamE.

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A variational pragmatic approach to responses to thanks in Namibian English

From quantitative to qualitative analysis

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Variational pragmatics has only recently been combined with non-native World Englishes research, by examining the pragmatics of Namibian English (NamE). However, this research has concentrated on the comparison of pragmatic phenomena in NamE to those in some L1-varieties, exclusively based on the same mixed-task questionnaire. Although this has led to the discovery of specifically Namibian usages, limitations to the validity of this type of data collection have been pointed out. This chapter triangulates the results of a quantitative questionnaire study with qualitative analysis of role-plays and meta-pragmatic focus group discussions, reassessing earlier findings on responses to thanks in NamE. This contributes to the understanding of sociolinguistic complexity and the negotiation of pragmatic strategies in the multilingual ecology of Namibia.

Keywords: Namibian English, variational pragmatics, responses to thanks, quantitative and qualitative analysis

1. Introduction

Variational pragmatics as the systematic study of pragmatic differences between regional or social varieties of a language lies at the intersection of pragmatics and modern dialectology (Schneider & Barron 2008; Barron 2017) and hence concerns itself primarily with pluricentric languages, such as French, German, Spanish and, of course, English. Studies of the latter, however, have overwhelmingly concentrated on native varieties, most notably American (AmE), English (EngE) and/or Irish English (IrE), mainly due to lack of comparable data from other varieties of English (cf. Schneider 2010, 2012b; Schneider & Placencia 2017: Section 3.1). Hence, systematic differences between L1- and L2-speakers of English (not to mention learner varieties) have so far received comparatively little attention. Indeed, this approach

to language variation has only recently been broadened in scope by examining the pragmatics of a non-native variety of English, i.e. Namibian English (NamE) (Schröder & Schneider 2018; Schneider & Schröder 2016).[1]

Research on NamE is particularly interesting in this context, as this variety cannot be neatly classified according to 'classic' categories. Since the country's colonial past never really involved the British as a colonial power, NamE does not neatly classify as a post-colonial English (PCE) or, in Kachru's (1985) terms, Outer Circle variety. English was declared the country's sole official language on independence in 1990, so that NamE can be defined as neither an Expanding Circle nor as a learner variety (see Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017 or Schröder & Zähres 2020 for discussion).[2]

With the description of NamE at the pragmatic level, our research (and hence the present chapter) is connected and complementary to descriptive approaches to NamE on other levels of linguistic analysis (see e.g. Buschfeld, this volume, or Schröder, Zähres & Kautzsch, this volume). Eventually, we hope to achieve what Barron and Schneider (2005) accomplished for English as spoken in the Republic of Ireland,[3] that is to provide a comprehensive description of the pragmatics of this national variety of English. So far, however, the focus of our research has been on the comparison of particular pragmatic phenomena, such as responses to thanks (Schröder & Schneider 2018), requests (Schneider & Schröder 2016) or small talk (Schneider & Schröder forthcoming) in NamE to those in some L1-varieties, exclusively on the basis of the same mixed-task multi-focus questionnaire, the *Questionnaire on English Usage* (QEU). This questionnaire, originally devised to investigate the pragmatics of IrE and subsequently revised and used for the investigation of other varieties of English (cf. e.g. Barron 2008; Schneider 2008; Schneider 2012a), includes multiple choice tasks (MCTs), discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and dialogue production tasks (DPTs) and elicits information on eight different pragmatic phenomena (see Schneider 2005: 110–111 for details). Although this research has warranted immediate comparability and led to the discovery of specifically Namibian usages, in particular with regard to responses to thanks, the problems of this type of data collection and the limitations concerning its validity are obvious and have frequently been expressed (see Ogiermann 2018 for an overview and discussion).

The present chapter therefore combines the results of a quantitative questionnaire study of the pragmatics of NamE with the qualitative analysis of video-taped

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1.   See also Anchimbe (2018) for a recent addition of pragmatic research on non-native varieties of English, albeit within a postcolonial pragmatic framework.

2.   See also introductory chapter (this volume) but particularly Stell (this volume) for more detailed accounts of the historical background.

3.   See Culpeper & Haugh (2014: 9) for an appreciation of their efforts.

role plays and meta-pragmatic focus-group discussions and thus reassesses via triangulation earlier findings on Namibian-specific responses to thanks. This will allow us to discuss this pragmatic phenomenon in NamE from the perspective of different individuals and also from the perspective of larger groups. In this way we will not only increase knowledge of the structural features of NamE but will also contribute more generally to the theoretical discussion. We hope to broaden the scope of variational pragmatics by including non-native and emerging varieties of Englishes and by introducing qualitative data from meta-discursive discussion to this type of pragmatic research. This should further enhance the understanding of sociolinguistic complexity and the negotiation of pragmatic strategies in the multilingual ecology of Namibia.

In the next section, we will provide an overview of the study of thanks and specifically of responses to thanks, with a particular focus on the quantitative study of responses to thanks in a number of L1-varieties of English. We will then proceed to compare the major results of these studies to those of a quantitative study of responses to thanks in NamE (Section 3). This account will lay the groundwork for Section 4, the report and discussion of a qualitative study of responses to thanks in NamE. Finally, the major conclusions from the previous sections will be discussed and perspectives for future research will be outlined in Section 5.

2.   Responses to thanks: An overview

The act of thanking someone for something and hence expressing gratitude "is considered a prime example of polite verbal behaviour" (Jautz 2013: 1), which involves a number of verbal routines and is frequently realised by conventional formulae. Hence, expressions of gratitude "are among the first words to be learnt in a first as well as in a second language" (Jautz 2008: 142). They are part of a reactive speech act which typically occurs in adjacency pairs, such as an offer and a thanks (Coulmas 1978: 37; Jautz 2013: 8), but which may be extended to a tripartite exchange. Jautz (2013: 8), referring to Wunderlich (1980: 295), for instance, describes it as a three-part-pattern consisting of (a) *reference action*, (b) *thanksgiving* and (c) *acknowledgement*. She also points out that the last element may be difficult to realise appropriately because the thanker (as the beneficiary of a thankable, provided by the thankee as the benefactor) acknowledges a debt (Jautz 2013: 9). Hence, "[o]n the one hand, benefactors may want to soften the face-threat the expression of gratitude causes for the speaker, but on the other hand they may not want to praise themselves" (Jautz 2013: 9). According to Schneider (2005: 107), one of the main social functions of this last part thus is "to minimize the thanker's indebtedness" and this is why some authors refer to this pragmatic act as "minimization"

(Goffman 1971), "thanks minimizers" (Schneider 2005), or "imbalance reducers after thanks" (Bieswanger 2015). However, as imbalance reduction or minimizing do not seem to be the only function of this speech act (Aijmer 1996: 39–40), in this chapter we prefer the neutral term 'responses to thanks' (see also Schröder & Schneider 2018: 344).

As has become evident from the previous explanations, responses to thanks generally consist of verbal interactional moves between at least two interlocutors, a thanker and a thankee, with the former usually expressing thanks, to which the latter responds. The speech act is commonly performed by brief formulaic expressions in two adjacent turns, which are well described in a number of studies of various languages and language varieties (for an overview, see Mulo Farenkia 2018: 64–65). For English, publications by Aijmer (1996), Schneider (2005, 2007), Talla Sando Oaufeu (2009), Mulo Farenkia (2012), Rüegg (2014), Bieswanger (2015), Dinkin (2018), and Staley (2018: Chapter 6) have approached the topic from various angles. They have – among other things – shown that responses to thanks "are used less frequently in English than in other languages" (Schneider 2007: 63) and that "significant differences in the realization of thanks minimizers exist between national varieties of English" (Schneider 2007: 63).

In his investigation of responses to thanks in EngE, AmE, and IrE, Schneider distinguished between realization types and tokens. The former are written in capital letters and "represented by their distinctive element or dominant form" (Schneider 2005: 116), such as WELCOME or NO PROBLEM; the latter are the actual formulations used by the informants, such as *you're welcome* or *no problem/bother/trouble* (Schneider 2005: 113–117). As Schneider (2005, 2007) conclusively shows, in the L1-varieties of English investigated responses to thanks constitute a limited inventory, as they occur almost exclusively in ten realization types, of which WELCOME, OKAY, ANYTIME, NO PROBLEM are the most frequent ones. These major realization types account for 85 to 90% of all the tokens in EngE, AmE, and IrE. The three most frequent types are in decreasing order WELCOME, ANYTIME, NO PROBLEM in IrE, OKAY, WELCOME, ANYTIME in EngE, and WELCOME, NO PROBLEM, ANYTIME in AmE (Schneider 2005: 119). In more detail, Schneider provides us with the distribution of the ten realization types in the three L1-varieties of English investigated, as illustrated in Table 1.

Furthermore, when classifying these realization types into five different *speaker strategies* (Schneider 2005: 121), the strategy of *minimizing the favour* (as in NO PROBLEM, OKAY) and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* (as in WELCOME, ANYTIME) are the dominant ones in these three varieties, "account[ing] for over 90% of all tokens in each data set" (Schneider 2005: 121).[4]

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4. For immediately comparable data from Canadian English and German learners of English, cf. Schneider (2017).

Table 1. Distribution of the realization types across L1-varieties
(adapted from Schneider 2005: 118)

Realization type	Variety			Total
	IrE	EngE	AmE	
WELCOME	51 (34.2%)	21 (16.3%)	69 (53.5%)	141 (100%)
OKAY	14 (9.4%)	66 (51.2%)	1 (0.8%)	81 (100%)
ANYTIME	38 (25.5%)	16 (12.4%)	24 (18.6%)	78 (100%)
NO PROBLEM	36 (24.2%)	8 (6.2%)	26 (20.2%)	70 (100%)
PLEASURE	1 (0.7%)	8 (6.2%)	4 (3.1%)	13 (100%)
DON'T MENTION IT	1 (0.7%)	3 (2.3%)	3 (2.3%)	7 (100%)
THANKS	2 (1.3%)	3 (2.3%)	1 (0.8%)	6 (100%)
YEAH	3 (2%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	5 (100%)
SURE	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.6%)	0	4 (100%)
DON'T WORRY…	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.8%)	0	2 (100%)
Total	149 (100%)	129 (100%)	129 (100%)	407 (100%)

Schneider's quantitative investigation of IrE, EngE, and AmE was taken as a starting point from which to explore the pragmatics of NamE, more specifically to examine the pragmatic phenomenon of responses to thanks.

3. Responses to thanks in NamE from a quantitative perspective

Schröder and Schneider (2018) studied the forms used to realize responses to thanks in NamE, basing their investigation on the same *Questionnaire on English Usage* (QEU) employed by Schneider (2005, 2007).[5] Their study is based on a total of 169 questionnaires completed by school students and young adults and they consider their "sample to be a fairly representative reflection of the diverse linguistic make-up of the country as virtually all language groups relevant for the Namibian context are represented" (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 351).[6] Their sample is equally comparable in size and composition to the data used in Schneider (2005), referred to in the previous section (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 349). In line with Schneider's study, Schröder and Schneider analysed the responses elicited by two discourse completion tasks (DCTs), which ask for the filling in of a response to a thanking act (see Figure 1).

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5. For details of this questionnaire, see Schneider (2005: 110–111) or Schröder and Schneider (2018: 342–344).

6. As we can only outline the major results here, please see the original publication (Schröder & Schneider 2018) for all necessary details of data collection and analysis.

Situation 4. Please complete.   Situation 12. Please complete.
A: *Thank you very much for the lift.*   A: *Thanks for the coffee.*
B:_____   B:_____

Figure 1. DCTs in the QEU for the elicitation of responses to thanks[7]

These two situations are to represent different levels of formality, as reflected in the choice of thanking formulae (*Thank you very much* versus *Thanks*), with situation 12 (the COFFEE situation) being slightly less formal than situation 4 (the LIFT situation). They represent also different situation types with regard to the thankable, a service as opposed to a material good (Schneider 2005: 111). That these are relevant differences is substantiated by Dinkin (2018).

As Schröder and Schneider showed, all ten realization types described for AmE, EngE, and IrE (see Table 1) are also attested in NamE. However, they occur with different frequencies and distributions. In addition, Schröder and Schneider found it necessary to add a realization type, which they coded as REJECT (2018: 353), because a number of informants expressed a clear rejection of the thanks (e.g. *Don't thank me*). As they note, "[i]n the same situations, REJECT was not observed in the L1-varieties of English" (2018: 353). REJECT is different from DON'T MENTION IT, because it is speaker/thanker-oriented (in the sense of 'you don't have to thank me'), while DON'T MENTION IT is thankable-oriented, the thankable considered to be negligible. Hence, for NamE eleven realization types occurred with the distribution as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the realization types of head moves in NamE (adapted from Schröder & Schneider 2018: 353)

Realization type	Token number	%
PLEASURE	207	61.1%
WELCOME	49	14.5%
NO PROBLEM	36	10.6%
ANYTIME	11	3.3%
OKAY	8	2.4%
SURE	7	2.1%
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT	6	1.8%
REJECT	6	1.8%
DON'T MENTION IT	4	1.2%
THANKS	3	0.9%
YEAH	2	0.6%
Total	**339**	**100%**

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7.   The numbers ('Situation 4' and 'Situation 12') indicate the position of these DCTs in the QEU.

This table illustrates very clearly that the most frequent and thus preferred realization of a response to thanks in NamE is PLEASURE, with WELCOME, which is the most frequent realization type in the L1-data (see Table 1 above), lagging far behind and being closely followed by NO PROBLEM. On comparing the four most frequent realization types in the varieties investigated, we note NamE's clear preference for one realization type (see Table 3).

Table 3. National preferences of the major realization types in IrE, EngE, AmE, and NamE (adapted from Schröder & Schneider 2018: 357)

IrE	EngE	AmE	NamE
WELCOME (34.2%)	OKAY (51.2%)	WELCOME (53.5%)	PLEASURE (61.1%)
ANYTIME (25.5%)	WELCOME (16.3%)	NO PROBLEM (20.2%)	WELCOME (14.5%)
NO PROBLEM (24.2%)	ANYTIME (12.4%)	ANYTIME (18.6%)	NO PROBLEM (10.6%)
OKAY (9.4%)	PLEASURE (6.2%)	PLEASURE (3.1%)	ANYTIME (3.3%)
	NO PROBLEM (6.2%)		

We also note that NamE is singular with regard to the choice of its most preferred realization type, as PLEASURE only plays a minor role in the other varieties of English. Consequently, NamE is also singular with respect to the clear preference for the corresponding speaker strategy (strategy B), as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of the speaker strategy types in the four varieties (adapted from Schröder & Schneider 2018: 358)

Strategy type	Variety			
	IrE	**EngE**	**AmE**	**NamE**
A: *Minimizing the favour*	34.9% (52)	60.5% (78)	23.3% (30)	16.2% (54)
B: *Expressing pleasure*	0.7% (1)	6.2% (8)	3.1% (4)	62.2% (207)
C: *Expressing appreciation of the addressee*	61.1% (91)	30.2% (39)	72.1% (93)	20.1% (67)
D: *Thanking the hearer, returning the thanks*	1.3% (2)	2.3% (3)	0.8% (1)	0.9% (3)
E: *Acknowledging the thanks*	2.0% (3)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	0.6% (2)
Total	**100% (149)**	**100% (129)**	**100% (129)**	**100% (333)**

However, NamE exhibits the same inventory of major realization types as AmE, albeit in a different order, and resembles EngE with regard to the position and distribution of WELCOME. Furthermore, speaker strategy B is virtually absent only from IrE. Schröder and Schneider therefore concluded that the differences observed between NamE and the L1 varieties investigated are not systematic but seem to be "more in degree than in kind" (2018: 358).

The authors also remarked that quite obviously the results obtained with this kind of data collection, "may only partially shed light on the actual spoken uses of the pragmatic phenomena investigated. The elicited data are neither spontaneously produced as the informants have planning time and may revise their responses, nor do they provide information on intonation or prosody" (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 343). Moreover, "informants may not report on actual behaviour in real-world situations, but they may reproduce behavioural norms and what is generally expected in a given social situation" (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 343). We therefore believe that their results need to be corroborated and triangulated with a different type of data.

4.   Responses to thanks in NamE from a qualitative perspective

4.1   Data collection

The data on which the following account is based were collected in 2017 at the Namib High School in Swakopmund during two sessions in Grade 8 and Grade 11.[8] The age and background of the informants for this study thus corresponds closely to those in the study discussed in the previous section.[9] Participants were between 13 and 18 years of age and lived in Swakopmund or its surroundings. We asked several groups of volunteers to leave the classroom with one of the researchers. They were given the background information on the two situations mentioned in Section 3 above, i.e. the LIFT situation and the COFFEE situation (see Figure 1) respectively. Subsequently they were asked to think of how to perform these situations in role-plays in front of their classmates without any further guidance concerning their enactment. They were given a maximum of five to ten minutes preparation time. Meanwhile the rest of the students in the classroom were informed by the other researcher of the upcoming performances by their fellow students and were

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8.   We would like to thank Ronél Louw at Namib High School in Swakopmund for her invaluable help and support.

9.   The quantitative study was conducted in 2015 with three groups: one group of 50 informants at Namib High School (Swakopmund) with the informants being at the time of data collection in Grade 8 and Grade 11; another one at Westside High School (Swakopmund) with 102 informants from Grade 7, Grade 11 and Grade 12. These two groups cover the age range from 12–19 years of age. A third group consisting of only 17 informants, who had already left school, was between 20–30 years of age (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 350). The age of the informants in Schneider's study was between 14 and 19 years for the Irish, between 11 and 17 years for the English and between 13 and 30 (on average 15 years) for the American informants (Schneider 2005: 111).

interviewed on their expectations. These expectations were re-addressed in the discussion after the performances.

Our approach here differs from other studies using role-plays to elicit spoken data (see Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker 2017: 29–31 for an overview) as we complemented the performances with retrospective and introspective verbal reports (see Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker 2017: 32–33 for an overview) as well as in-group discussions.[10] On the one hand, the role-plays may allow us "to examine interactional practices (e.g. speech act sequences, conventional routines, openings and closings), discourse markers […], mitigators […], turn-taking patterns, and polite and impolite practices" (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker 2017: 29) and can also lead to the study of prosodic elements (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker 2017: 31). Verbal reports, on the other hand, "can be used to increase the degree of content validity […] and thus ensure trustworthiness of the results" (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker 2017: 33). Finally, the meta-pragmatic discussions enabled us to observe the negotiation and debate of different, sometimes divergent, viewpoints concerning, for instance, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. We hence include in our analysis what Preston and Niedzielski refer to as *folk pragmatics*, i.e. "non-linguists' conscious responses to and comments on pragmatic concerns" (2017: 206).

From Grade 8, three groups of two students each (one all-female and two all-male) performed the LIFT situation. From Grade 11, one group of two female students performed the LIFT situation and another group of two females did the same for the COFFEE situation.

The interviews preceding the role-plays, the subsequent role-plays and the final meta-discussions by the entire class, with both researchers present, were recorded by two cameras (one hand-held and one stationary)[11] and two Zoom recorders. We mainly transcribed the video-recordings from the stationary camera as these proved to be of superior quality. Wherever necessary, we complemented the transcriptions with the help of the other three recordings. The video- and audio-recorded material was transcribed and analysed with ELAN,[12] and provided us with roughly 1 1/2 hours altogether of student interactions.

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10. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) also combined role-plays with retrospective reporting. We have, however, no knowledge of any study combining role-play, verbal reports and group discussions in any comparable way.

11. We thank Iris Schneider and Thomas Pencs for their help with these recordings.

12. We would like to thank Saeb Sadek, Lisa Schumacher, and Teresa Turnbull for their help with the transcriptions.

4.2   Data analysis

Much to our surprise, none of the groups in Grade 8 performed an expression of gratitude as expected and the role-plays took a very different course from what we anticipated. The first group performed the LIFT situation with the passenger leaving the car without thanking for the lift and the driver protesting against this ungratefulness. This passenger's behaviour in particular also provoked strong reactions from their fellow students who – in the final discussions – were thus initially more concerned with thanking practices as exhibited in the performances in general than with responses to thanks:

> The first [/] the first couple, the [/] the passenger seemed like she didn't like the driver, so *she didn't say thank you* or [/] or in the second couple [//] people [//] the second group, they [/] they said thank you and [/] and have a nice day[13] and the third group just, they just erm kicked him out of the car, because he was asking a lot of questions about stuff that they didn't wanna do, like school or yes.
>
> (Grade 8, 26:14)

> The first group, the girl like that left was very rude because the other girl offered her a lift home and *she didn't even bother to say thank you or something*. She just got out. The second group was the best because they were friends, they went to a party together, they went home, not together but like he [left him at home?] and he said thanks see you again. And then the third group, the driver wasn't really interested in school work; he just wanted to party and then the passenger really wanted to like XX schoolwork and stuff like that XXX [?car?].   (Grade 8, 26: 58)

> So erm the first group was kind of unbelievable because the [/] the girl that needed a lift actually [/] actually just came out to see if she wanted the driver to see her, and then she knew that the driver would give her a lift. It's like *she wasn't thankful* because she got what she wanted. The second group was [/] was kind [/] kind to each other, and the third group was just, they [//] the driver actually kicked the passenger out of the car himself   (Grade 8, 28: 21)

In this, the students confirm the importance of the act of thanking, which becomes most apparent when "missing in situations in which we would expect [it]" (Jautz 2013: 6). However, when explicitly asked for a response to a thanks in the pre-role-play discussion, students in Grade 8 would assume that PLEASURE was the appropriate answer:

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13.   Actually, this is not what happened in Group 2. In this group the passenger also leaves without an expression of gratitude but with a farewell ('See you later') and the driver responding with a 'Thanks' to which no real response is given but both interactants reply simultaneously 'Ciao'.

> KPS: […], what would happen at the end of the ride? They have the ride; what would they say to each other? What do you think?
>
> Stud A: Thank you.
>
> KPS: Thank you!
>
> Stud B: You would say erm thank you
>
> KPS: What would you say in response to that?
>
> Stud C: It is my [deepest?] *pleasure*.   (Grade 8, 22: 28)

In Grade 11, the passenger in the all-female group performing the LIFT-situation leaves the car saying

> Stud.: […] okay thanks [/] thanks for the ride […]   (Grade 11, 31:56)

However, the background noises do not allow for an analysis of the driver's response. When asked after the role-play what her answer had been, however, she claimed it to have been OKAY, but she also stated that the 'usual' response would be PLEASURE:

> Stud: When she said thank you I just said *okay*
>
> KPS: You said okay?
>
> Student: Yes cause I think that's the response that you usually say it's *my pleasure* # but it's just *okay* cause I don't know her and she doesn't know me so why would I do this?
>
> […]
>
> If you know each other very well XX well actually it's good manners if you say *my pleasure* if someone says thank you […] (Grade 11, 33:12)

This is also what other students in Grade 11 mention as a normal response to a thanks in the pre-role-play discussion:

> KPS: […] what would happen after the thanking what would be the response to that do you reckon yeah
>
> Stud: I think the driver was like yeah *it's my pleasure* let me know if you ever…
>
>   (Grade 11, 28:45)

Furthermore, in the meta-pragmatic discussions after the role-play, students in Grade 11 also mention NO PROBLEM as a possible realization type:

> I think *no problem* in my life is sort of toward people who I'm friends with, who I'm close with. Like, for example, if my best friend said thank you, I would say *no problem*. But if someone who I look up to or someone who's not in my closer group of friends, I would say *it's a pleasure*   (Grade 11, 50:18)

This comment reveals that the formality of the situation and the relationship between the interlocutors in terms of power and familiarity seems to influence the choice of the realization type. However students make no reference to the choice

of the thanking formulae (e.g. *Thank you very much* versus *Thanks*), influencing their choice of a response.[14]

Moreover, the students in Grade 11 see WELCOME as another possible response to a thanks in the Namibian context:

KPS:	What do you normally say in response to thanking # thanking?
Students:	*This is a pleasure* XXX [=background noise and mumbling]
KPS:	It's a pleasure
Students:	*You're welcome*.
KPS:	Yeah. Is that the standard thing to say what you normally expect. Everyone?
Stud:	No
KPS:	No?
Stud:	Usually erm I feel awkward when someone thanks me for something
	(Grade 11, 29:21)

This last comment is particularly interesting and relevant, because it provides a possible explanation for the missing thanks in the performances of the groups in Grade 8, discussed above. As students in Grade 11 explain, they would not always find it necessary to thank somebody and hence would not expect or give a response to a thanks:

KPS:	You feel akward #
Stud:	Yeah
KPS:	And what's the consequence of that?
Stud:	I don't say anything
KPS:	You don't say anything?
Stud:	Yeah. I just say bye or something (Grade 11, 29:45)

Stud:	Sometimes you don't expect a person to say thank you # because it's your friend, acquaintance so it is yeah okay XX and you don't really do that
KPS:	Aha you don't
Stud:	Well you do you can but you don't expect the person to say thank you because it's not really a big deal (Grade 11, 30:12)

Like you know I just say we don't [///] we know like we should say my pleasure, you know, and [/] and thank you, but then sometimes we just choose not to, because like she said, you know, it's something you don't expect someone to thank you for. It's something that's natural and you will do for them anyway so why would someone thank you for it? And why would she say my pleasure? (Grade 11, 50:48)

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14. In the quantitative study, different formality levels were assumed with the LIFT situation (*Thank you very much for the lift*) being more formal than the COFFEE situation (*Thanks for the coffee*) because of the respective thanking formula (see Section 3 above).

Similarly, when the second all-female group from Grade 11 performed the COFFEE situation, the interlocutors argued for a while about who would let the other pay. Eventually, one won out and the other thanked her for it, but the thankee did not give a response:

Stud 1:   […] can we get the bill please? [//]
          I'll pay for this
Stud 2:   No no it's fine. It's only 39 €.
Stud 1:   No I can pay for it
Stud 2:   Thank you!   (Grade 11, 41:45)

Hence, students in Namibia seem to perform what we could possibly code as BLANK as thanks as well as a response to a thanks. This seems to be a new realization type not described in the previous study of NamE. Possibly, the informants felt obliged to fill in the blank line in the written questionnaire. In the quantitative study reported on in Section 3 above, only two informants actually left the space blank. But as they had apparently stopped filling in the questionnaire, these were not taken into consideration in the subsequent analysis (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 352).

4.3   Discussion

The role-plays and the meta-pragmatic focus-group discussions provide us with valuable additional and new information concerning thanking practices and responses to thanks in NamE. First, we can identify PLEASURE as the norm and standard response to a thanks in NamE and thus validate the results elicited in the quantitative study (Section 3 above; Schröder & Schneider 2018). All students in our study apparently agree that PLEASURE would be the default response to a thanks in NamE. In this, they corroborate the findings for what Schröder and Schneider refer to as the reproduction "of behavioural norms and what is generally expected in a given social situation" and hence "the cultural models underlying actual performance in spoken interaction, which are stored in the long-term memory of speakers as part of their pragmatic competence" (2018: 343). According to our findings, the underlying cultural model would require PLEASURE in most Namibian contexts.

However, when referring to 'cultural models', we need to take into consideration that very few Namibians would be able to identify one Namibian culture, but rather speak of several Namibian cultures (cf. e.g. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 279). As Anchimbe and Janney note "[…] postcolonial pragmatic practices cannot be adequately explained without reference to the complex, hybrid cultural contexts in which they occur" (2017: 111). These are also determined by diverse L1-backgrounds and hence, not surprisingly, we find the home languages or L1s also playing a role in the choice for the realization of a response to a thanks:

But we don't speak [/] but we don't speak English at home, so # in my language[15] there is not really a way of saying my pleasure. We just say it's fine

(Grade 11, 51:47)

In my native home language, which is Afrikaans, I was told to say no problem rather than it's a pleasure

(Grade 11, 52:14)

This last comment is particularly interesting in the present context, because interference with Afrikaans was one of the explanations for the dominance of PLEASURE in NamE (see Schröder & Schneider 2018: 358–359 for a discussion), which is seemingly contradicted by this remark.

In addition, the present study also informs us that familiarity with the interlocutor and the formality of the situation also determine the choice of a particular realization type. Apparently, NO PROBLEM and possibly WELCOME are among the realization types that younger Namibians might choose in less formal situations and with peers.[16] However, probably very few of the students in our study would choose PLEASURE as a response to thanks when talking to their peers. Nonetheless, the data elicited in the role-plays and the focus group discussions cannot be systematically compared to the quantitative QEU-data with regard to the different formality levels assumed for the two situations on the basis of the different thanking formulae (e.g. *Thank you very much for the lift* versus *Thanks for the coffee*) alone. The exact wording of the thanksgiving in the role-plays could not be controlled and also the students could decide on a different level of familiarity between the interlocutors than suggested in the QEU.

In addition, many students would perform neither the second nor the third part of the pattern described by Jautz (2013: 8). Hence, neither a *thanksgiving* nor an *acknowledgement* will follow a *reference action* if the latter is considered expectable and unremarkable in the context of the interlocutors' relationship. We therefore wonder whether the responses to thanks should really be considered "a universal illocution which can be realized in a number of different ways in all languages" as has been suggested by Schneider (2005: 102). The difficulty of reacting appropriately in a potentially face-threatening situation could play a part in this speech act for the Namibian informants, as students explicitly voice their uneasiness linked to such situations. However, we are well aware that the notion of 'face', in particular 'negative face', and the related politeness strategies may not necessarily be transferable to the Namibian context, as Anchimbe and Janney (2017: 111) show for other

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15. This student's home language is Damara.

16. Dinkin (2018) reports that NO PROBLEM is favoured by young Canadians among friends and in informal situations and increasingly also in more formal contexts.

postcolonial and multilingual societies. However, the observations confirm results for British English (BrE) and AmE, namely that "the more informal a conversation, the less likely it is that thanks minimizers will occur" (Schneider 2007: 80). Finally (and possibly as a result of the last observation), the present study also introduces BLANK as a possible realization type into the study of responses to thanks in NamE. In this, NamE seems to resemble BrE for which the absence of a response or the replacement of a verbal response by a non-verbal one (e.g. shrugging one's shoulders) has also been reported (Schneider 2005: 108; Schneider 2007: 68).[17] We do not know whether the reasons for this are the same as in NamE and this definitely needs further investigation. But from personal observation and in personal communication, we deduce that at least in some indigenous cultures in Namibia the entire speech act may not be performed.[18] This may also explain why a rejection of thanks (REJECT) occurred as a Namibianism in the quantitative study discussed in Section 3 above.

However, it seems as if this strategy, which is not captured by any of the five strategies mentioned in the previous section, only develops with speakers' maturity. While the Grade 8 students react very strongly to the non-performance of the thanking act by one of their peers with openly prescriptive statements, the Grade 11 students discuss the possibility of this strategy and the intricate facework of the speech act as a whole in much more detail.

We may conclude that the analysis of qualitative data of the kind presented here significantly improves our knowledge of the use of responses to thanks and to showing gratitude in NamE. However, we are well aware that the role-plays themselves seem to elicit primarily formulaic language use, which somewhat resembles the type of information received from the quantitative data. Again, this is particularly clearly visible in the reactions to the performances in Grade 8. But the volunteers in Grade 11 also very much perceived the role-plays as staged performances and where participants did not necessarily behave naturally. The performers in both groups focussed more on the staging of the interaction and not so much on the interaction itself. The students, both performers and audience, also commented on the awkwardness and artificiality of the situation.

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17. See also Bieswanger (2015: 538–539) on non-verbal responses and non-realisations in AmE and CanE.

18. Note that this is also true for some South African cultures. As reported by Susan Coetzee (p.c.), she literally translated *You are welcome* into Sesotho and thus introduced this into this language. Interestingly, the option to say nothing has also been observed in German (Schlieben-Lange & Weydt 1978).

I feel like when they greeted each other it was sort of # not normal in a normal social environment like they were standing there and J***** is like "Oh she's my friend I'm supposed to hug her" like and then XXX was just like "Okay she's hugging me" I think in [//] like on normal terms it would be them hugging like "Hi" and then…

(Grade 11, 18:23)

KPS: So you were ?internally embarrassed that you had to do it like that right?
Stud.: Yes yes but I had to act so   (Grade 11, 25:47)

Yeah, but it was just also because me and **** know each other so I kind of XX know each other or it was just difficult to also just make a situation like we were just sitting in the car so we had to make a little act XX yeah, but it was [a good experience?] to act like we don't know each other to see what you say XX

(Grade 11, 35:23)

Thus it seems that role-plays are not ideal for eliciting near-naturally occurring speech and pragmatic practices. However, role-plays proved extremely valuable for eliciting information on cultural models, pragmatic norms, and thanking practices in the meta-pragmatic focus-group discussions. These discussions would probably not have provided us with as much insight had they not been triggered by the embedded role-plays.

Nevertheless, we are well aware that Namibian communicative culture should not be perceived as a homogenous entity but most likely consists of divergent sub-cultures. Macro-social factors such as region, socio-economic class, ethnicity, gender, age, education, and religion probably influence language use. Hence, "realisations for a given illocution vary across sub-cultures, and […] the same realization may have divergent uses in different sub-cultures" (Schneider & Barron 2008: 13) within the Namibian ecology. As we pointed out previously: Damara-speakers may prefer *it's fine* over PLEASURE because of their L1-culture. Speakers with a different ethnic background may prefer to say nothing (BLANK) or REJECT the thanks, because responses to thanks or thanking as such are not part of their respective culture. Furthermore, "[d]ifferent types of language variation may interact, e.g. regional, gender and age variation" (Schneider & Barron 2008: 15). It will be the task of our future research to establish which values are preferred by other age groups, diverse ethnicities and, of course, in other Namibian languages.

5.   Conclusions and outlook

The present study complements previous studies of NamE by considering the pragmatic level of this variety of English. It also adds to the study of varieties of English in a more general way. A pragmatic approach to language variation is still in its infancy in non-native World Englishes research, as short and rather sketchy chapters

in Melchers and Shaw (2011: 30–31, 141–142) and Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 131–147) or the total neglect of the pragmatic perspective in other handbooks (e.g. Kortmann & Schneider 2008) show. We agree with Schneider and Barron that any analysis of a variety of English "which concentrates on linguistic form alone and ignores communicative functions altogether is not only incomplete, but also inadequate" (2008: 3).

We believe that the present account of responses to thanks in Namibia also complements earlier findings on this pragmatic phenomenon in NamE. The importance of PLEASURE as the default response to a thanks has been confirmed by the statements of our informants. However, the complexity of the facework and the importance of divergent cultural norms which influence the speech act in this pragmatic situation are seemingly higher than previously assumed and possibly even more intricate than in those monolingual societies described in Schneider (2005: 103–104).

We acknowledge that by following the contrastivity principle advocated in variational pragmatics (Barron 2017: 96), we have compared a native English speech act with its realizations in a non-native/indigenized variety of English and may have made a fundamental error in assuming that a comparison is even possible. As Anchimbe and Janney are correct in pointing out: "Reasons in postcolonial conversation for offering, *thanking*, promising, agreeing, apologizing, congratulating, hedging, or expressing sympathy, regret, or willingness can vary considerably from motives for performing similar acts in Western conversation" (Anchimbe & Janney 2017: 110, our emphasis). However, considering the complete lack of corresponding studies of comparable varieties of English we believe that by employing folk pragmatics techniques, as in meta-pragmatic focus group discussions etc., we satisfy their call for community-based and emic approaches to the investigation of pragmatic practices in a postcolonial speech community (e.g. Anchimbe & Janney 2017: 117). As the strong reactions of the students in Grade 8 to the non-performance of the thanking sequence indicate, the speech act as such is not absent from Namibian communicative usages but is rather considered important, at least in some settings. The discussions by the Grade 11 students further show that possibly a change from strategy B to strategy D may evolve with maturity, depending on the setting, and that complex facework negotiations are going on.

The present study also shows that the focus group discussions and the folk-pragmatic techniques employed proved highly valuable and informative. Furthermore, "these investigations are good groundwork for professionals to look further (with observational, experimental, or other pragmatic research techniques) into the clues given by the folk respondents" (Preston & Niedzielski 2017: 199) and will hence improve future research on the pragmatics of NamE and other languages in this multilingual and multiethnic ecology.

The representativity of our findings is of course compromised by the fact that we rely exclusively on the evaluations of two groups from Swakopmund, aged between 13 and 18 years of age. This limitation is justified, however, to guarantee comparability with previous studies of responses to thanks in NamE and other varieties of English (see Section 4.1 above). Future research on the pragmatics of NamE (and other varieties of English for that matter) will have to pay close attention to other macro-social and micro-social factors influencing language choice (cf. Schneider & Barron 2008: 16–18 for a discussion). The same goes for the effect of genre, which has been shown to influence the frequency and the choice of a response to thanks in BrE and AmE (Schneider 2007) as well as of expressions of gratitude at a more general level in British and New Zealand English (Jautz 2013).

Finally, the study presented here can only be seen as a pilot and is still preliminary in so far as it has only analysed a comparatively small amount of qualitative data from a small focus group. Needless to say, further studies are needed, with a larger amount of data and including other pragmatic phenomena and more Namibian languages. By connecting the description of the pragmatics of NamE not only to the description of other national varieties of English but also to other Namibian languages, notably German (see Kern, Schröder & Schneider 2018), and preferably also to languages such as Afrikaans and Oshiwambo, a more comprehensive picture will be obtained. Such an approach will substantially enhance the understanding of the sociolinguistic complexity and the negotiation of pragmatic strategies in the multilingual ecology of Namibia. The present study, however, demonstrates that analyses of qualitative data – time consuming as they may be – should definitely be part of any such prospective research and this chapter therefore serves as a contribution to future endeavours.

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Literary creativity in Namibian English

CHAPTER 10

Namibian literature in English
An overview

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This essay provides a survey of Namibian literature written in English both
before and after independence in 1990, but with a focus on post-independence
writing. The survey is structured by genre categories, starting with autobiog-
raphies, novels and short stories and continuing with drama and poetry. In
each section, important authors and anthologies are briefly named and selected
works are given more detailed attention. While aiming at a general overview of
Namibian literature, this essay puts particular focus on the way the texts negoti-
ate the topic of personal and national identity, either with reference to the coun-
try's colonial past and the liberation struggle or regarding contemporary society
and its social inequalities, contrasts and cultural diversity.

Keywords: Namibian literature, post-colonial literature, cultural identity,
national identity

1.   Introduction: Namibian literature and the challenges
of cultural identity

Namibia is a country of many cultures and languages. For young Namibians grow-
ing up since independence, it is a challenge to navigate the different cultural fields
existing side by side, particularly in the urban centres. A number of contrasts and
socially dividing factors make it difficult particularly for the younger generations to
establish a sense of identity and of direction for themselves – the traditions of the
different ethnic groups, the offers and pressures of Western culture industry, the
gap between rich (and self-enriching, cf. Melber 2014: 149) elites on the one hand
and the underprivileged parts of society on the other, the residues of racial discrim-
ination from the apartheid era, which are particularly virulent in the land question,
and the contrast between city life and life in the countryside. Both elites and poor
migrant workers living in the urban centres "continuously straddle contrasting

life-worlds" (Winterfeldt 2010: 153), maintaining strong bonds with their clans and families in the countryside while adapting to the faster pace of living, the habits of consumption and a more individualistic way of life in the city, often accompanied by a sense of alienation from cultural traditions and nature.

The work of Namibian literary authors offers insights both into the historical development and the contemporary complexities of such socially dividing factors. In contrast to political or sociological analysis, literature shows the impact of social history and reality at the example of (fictional) individual lives, presented from individual perspectives which allow the reader to identify and sympathise with a particular situation. By creating individual ways of dealing with the challenges of identity formation in the face of a colonial or post-colonial society, literary works offer moments of hope and reconciliation, but also of defeat and injustice, without over-simplification or easy solutions. This combination of concrete cases and the multi-layered symbolic representation of general social problems is the unique value of literary texts and their contribution to struggles of creating individual and national identities. From a linguistic perspective, the history of Namibian literature written in English can be linked to different stages in the development of Namibian English. In Edgar W. Schneider's model of five stages in the development of new varieties of English in (post)colonial countries, literary writing in English generally indicates that "a high degree of cultural as well as linguistic independence has been achieved" (Schneider 2007: 50). In this model, "literary creativity in English, […] rooted in the new culture and adopting elements of the new language variety" (Schneider 2007: 50) commonly emerges during stage four, which he calls "endonormative stabilisation".[1] Typically occurring after political independence, this stage shows an increasing sense of collective national identity or even "the birth of a new nation" (Schneider 2007: 49).

In this essay, my aim is to provide an overview of Namibian literature written in English before and after independence with a focus on the topic of identity creation. Starting with prose literature, briefly touching on plays and ending with poetry, I attempt to give brief overviews of the range of productions in each genre and to present selected works in more detail, with particular focus on their treatment of personal and national identity. These are concerns which all the literary works share, and they are concerns which lie at the root of many other challenges the country is facing until today.

I focus on works written in English by Namibian-born authors or by those who have lived in Namibia for most of their lives, but briefly mention a number of novels written by non-Namibians that deal with Namibian history and society. My survey

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1.   For an overview of the five stages, cf. Schneider (2007: 32–55).

does not claim to be exhaustive, but I have spent over two years in Namibia, tracing as many published and in some cases unpublished works as I could. Chasing copies of Namibian books can lead to interesting journeys and encounters; sometimes, the only way to get a book was to visit the authors themselves.

For an author in Namibia, to get published is very difficult, and to make a living from creative writing alone is virtually impossible. Macmillan Windhoek and Wordweaver are two publishing houses that promote Namibian literature, joined in 2016 by Martial Publishing.[2] UNAM Press, the local University press, also publishes literary works. Those types of literature that are created for performance, i.e. performance poetry and plays, offer more platforms and support for authors. There is a particularly vibrant performance poetry scene in Windhoek, where speakers voice concerns about racial discrimination, gender-based discrimination and violence and politics as well as more personal themes in creative ways and in a positive atmosphere free from judgment and bias.[3] Keamogetsi J. Molapong, one of the country's best-known contemporary poets, whose work will be discussed in Section 4, emphasises the potential of poetry in the current political climate: "In Namibia we need to engage, share and at times confront the socio-economic disparities and poetry can be such a tool […]." (Mukaiwa 2016) Namibia's theatrical productions also offer a space for authors to share their work, but funding is tight and competition is high, as the play *The Show Isn't Over Until…* (2000) by Vickson Tablah Hangula, discussed in Section 3, reveals.

There has been very little research in Namibian literature to date. A few articles give overviews of Namibian prose and poetry (cf. Arich-Gerz 2010; Vale 2008; Frank 2018), engage with individual authors such as Molapong or Nyathi (cf. Malaba 2010; Mlambo & Kandemiri 2015) or analyse specific themes in Namibian literature (cf. Haarhoff 1991). The most comprehensive research project concerning Namibian literature has been published in 2018: *Writing Namibia: Literature in Transition*, edited by Sarala Krishnamurthy and Helen Vale. This volume is a compilation of detailed discussions of Namibian literatures, literary performances and film productions by a number of experts in these fields and will hopefully trigger further critical investigation. Of course, the same hope inspires the following survey.

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2. For the interesting history of the publishing house New Namibia Books (1990–2005), cf. Katjavivi (2018).

3. Spoken Word Namibia is known for its monthly sessions of performance poetry at Warehouse theatre, which have not taken place since 2018 but will hopefully be resumed (cf. Mukaiwa 2018).

2.   Prose literature

The most popular genre of prose writing in Namibia by far is autobiography. Narrative renderings of personal experiences during the liberation struggle, most prominently stories of fighters in the struggle as well as exiles, make up most of the published works within this genre. In these, the storylines of national and personal identity are closely linked as the narrated lives are shaped by the fight against the South African rulers and the apartheid system. Due to their respective roles within the ethnic groups and within the struggle, there are some general differences between male and female autobiographies. Sam Nujoma's *Where Others Wavered* (2001) is the most prominent example of a male autobiography. It belongs to a type of writing that has been called "founding father autobiographies" (Fulkerson-Dikuua 2018: 59) and links an individual life story to the narrative of a nation freeing itself from suppression. As Patrick Colm Hogan points out, it "closely follows the heroic genre" (2018: 76) and presents its protagonist as a descendant of meritorious leaders, whose fate is strongly linked to that of his nation. With his people, he suffers conquest and suppression, but actively shapes his and his country's destiny by fighting and winning it back.

When told from the point of view of female protagonists, autobiographies of exile and struggle tend to tell a different tale. In the wake of a few early examples such as Ellen Namhila's *The Price of Freedom* (1997), the new century has witnessed more women writing and publishing their personal accounts of the fight for independence and, increasingly, of their experiences in independent Namibia. Lydia Shaketange's *Walking the Boeing 707* (2008) narrates the author's story from the age of 14, when she decides to cross the northern border towards Angola and join the SWAPO in their fight for freedom from South Africa. Her journey leads her to Zambia, where children like her receive schooling in SWAPO camps, to Sierra Leone for secondary school, to Finland and England for further studies in education and finally, at the age of 29, back to Namibia, where she feels both excited to be home and estranged. After years of working for a greater cause, she and the other returnees have to find their individual places in society. "Overnight, people had to move from thinking collectively to thinking individually; instead of looking to the party for their personal needs to be fulfilled, they needed to look to themselves. This was the hardest thing to do." (Shaketange 2008: 123) The new way of life after independence constitutes both a shift in ideology and a shift in real-life realities. The ideology of the fight for independence was infused by socialist ideas of community, which corresponded to most existing community structures in Namibia. The new country, with its birth coinciding with the breakdown of socialist regimes in Europe, was shaped by Western models of democratic capitalism. Shaketange's

words show how these discrepancies on a bigger ideological level translated to an individual level, where people who had fought for SWAPO beliefs and let their lives be taken over by the struggle were now left to fight for themselves. Many of them felt like strangers in their homes and faced an uncertain future under the threat of homelessness and unemployment.[4] In the case of Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu's *Taming My Elephant* (2016), it is not the protagonist's decision to join the fight for independence, but she and her whole school in Northern Namibia are simply abducted one night and brought to SWAPO camps across the border. After a long time of bewilderment and simply following strange rules, she gradually comes to identify with the struggle. "Slowly but surely, we glided from the naïve, narrow minded and traditional human beings to vibrant members of a liberation movement. We were prepared to live according to the motto: Everything for the struggle!" (Amulungu 2016: 121) As with Shaketange, the biggest challenge for her sense of national and personal identity comes after independence. As Fulkerson-Dikuua summarises: "Thus these women […] embody the transition from traditional Namibian values and authoritarian structures to a generation which has blended their knowledge of tradition with that of the broader world which they have encountered in exile" (2018: 64). In the case of Amulungu, this transition becomes most evident in her marriage to another SWAPO member, a White Namibian whom she meets in exile – a shocking alliance at the time. Her account of the challenges after independence mostly focus on this very personal struggle to combine the formerly opposed sides in one family; a struggle, however, which can be seen as representative of the general social challenges as the country tries to reinvent itself in a spirit of reconciliation.

Of course, this brief overview is not meant to suggest that all men's biographies take a heroic stance from the top of the liberation process, while all women's life narratives take the perspective of the smaller players in the game. The widely read autobiography of Libertina Amathila, for example, *Making a Difference* (2012), portrays a highly educated, powerful woman, who takes part in negotiations and organisation on the highest political levels during the fight for independence and who returns to independent Namibia to join the ranks of the country's leaders in parliament and government. Although a staunch supporter of SWAPO, she also voices criticism of the party's development, particularly during the choice of the

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4. This implied critique of how the celebrated freedom fighters were treated after independence surfaces in many literary works, for example in the play *The Show Isn't Over Until…* by Vickson Tablah Hangula, which will be discussed later in this essay (see Section 3).

presidential candidate to follow Sam Nujoma (cf. Amathila 2012: Failed Attempt at Democracy).[5]

While autobiographies typically comprise long stretches of time as well as many characters and details, connected by the story of one life, the genre of the short story presents characters in a completely different way. In its relatively brief space and limited plot, every detail is filled with meaning and tied up closely with the central idea of the whole. Namibian short stories often focus on one particular event or character constellation which points at a social, political or historical wrongdoing. In the collection *Coming on Strong: Writing by Namibian Women* (1996) edited by Orford and Nicanor, for example, several stories create moments of personal suffering and cruelty under the apartheid regime and during the fight for independence. Marialena van Tonder, who grew up in South Africa but now lives in Namibia, focuses on social and political problems in independent Namibia. She prefaces each of her stories in the collection *Namibia in Balance* (2002) with an extract from the Namibian Constitution that proclaims human rights which are then violated by characters in the stories, revealing the greed of individuals who threaten the functioning of the community by their ruthlessness. At the end of each story, however, these wrongs are at least partially righted or avenged, giving a sense of poetic and/or social and political justice and of hope that the institutional and moral frameworks of the young country will protect the society from such corrosive elements. This tendency to somewhat simplistic solutions to such fictional but exemplary problems also features in some of Jaspar David Utley's texts in *Allsorts and Other Stories* (1991). Utley is British but lived in Namibia for several years and wrote extensively about the country. In his stories, the poetic justice in the face of – for example – cruel, oppressive husbands takes more drastic forms, culminating with one protagonist killing her husband and serving him to his male friends as *braai* (i.e. barbecue) (cf. "Braai", 26). Sylvia Schlettwein, a German-Namibian author, also creates drastic scenarios in her short stories. Some are situated within the bounds of the reality we know, as in "The Matron" (Morris & Schlettwein 2012), which shows the moment of revenge of a Black woman who has been abused by her White employer for years and borne him two unacknowledged children. Others are dystopian ("At the Tropic of Jackal") or fantastic, such as "Blood Brothers", which features vampires roaming the Namibian deserts. Among the non-fantastic prose

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5. Earlier examples of autobiographies about leading freedom fighters are Dennis Mercer's *Breaking Contract: The Struggle of Vinnia Ndadi* (1974) and John Ya Otto's *Battlefront Namibia* (1982); both are described in more detail by Dorian Haarhoff (1991: 224–229). Also, there are other biographical accounts that do not follow the prototypical trajectory of rural childhood – exile – return, such as Jackson Kaujeua's *Tears over the Deserts* (1994), which ends with his leaving for exile.

that is predominant in contemporary Namibian works, these stories stand out in their drastic contrasts between seemingly non-fantastic settings and the sudden intrusion of fantastic elements, which creates the disconcerting impression of a society that is coming apart at the seams.

While short stories are an important and popular genre, the novel has a unique potential to address the pressing themes of Namibian society on a broader scale and with a more detailed and intricate development of characters and plot. Up to date, however, not many novels in English have been published by Namibian authors. From the time before independence, one novel stands out as the most literary example that brings to life the experiences of an 'ordinary' Omuwambo man under South African apartheid rule: Joseph Diescho's *Born of the Sun* (1988).[6] In many respects, the story of the protagonist Muronga is similar to those recounted in the autobiographies mentioned above: From a setting of rural upbringing and traditional community structures in his Northern Namibian homeland, the protagonist sets off to work in the South African mines since this is the only available option to pay the taxes imposed by the South African government. He experiences the exploitative working conditions in the mines and becomes affiliated with the movement of resistance against the White oppressors, which incurs their wrath and violence against him. Faced with a choice, he decides to go into exile to join the fight for independence, although this means that he does not know when or if he will see his family ever again. Despite his misgivings, he feels sure that he has made the right decision: "I did what I had to do. My duty was then, and is still, to protect and provide for my family and my people. I had no other choice. I did the only thing I could." (1988: 289) The individual and the national become closely entwined in this novel, but not in a heroic narrative that emphasises destiny and battle, but with a focus on personal attachment, responsibility and compassion, as Patrick Colm Hogan points out in his juxtaposition of Diescho's novel and Sam Nujoma's biography (cf. 2018: 85). Muronga is an essentially gentle, loving character, whose strong connection to his community and family force him to sacrifice his family life twice, first as a contract labourer, then as a freedom fighter. The form of the novel allows the reader, in particular the reader from a different cultural background, to be immersed in the atmosphere and value system that shaped (and still shapes) people from rural Northern Namibia: The deep sense of belonging to a community in which communal spirit and mutual help, a strict social hierarchy, a close connection to the land and recurring rhythms of work, rituals and festivities form the central core of life.

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6.   See also Schröder (this volume) for a discussion of this novel as well as Diescho's other novel *Troubled Waters* (1992).

Besides *Born of the Sun*, several other novels revolve around the fight for independence: Kapache Victor's *On the Run* (1994) portrays a group of young men who are active in the student movement against the apartheid regime and threatened by the police. Joseph Diescho's *Troubled Waters* (1992)[7] changes back and forth between the perspective of a White South African soldier, who is teaching Black children at a Namibian school, and his Black, female colleague as they slowly become closer and fall in love. In *Meekulu's Children* (2000), Kaleni Hiyalwa tells the story of a young girl growing up with her grandmother during the fight for independence in a Northern Namibian village. The novel *Marrying Apartheid* by Ndeutala Hishongwa (1986) presents a marriage destroyed by the cruelties of the apartheid regime.[8] In *Power Is Sweet* (2003), John Makala Lilemba tells a story of power struggles in a fictional country called Kangwa. Salom Shilongo's *The Hopeless Hopes* (2013) shows the hardships of Robert, a young man who suffers in the contract labour system devised by the apartheid regime until he kills his cruel employer, makes his way home and joins the fight for independence. After the country has been freed, however, he is disillusioned by the persistent poverty of himself and the neighbours in his slum, ignored by those newly in power: "Now more black people were driving luxurious cars than the Whites and more blacks held leadership positions, yet there were still more slums than houses. More tears instead of smiles, more diseases instead of cures, and more depression instead of joy." (Shilongo 2013: 127) This sense of disappointment in the new elite is a recurring theme in all literary forms in Namibia. In the end, Robert succumbs to alcohol and hopelessness and dies in a car accident as he crosses the street in an alcoholic daze.

Among the novels set in contemporary, post-independence Namibia, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) by Neshani Andreas is the best-known example. Set in a Northern Ovambo village, it revolves around two women, Ali and Kauna, who are connected by a friendship so close that Ali's husband names their daughter after Kauna, thereby joining the two families as tightly as relatives. For Ali, who came to the village as a stranger when she married her husband, her bond with Kauna was essential to help her settle into the village. In turn, she watches out for Kauna and is deeply concerned when Kauna's husband Shange mistreats and betrays her. Kauna suffers this treatment without challenging him, but when Shange suddenly dies, she refuses to mourn him in the traditional way. During the days of the customary wake and funeral that follow, her strange behaviour causes much rumour and even speculation that she might have killed her husband with

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7.   See previous footnote.

8.   Hiyalwa's and Hishongwa's novels are analysed and compared in more detail by Netta Kornberg (2018).

witchcraft. Her in-laws make use of this and cheat her and her children out of her inheritance so that she decides to leave the village.

The story is told by Ali, the first-person narrator.[9] She has a critical mind and judges the behaviour of Shange, his family and the village by her own moral standards. The novel opens with Ali running into an older, much respected and influential woman from the village. They greet each other in the traditional way, enquiring after the family, but Ali secretly abhors the woman. "What I most dislike about her is that she does either little or nothing for the women and widows who are mistreated by their husbands and in-laws, despite her position. She believes that marriage should be one miserable, lifelong experience. […] It is the way of the world." (Andreas 2001: 4) Ali does respect her elders and believe in the importance of the community, but she feels that the community has a responsibility towards the individuals, particularly the powerless ones, and must protect them. For her, tradition and community are not values in themselves, but part of a contract to sustain each other, and if that contract is broken, the individual has a right to fight for him- or herself.

Several parallel stories from the village serve as a backdrop to Kauna's life, showing social structures and the limited extent to which individuals, particularly young female individuals, are allowed to determine their own lives. However, other memories of Ali's show how deeply engrained solidarity and community spirit are in this society. When Kauna once despairs of getting her fields tilled before the rain, the village women get together in a ritual named *okakungungu* and finish her work in one day, with a traditional celebration to follow. Ali is deeply impressed by this occasion: "I felt connected to these women, these sisters, these mothers, these aunts, and grandmothers. As we parted, I looked at them and thought, Yes, girls, you have done it again." (Andreas 2001: 119) With such flashbacks, the narrative jumps back and forth in time, adding such memories to the central plot of Shange's death and the following days, showing how Ali and Kauna have arrived at their present state of mind. When Kauna leaves, she and Ali part in sorrow, but comfort each other with pledges of their love, and Ali is partly consoled by a conversation with her husband in which he shows his deep respect for her and his critical mind, which allows him to decide on his own values and course of action, not just accepting traditions. He claims that "so much is changing now and we are not changing with it fast enough" (Andreas 2001: 180) and critically reviews the behaviour of his fellow men, so that Ali is relieved to have a strong partner at her side in her struggle to combine her respect for the existing social order with her individual sense of justice.

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9. For a more detailed exploration of the narrative technique in this novel, cf. Frank (2018: 25–26).

Tragically, Neshani Andreas passed away in 2011. She left behind the manuscript of a second novel, *Who Told You that You Were Naked* (2011), which has not been published to date. It shows Ovambo village life in the nineteenth century, before colonization, with the first Christian missionaries arriving. Similar to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1959), the story traces the impact of the White missionaries on a rural community. The first part shows the strong order and cohesion in this community at the example of one family. Itaala, a young girl, recounts the stories of several family members. She watches in fascination as her aunt Oshoveli takes part in the rites of the *efundula* festival, which celebrates the young girls' transition into womanhood and allows them to get married. Oshoveli's hopes for a proposal from a young man from another village are disappointed, yet years later, when he learns of her affection for him, he takes her as his third wife. She accepts but remains bitter and resentful. Itaala's uncle Ndemufayo sets off with other young men of the clan on an arduous and dangerous journey to the salt plains in order to prove their strength and manhood. Shortly after this initiation, Ndemufayo's father, the clan's headman, suddenly dies and Ndemufayo is chosen as the new headman. His older brother Pokolo resents being bypassed, but Ndemufayo accepts his new role and grows into his new responsibilities. He builds an impressive homestead, finds a first, second, and third wife and learns to preside over the tribal court. The community enjoys a well-ordered social life under his rule, with traditional festivals and dances as welcome diversions from the hard work on the fields and in the homesteads. However, when the first White missionaries arrive, those members of the clan who are feeling unhappy with their position in the community, such as Oshoveli and Pokolo, are eager to discard old customs and begin a new life. Their departure causes disruption and unhappiness in the clan and confronts them with cultural differences and personal choices that leave them suspended between two worlds – a foreshadowing of the generations to come.

Although this manuscript has not been edited for publication yet, it is an intriguing account of pre-colonial village life in Northern Namibia with its well-ordered social hierarchies, seasonal rhythms and customs. It can only be hoped that it will be published eventually.

The novel *The Other Presence* (2011) by Francis Sifiso Nyathi also shows a Namibian village that is torn between long-cherished customs and beliefs on the one hand and deviating world-views from outside on the other, in this case both Christianity and Western medicine in contemporary times. The novel is set in the Caprivi region and revolves around the funeral of a young man, Akapelwa. His mother believes that his uncle, elder Sinvula, has caused her son's death by using witchcraft. As she spreads these accusations around the village, the community is divided along the lines of loyalties and world-view. The Christians among them are supposed to deny the power of witchcraft although it is a part of their cultural

heritage. Thomas, a young man who has just returned from studying in the USA, shocks the mourners by openly declaring that Akapelwa died of HIV/AIDS (cf. Nyathi 2011: 24). His blunt approach does not fit in with customary ideas of behaviour, and Mlambo and Kandemiri claim that he "has become culturally dislocated by negating his African-ness and his identity." (2015: 60) Discussions between the mourners move back and forth as personal vendettas, social hierarchies and conflicting world-view influence individual points of view on the subject matter.[10] The novel ends with the funeral speech of an outsider, a medical doctor who addresses the congregation with a warning about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and the hopeful message that medical help is possible if the community accepts the reality of the epidemic.

Finally, several novels deserve to be mentioned which were written by authors who are not Namibian but have (in most cases) lived in Namibia for an extended period of time and written about Namibian history and society: Brian Harlech-Jones's *A Small Space* (1999) and *To Dream Again* (2002); Andrew Matjila's *Navachab Gold* (2002),[11] Peter Orner's *The Second Coming of Mavala Shikongo* (2006) and Mari Serebrov's *Mama Namibia: A Novel* (2013). The celebrated South African author Damon Galgut has set part of his novel *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1991) in Namibia as his fictional White South African protagonist is sent there as a soldier during the fight for independence.

3. Drama

Both Namibian drama and poetry benefit from the lively scene of young performers brought together by Spoken Word at the Warehouse theatre and some other initiatives which encourage artists to find and present their voice. Beside the Warehouse, theatre productions mainly find their place at the National Theatre of Namibia, the Space Theatre and the COTA Theatre School (cf. Rudd/Vale 2018: 206). Sandy Rudd, a Zimbabwean producer and writer who has been working in Namibian theatre for many years, perceives an upward trend in Namibian theatre today (cf. Rudd/Vale 2018: 205). Under the South African apartheid regime, Windhoek theatre was "the exclusive preserve of white Windhoek" (Zeeman 2000: v), featuring mostly European shows. Black writers and performers meanwhile formed "a flourishing

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10. For a more detailed analysis that emphasises a critical view on the threats of modernising forces for Namibian culture, cf. Mlambo and Kandemiri (2015).

11. Andrew Matjila has been living and working in Namibia for a long time, but he was born and educated in Pretoria (cf. back cover of Matjila 2002).

counterculture" (Zeeman 2000: v). Since independence, conditions for indigenous theatre have much improved, but funding is tight.

In his play *The Show Isn't Over Until…* (2000), winner of the 1998 Golden Pen Awards, Vickson Tablah Hangula addresses the meagre funding that holds back the development of Namibian theatre. In the play, a group of actors are rehearsing. As the actors and their director sit down to a meal of bread and chips during a break, they muse on the lack of recognition of their work in their country. One actor claims: "Nobody wants to give any funding to theatre groups, especially not black-dominated theatre groups like ours." (Hangula 2000: 24) The director agrees, pointing out that if a performance is successful at the National Theatre, "it is either a foreign production or one that appeals mostly to white, rich audiences […]." (Hangula 2000: 25) While the frame of the theatre rehearsal thus criticises contemporary politics in the arts sector, the play that they are preparing to perform targets another aspect of post-independence Namibian politics and society: the widening social and material gap between those who benefited from independence and found good positions in the new administration and those who fought in the struggle only to realise that their prospects of work and a good income had not increased at all in an independent Namibia. This gap becomes apparent in a series of interviews conducted by Festus, executive of a construction company that was founded to provide employment for former freedom fighters. The first candidate is a former comrade of Festus' who saved his life in battle. The executive, however, does not make any promises and blames the new leaders of state and the policy of reconciliation for the situation: "We should have grabbed all the farms, mines, shops and everything first before we started to sing reconciliation! But hey, comrade President has decided and we have no choice but to follow." (Hangula 2000: 14) In this statement and in Festus' own dealing with his former fellow fighters, it becomes clear that the term 'comrade' only serves to mask the strong hierarchical structures of the system.

The second candidate is a former comrade, too, but a female one, and Festus quickly uses his position to press unwelcome advances on her in exchange for the prospect of a job. The third candidate, a former soldier from the South African side, gets short shrift despite his claims that the policy of reconciliation entitles him to help, too.

The last candidate is the niece of Festus' White secretary. He rethinks his initial dismissal when his secretary insinuates that her niece is open to sexual adventures. In the end, he hires her because her tough way of dealing with the workers keeps their salaries low (cf. Hangula 2000: 34).

With the structural device of the play-within-the-play, *The Show Isn't Over Until…* presents a number of biased, controversial opinions and social groups in independent Namibia, for the most part without directly taking a stance. It is made

clear, however, that the new elite and the old, despite certain reservations and quarrels, conspire to maintain their power and keep down those less educated and less fortunate. Towards the end, the narrator of the play brings the message home more explicitly:

> Little did we know that all the repossessed wealth would only be for those who are used to the European luxuries. […] Those who always had the best should stick to the best, and those who lived in squalor should be cramped up like sardines in the shacks in Ombili, Havana and Babylon.   (Hangula 2000: 34)

Here, the narrator openly addresses a recurring bone of contention in independent Namibia: the rift between exiles, fighters and those who stayed at home. While those who stayed in Namibia often felt that their exiled comrades were enjoying Western lifestyles and getting an education as well as the necessary networks to come back to lucrative posts in the new administration, returning exiles in their turn felt alienated and unwelcome upon their return. Those who actively fought as soldiers, it is implied here, got the worst of both deals and returned from a life of hardship to poverty and hopelessness.

Besides the plays collected with *The Show Isn't Over Until…* in two volumes of *New Namibian Plays* (ed. Zeeman 2000, 2002), the collection *One Hundred Short Plays* (ed. Zeeman 2005) also offers a variety of plays by different authors, albeit very short ones that contain only snippets of conversations. More sustained and comprehensive works are the historical play *Samuel Maharero* by Clarence Chaklas Kaurapua Kaakunga (2001) about the famous Herero chief who fought against the Germans in the war of 1904–1908, and the plays by Dorian Haarhoff contained in the trilogy *Goats, Oranges and Skeletons* (2000). One of the most widely recognised Namibian playwrights is Frederick Philander, who has also been the director of an annual theatre festival in Windhoek.[12]

4.   Poetry

Several playwrights who feature in *New Namibian Plays* are more commonly associated with their poetic works, in particular Petrus Haakskeen, Axaro W. Thaniseb and Keamogetsi J. Molapong. Further contemporary, published Namibian poets are Hugh Ellis, Julia Amukoshi and Anneli Nghikembua. Poetry from the time of the struggle against apartheid is collected in the anthologies edited by Melber, *It Is No*

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12. For further information on Philander and his work as director and writer, cf. Olivier-Sampson (2018).

More a Cry (2004), and by Molapong and others, *In Search of Questions* (2005).[13] The best-known poet who wrote during that time, "the father of Namibian Poetry" (Krishnamurthy 2018: 145), is Mvula Ya Nangolo, whose poems where published in *Thoughts from Exile* (1991) and *Watering My Beloved Desert* (2008).

In contrast to Nangolo's perspective from exile, Keamogetsi Molapong presents the point of view of those who remained in Namibia during the struggle. He is arguably the most prolific and provocative poet in Namibia to date or, as Helen Vale calls it, "the most outspoken and angry of all contemporary poets" (Rudd/ Vale 2018: 166). Due to his involvement in a number of organisations and projects, he is one of the very few Namibian artists who can live from this profession. Molapong openly confronts what he sees as grave and persistent problems of his country and is not afraid to blame those he deems responsible. His poems negotiate tensions between individual identity and national identity, showing that a sense of national identity is hampered by social differences and the self-enrichment of the elites. In "The Black People I Know", he calls them "Big Bellied Black Brothers, Bad Breathed Bullies/ Milking the economic live [sic] out of the poor" (2005: 73). "Let's go to Parliament" calls up the underprivileged to "invade parliament/ Exhibit our interest/ Perform our hunger to them/ Let's sing to them of our thirst" (2014: 45). Despite radical phrases such as "Let's blow up the Parliament" it becomes clear that his call is for artistic and intellectual resistance, not for violent revolution, and that his sense of frustration does not lead to resignation but retains hope that resistance is possible.

Molapong also blames the all-pervasive influence of Western economics and culture for the lack of coherent identity in his country: "As long as we consume traditions/ Of dead presidents and pale queens/ A lot of times, we will become fools/ […] As long as we humble our beings/ They will never let us be a people/ A Civilised and sovereign nation" ("The West", 2005: 75)

In order to explain the rifts in society, Molapong engages strongly with the past. He urges his fellow Namibians not to pull "all your problems over your head/ Like a blanket" ("Second None-Sense", 2005: 84) and hide, but to air the grievances of himself and others from the times of apartheid and independence. In "We Who Decided to Stay", he finds harsh words for his exiled comrades from the perspective of one who stayed behind: "Cowards who ran into exile/ Fighting their struggle, abroad/ At institutions of ideologies/ While the true fighters stayed/ Fighting the regime from within". After independence, he claims, those who stayed were called "Sell-outs", and now "The experience of the regime Apartheid/ Is unfolding itself in

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13. In the introduction to this anthology, Volker Winterfeldt gives a comprehensive overview of Namibian poetry up to 2004.

Independence/ We, who decided to stay, are exiled" (2005: 70) while the returnees enjoy their new positions.[14] Besides the ascension of new elites and the treatment of those who did not go into exile, Molapong also criticises the policy of reconciliation between Black and White Namibians after independence.

> Reconciliation is an insult
> To our Black integrity
> A humiliating smack
> On innocent Black faces […]
> Listen, the pale I see
> Reminds me of the Blackness
> I started to hate
> The face I was given
> The typical flat nose
> And extra big mouth
> Has been savagely destroyed
> Now it's just another Black face
> Filling an empty space
> No shape, no identity
> Look at us, our African pride
> Has been hypnotised by reconciliation.   (2005: 98–99)

Reconciliation, so the implied argument, leaves no space for those whose identity was negated by decades of apartheid to actively win back their pride and sense of self. How can you reassert the value that was denied to you when you are not allowed to confront those who did it to you? In his introduction to Molapong's second anthology of poetry, *The Scars on My Skin*, Joshua Razikua Kaumbi claims: "Through his poetry he is questioning how we could have given our people the identity and yet took it away before they understood it." (2014: n.p.)

On the whole, Molapong's poetry is full of criticism – of the apartheid regime that denigrated Black Namibians' cultural identity, of those who returned from exile and did not appreciate the sacrifices of those who stayed at home, of the new Black elites who have taken the place of the old, White ones, and of Namibians who embrace Western values and lifestyles too uncritically, neglecting their own cultural heritage and with it a vital part of their identity. In "Confusion" (2005: 39), Molapong brings together all that he finds wanting in 21st-century Namibian society: greedy political leaders, loss of established moralities, the cult of Western lifestyles among the young, and a general loss of freedom and meaningful social values.

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14. For this topic in Molapong's poetry, cf. also Malaba (2010: 66).

> I am a Black man
> And my simple ears still serve me
> I hear the Afrikan drums
> Escorted by the ululation of women
> With the singing of joyous songs
> And the stamping of bare feet
> Bringing freedom to my soul   ("Second None-Sense", 2005: 84)

These lines represent the hopeful, joyful side of Molapong's poetry – a revelling in tradition and belonging, a reasserting of his identity. Besides this anchoring in cultural roots, he also explores the way towards a positive individual sense of identity in his love poetry. In this political and personal divide in Molapong's work, Malaba sees "a striking counterpointing of aggressiveness, on the one hand, and vulnerability and hurt, on the other hand" (2010: 74). The poet's work oscillates between hope and anger, private consolation and recurring frustration with unchanging social and political inequalities.

Apart from Molapong, important contemporary poets who have been published are Kavevangua Kahengua and Axaro W. Thaniseb. Their work is less openly critical of the post-colonial elites, but what they share with Molapong is a critical view of social developments, particularly in the cities. Urban poverty, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and an ever-widening gap between rich and poor are recurring concerns in their poems. They also reflect the struggle of younger generations to create a sense of identity in between the tensions of the past, different cultural backgrounds of the ethnic groups, and the strong influence of Western lifestyles and consumerism. A common motif in these poems is an – often nostalgic – comparison between simple village life, typically associated with childhood, family and community, and the alienation, hardship and loneliness of city life. In "Here I want to live", Kahengua directly contrasts the two spaces:

> Here I want to be, walk among the silent lush vegetation
> Here I want to be and listen to the bird melodies
> Here I want to be, to feel the peace of mind
> […]
> Here I want to be, far away from the city
> Where everybody has plodded their ways
> In the city where the people want to scream but they can't   (2002: 12)

While Kahengua emphasises the link to nature that allows the speaker to re-connect with himself, Thaniseb in his poem "Jannie Pos" celebrates his memories of family and village life, comfortingly structured by returning seasons and rituals, "The place where grandma's story-time was a treasure despite the/ Smoke burning tears from your eyes." (2011: 69) Some remnants of village life, however, resurface in a

particular part of the city, as the 'township' Katutura is presented in a much better light, as a place brimming with real social life and community: "The spirit of to-getherness abounds" (Thaniseb, "Katutura", 2011: 66) in contrast to the deserted, hostile streets of the richer parts of Windhoek.[15]

Poets such as Molapong, Kahengua and Thaniseb explore the spatial contrasts of the country as a whole and particular places and reveal them as filled with cultural and historical meaning. They emphasise the connection between the land and its people, both emerging after independence from a history of oppression and trauma, of which scars on landscape and bodies bear witness.

> If you ask me who I am,
> I will show you the rugged plains
> Almost uninhabitable to a man of lesser spirit,
> And the sun baked granite hills […],
> The place where stories of the people
> Are caved deeply into the stone, and if you listen
> Carefully – you hear, carried in the wind,
> The tongues of many a man before my time;
> That is the great Daureb.[16]
> […]
> If you ask me who I am,
> I will show you the scars of yesteryear
> Carved deeply across my black back…
> …and mirrored in my depthless eyes.
> That is who I am and what my name is…
> I am too dark, they say – I am the son of the soil,
> I say.   (Thaniseb 2011: 28)

In a similar vein, Molapong confronts racist prejudices and hegemonic Western ideals of beauty in his "I am and much more", presenting the trauma of apartheid violence as a part of, but not the essence of African identity: "I am much more than/ The African face you see/ The face of split lips and shattered dreams" (2014: 50). Identity, it becomes clear in this and other poems, is still something that has to be reclaimed after decades of oppression and in the current situation of post-colonial meddling. Thus, his poetry looks forward to a self-created, complex identity that acknowledges the hurt of the past but has won back its pride and self-esteem.

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15. For further examples both of the largely negative image of Windhoek in Namibian poetry and of the special role of Katutura, cf. Krishnamurthy (2018: 157–158).

16. This place is also known as 'Brandberg'.

5. Conclusion

As this overview shows, the different genres within Namibian literature employ their specific generic possibilities and traditions to engage with questions of individual and cultural identities. This ties in with Schneider's Dynamic Model of the Evolution of Postcolonial English mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in which he describes the development of new varieties of English in postcolonial contexts as "a sequence of characteristic stages of identity rewritings and associated linguistic changes" (2007: 29). Literary works from Namibia written in English can be divided into two categories: Those which explore Namibia's colonial past, the liberation struggle and the transition into independence, and those which are concerned with contemporary Namibian society with its social and political challenges. Among the latter, there is a further divide between works about city life and those about life in the rural areas, but while the poetry of e.g. Thaniseb and Kahengua mainly emphasises the difference between the two spaces, with a nostalgic preference for village life, novels such as *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Other Presence* show how life in the rural communities is gradually affected by change in the form of conflicting world-views regarding both medical issues and social hierarchies, particularly patriarchy.

Thus, Namibian literature offers valuable insights into Namibian cultures for outsiders as well as inspiration and occasions for cultural self-reflection for Namibians. In the context of today's challenge for young people to create a sense of identity within the social and political tensions, Namibian literature can be an important source of polyphonic impulses to engage with their own past, present and future. However, this source is currently not available to the majority of young people growing up in Namibia, since literature and the arts do not play a big role in education, particularly in the rural areas (cf. Sandy Rudd in Vale 2018: 206). It is to be hoped that efforts to improve education across social and regional divides will eventually create more access to literary productions as well as awareness of their potential to reflect and create identities in the face of cultural diversity.

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A land in transition

The representation of linguistic diversity in Joseph Diescho's *Born of the Sun* and *Troubled Waters*

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This chapter looks at linguistic diversity as represented in two Namibian novels, discussing aspects of authenticity, identity formation, style-shifting, and meta-language, but also the representation of multilingualism in literary texts. By combining linguistic analysis with literary study, the chapter sheds light on questions of language ideology and the representation of language groups, some marginalized, in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural make-up of the Namibian nation at its beginning and during the first years of its existence. This will help to gain some insights into the construction of 'Namibianness' during the struggle for and the first years after independence.

Keywords: Namibian English, Namibian novel, literary linguistics, multilingualism in literature, ficto-linguistics

1. Introduction

Joseph Diescho's novels, *Born of the Sun* (1988) and *Troubled Waters* (1993), both deal with the Namibian struggle for independence. Hence, they depict a period during which South Africa attempted to retain control over Namibia and the tensions between the South African administration and the Namibian liberation movement increased considerably (Wallace 2011: 273). This period is also foundational for present-day Namibia's language policy and the contested decision to make English the country's sole official language on independence in 1990. Both works take an insider's perspective: Joseph Diescho was an activist against the apartheid system and is one of the very few native Namibian novelists (Chapman 1995). The first novel was written (in co-authorship with Celeste Wallin) and published during the peak period of the liberation struggle, while the second was written and published shortly after Namibia's independence.

In this chapter I will approach the linguistic diversity represented in these two cultural productions from a ficto-linguistics perspective. Based on Hodson's (2014) seminal study on dialect in film and literature, this chapter will include discussion of authenticity, identity formation, style-shifting, and meta-language, but will primarily investigate the representation of multilingualism according to Bleichenbacher's (2008: 24) taxonomy. With this fruitful combination of linguistic analysis and literary study, I hope "to move from a practical investigation of the mechanics of analysing dialect in film and literature, to a broader and more theoretical analysis" (Hodson 2014: 16). Furthermore, the analysis of the representation of linguistic diversity in these two novels will shed light on questions of language ideology and the representation of marginalized language groups in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural make-up of the Namibian nation, at its beginning and during the first years of its existence.

As a first step, however, a closer look at the historical context of these two novels is necessary. Both depict the decades before and the struggle towards Namibian independence. Although the fight for liberation in Namibia "was only one of Africa's many wars, it was one of the most complex and multifaceted journeys to independence in the last century" (Dale 2014: 13). The historical overview in the next section will provide a rough account of the most important facts necessary for the subsequent ficto-linguistic analysis of the two literary texts in Section 4.

With this chapter, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of these novels, more specifically, to a better perception of the function of different languages and language use in these texts and how the author represents Namibia's complex linguistic and cultural ecology in predominantly monolingual fictional texts. At the same time, I also wish to consider Namibian society on a larger scale, because all representations in literature "interact with the society within which they appear" (Hodson 2014: 10). The analysis may perhaps help to gain some insights into the construction of 'Namibianness' during the struggle for and the first years after independence.

2. Historical background: The struggle for liberation

In the aftermath of WWI and Germany losing its African territories, the territory of today's Namibia, at that time referred to as German South West Africa, was taken over by the Union of South Africa (which later became the Republic of South Africa) on behalf of the British Crown (Melber 2014: 8). South Africa began to govern the territory legally, based on a League of Nations mandate, but it increasingly tried to incorporate South West Africa into its governmental structures. This included a system of land expropriations, the establishment of White Afrikaner settlements and of reservations for the Black African population. As the latter were

not able to sustain themselves in their territories, this in turn supported a system of forced labour, as "pools [...] of black workers would come to the so-called white areas – the mines, railways, farms, developing industries etc." (Katjavivi 1988: 15). Furthermore, South Africa introduced its rigid apartheid system from 1951 on-wards. Hence, instead of promoting the well-being of the territory as expected under the terms of the mandate (Katjavivi 1988: 13; Kaela 1996), the South African administration sought "to extract as much wealth from the country as possible" (Wallace 2011: 205). Eventually, resistance to South Africa increased.

> This grew into four separate, but intermittently connecting, strands. In addition to the activities of the traditional leaders and mounting discontent in the churches, migrant workers from the north became increasingly politicised, as did the tiny Namibian intelligentsia. The latter two groups were to form the backbone of the organized nationalist movements that emerged at the end of the 1950s.
>
> (Wallace 2011: 245)

In 1957, influenced by resistance movements in South Africa such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Ovambo People's Congress (OPC) was founded by mainly Oshiwambo-speaking contract workers from Namibia living in Cape Town, South Africa (Wallace 2011: 246–247). Inside Namibia, the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) was founded in 1959 by Sam Nujoma in Windhoek. Other organisations were the Herero Chiefs' Council, which, together with the South West African Student Body, later the South West Africa Progressive Association, established the South West Africa National Union (SWANU). However, the Herero Chiefs' Council withdrew from this in 1960 because of disagreements concern-ing issues of ethnicity (Wallace 2011: 249). SWANU, thus weakened, lost influ-ence, while the OPO redefined itself as a national movement in competition with SWANU. It was reconstituted as the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), "which was to become the dominant liberation movement of the next thirty years" (Wallace 2011: 250), as it gained cross-ethnic support and national popularity (Wallace 2011: 260).

Alongside numerous other small organisations,[1] SWANU and SWAPO fought for independence within Namibia, adopting methods of civil disobedience or passive resistance, to which the government reacted with violence (Katjavivi 1988: 47–49). Furthermore, "there was intensive petitioning at the United Nations by and on behalf of the Namibians, and a general belief that the best way to proceed towards Namibian independence was to place the country under UN trusteeship" (Katjavivi 1988: 55).

However, SWAPO eventually decided to adopt "a military strategy, given the apparent failure of peaceful protest" (Wallace 2011: 268) and sent young men for

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1. See Katjavivi (1988: 49–52) for details.

guerrilla military training to "sympathetic African, Asian, and Eastern European countries" (Tonchi et al. 2012: 399). In August 1966, the first armed encounter between SWAPO and the South African army took place in the north-western part of Namibia (Katjavivi 1988: 60). Although this first encounter was "in itself, a minor battle, and easily won by South Africa, […] its effects were far-reaching. The battle became a symbolic focus for SWAPO's mobilisation in support of its military campaign" (Wallace 2011: 268). What followed were guerrilla attacks, "especially the organization of raiding forces from neighbouring territories" (Tonchi et al. 2012: 399), as well as "arrests and harassments in the north; tension throughout the country" (Wallace 2011: 269). This included the assassination of the South African Prime Minister (Katjavivi 1988: 60) in September 1966, followed by the arrest of SWAPO leaders and their imprisonment and torture, leading to the 1967–1968 Terrorism Trial (Katjavivi 1988: 61–64; Wallace 2011: 269–271).

The 1970s saw South Africa's increasing international political isolation, its occupation of the Namibian territory largely considered illegal, and the acknowledgement of SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people by the UN General assembly (Dierks 2002: 252). The decade was one of intensified activities on the part of SWAPO and other liberation movements and further brutal repressions by the South African government. For example, the tensions and hardships caused by the contract worker system erupted in a general strike in 1971/1972, shutting down major enterprises and mines and leading to mass deportations of strikers and their leaders to northern Namibia (Wallace 2011: 273). Subsequently, the South African government imposed a kind of martial law in the northern regions. Other events, such as South Africa's introduction of its Bantustan policies (see Katjavivi 1988: Chapter 12), or the end of Portuguese colonial rule and an ensuing civil war in Angola (Wallace 2011: 279), also had a direct impact on the Namibian situation (see Wallace 2011: 279–284 for details). "The remainder of the decade saw the north of Namibia increasingly transferred into a war zone, as the South African military presence grew, attacks by SWAPO fighters intensified and more repressive legislation was applied" (Wallace 2011: 285). The 1980s were further shaped by South Africa's refusal to implement UN resolutions and to accept the illegality of its actions. These actions, however, were now backed up by international geopolitical developments and the power politics of the Cold War, as South Africa could construct "itself as a bastion against the spread of communism in Africa" (Wallace 2011: 296–297), the Cubans for instance being involved in the civil war in Angola. However, eventually the political climate changed. In Angola, there was a military gridlock leading to negotiations between all parties. South Africa was increasingly challenged by anti-apartheid sanctions from the outside and by political and financial turbulences from the inside. Most importantly, however, "all sides were counting the costs and finding it too high" (Wallace 2011: 299). The

negotiations which led to South Africa's withdrawal and the transition to independence started in 1988/1989, with the elections for the Constituent Assembly taking place in November 1989 (Dierks 2002: 306; Wallace 2011: 305). SWAPO won 57.3% and thus the majority of the votes. Despite winning an absolute majority, "SWAPO President Sam Nujoma announces that SWAPO does not want to create a one-party state, but would rather work together with its political opponents to build a new state" (Dierks 2002: 307). On March 21, 1990 Namibia became independent with Sam Nujoma as its first president.

> A corner stone of the national policy of the new independent Namibia is the policy of national reconciliation. The policy seeks to address the consequences of the legacy of Namibia's violent past, dating back to German colonial times, the South African oppression and effects of the apartheid system together with human rights violations committed during the liberation struggle.   (Dierks 2002: 309)

One of the legacies of Namibia's colonial past and also of South Africa's apartheid policy was a population fragmented along ethnic and linguistic lines. The new government sought to overcome this fragmentation as well as linguistic and educational disparities by introducing a monolingual official language policy with English as the country's sole official language. "This policy can be seen as an outcome of ideological views espoused by Namibia's pre-independence government more than a decade before […] independence" (Frydman 2011: 181). For SWAPO, English had become a symbol of resistance, unity, liberation and true democracy, in stark contrast to Afrikaans, the language of the oppressors and of oppression (Maho 1998: 185; Fourie 1991: 70–71). English was only spoken by a small part of the population at the time of independence and the choice of this language was only "retrospectively rationalized with functional and linguistic arguments" (Frydman 2011: 182). Since "the slogan of *own language, own culture* [had] been abused too extensively by apartheid propaganda" (Fourie 1997: 40, original italics), a promotion of Namibian indigenous languages did not seem to be a viable option. The choice of English and its promotion has since met harsh criticism, most notably for excluding a large part of the Namibian population from the benefits that the English language has undoubtedly brought to independent Namibia (Frydman 2011).

With this sketch of the historical events leading to Namibia's independence as a backdrop,[2] I can now turn to the analysis of two Namibian novels, because "[t]o catch the authentic voice of the people, to hear ordinary people talking, we must look to the novelists" (Hallet 1989: 6). For this, however, the question of authenticity and of realism needs to be addressed, together with a number of other fundamental conceptual and theoretical concerns.

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2. See also Stell (this volume) for a socio-historical account.

3. Theoretical and methodological considerations

In this pursuit of 'catching the authentic voice of the people', the author of the two novels analysed in Section 4 below faces a number of serious challenges. For one, he has to depict the very complex multilingual situation of his country for a readership that has no knowledge of most of the languages concerned, and secondly, he does this in a language that is virtually absent from the linguistic ecology portrayed. Therefore, the methods Diescho employs to represent different languages in a principally monolingual English text need closer investigation.

In my approach to language representation in these two Namibian novels, I will largely draw on methods and theoretical discussions spelled out in Hodson's (2014) book on the analysis of dialect in film and literature. As Hodson explains, literature has "employed a range of different dialects in […] representations of speech forms throughout […] history", and "the analysis of dialect in literature has received some significant critical attention during the last 100 years" (2014: 1). However, while in her book Hodson only considers the uses of *dialect* and *accent* in film and literature, I will primarily be looking at the depiction of different *languages* and hence at the representation of a wider range of linguistic diversity. "The emblematic modernist themes of exile, travel and intercultural encounter lead, inevitably, to the necessity of representing different languages" (Taylor-Batty 2013: 39) in fiction. I will therefore also include Bleichenbacher's (2008: 24) taxonomy for the representation of multilingualism in cultural productions in my analysis.

Some of the key issues concerning the linguistic analysis of literary texts and the relationship between literary texts and the 'real world' also need to be considered. For instance, Jucker and Locher (2017: 4) stress the fact that at the morphological, syntactical or lexical level there are no systematic differences between fictional and non-fictional texts, but they do concede that "fictional texts enjoy a special status" and that "[d]ifferent expectations apply to the claims made in such texts and to the world depicted in them". Most people would agree that language use as represented in literary productions does not reproduce real-world usage and that "there are important differences" (Hodson 2014: 12). However, the "boundaries between fictional and non-fictional language are, by any account, fuzzy and slippery" (Jucker & Locher 2017: 5). Nevertheless, anyone who analyses dialogues in cultural productions as if these were "accurate case studies of everyday conversation [operates] on mistaken assumptions" (Kozloff 2000: 19). However, Locher claims that there is "a strong case to treat fictional dialogue as naturally occurring in its own right" (2017: 299).

Hodson borrows the concept of ficto-linguistics from Ferguson (1998), "because it provides a way of talking about patterns of language variety we find within fictional texts, and using terms and concepts borrowed from linguistics in order to do so, while making it clear that language varieties do not function in the same

way as language varieties in the real world" (Hodson 2014: 14). In Ferguson's own words, ficto-linguistics refers to "the systems of language that appear in novels and *both* deviate from accepted or expected socio-linguistic patterns *and* indicate identifiable alternative patterns congruent to other aspects of the fictional world" (1998: 3, original italics). Most importantly, the uses of language are analysed not with respect to the accuracy with which they reflect supposed real-world usage, but ideally as an "integral part of the fictional world within which they appear" (Hodson 2014: 14). Nevertheless, the question of authenticity remains an important one, as "the perception of authenticity is often highly valued by audiences and readers" (Hodson 2014: 18), despite the fact that "completely authentic dialect [or language, A.S.] representation cannot be achieved in film or literature" (Hodson 2014: 219). Therefore, Hodson (2014: 222–234) concedes that the analysis of the representation of language variation in literature could follow the principles outlined by Ives (1971), applying "the criteria of the professional linguist to the literary construct" (Hodson 2015: 417), and hence include an in-depth linguistic analysis of the features of the various language varieties both inside and outside of the cultural productions, to ascertain the overlap and thus the level of authenticity. However, she suggests "an alternative approach: that we recognize that authenticity is constructed through the discourses that surround dialect representation, and that we analyse these discourses in their own right" (2014: 235).

For the analysis of linguistic practices within a literary text, Jucker and Locher make a useful distinction between two types of discourse that should be taken into consideration: those happening at the level of intradiegetic communication, i.e. "between the characters depicted within fictional texts" (2017: 1); and those at the extradiegetic level, i.e. "communication taking place between the author [or the narrator, A.S.] and the reader" (2017: 2). In this context, Hodson recommends the further inclusion of metalinguistic comments in any linguistic analysis of cultural productions and hence of instances "where dialect" (and we may add: any language variety) "is explicitly discussed or commented upon" (2014: 166). As she makes clear, "[a]t such moments, authors and narrators guide readers towards specific interpretations of dialect representations, and characters undertake the social work of policing the boundaries of class and identity" (Hodson 2014: 166).

Similarly, the alternative use of styles, i.e. style-shifting, especially "in response to a particular situation" (Hodson 2014: 171) may be used by writers "to communicate information about emotional state, relationships and identity of characters" (Hodson 2014: 190). Thus, Hodson distinguishes between emotional style-shifting "when a character is surprised, upset or otherwise disturbed from the normal emotional state" (2014: 174), and interpersonal style-shifting, whereby speakers converge or diverge their speech style in response to the speech style of their interlocutors (Hodson 2014: 177–178). Furthermore, she introduces the concept of

transformative style-shifting, i.e. a character's "attempt to adopt a new language variety in order to bolster their social standing", which "offers writers and film-makers the opportunity to demonstrate dramatic shifts in character and situation" (Hodson 2014: 180).

As Hodson's study is primarily concerned with the use of dialect in film and literature, she does not explicitly discuss the alternating use of different languages within one conversation, i.e. codeswitching in a multilingual environment, but I assume that similar ways of interpreting the shift from one language to another language can apply. In the vast literature on codeswitching, several types of code-switching are defined, most of which may not be of direct importance in the context of this chapter.[3] In addition, the distinctions between codeswitching and borrowing are fuzzy at best.[4] What seems to be important for the analysis of literary texts, however, is the distinction between affective or metaphorical and referential functions of codeswitching. In the latter, codeswitching may simply be a quotation of an earlier conversation, or serve the purposes of a communicative act, which necessitates the use of several languages, depending on the topic, the speakers involved, and possibly a change in the communicative situation (hence this is also referred to as situational code-switching). However, it may also express a meta-communicative, marked, affective meaning or serve a rhetoric effect. Furthermore, for the study of cultural productions Bleichenbacher adds indexical codeswitching, which occurs "for the benefit of the viewer" (or reader in our context) "as a mere index of [the characters'] OL [other language] ethnolinguistic background" (2008: 192).

This brings me to the depiction of different languages or multilingualism in literature. As Locher (2017) shows in her comprehensive overview of research traditions, the phenomenon of multilingual fictional texts is not a recent development but spans several centuries, from medieval texts to post-colonial literatures, and Taylor-Batty (2013: 39) reminds us that "few fictional texts are as polylingual as the fictional world they represent". Therefore Bleichenbacher (2008: 23–25) introduces Mareš's taxonomy for the representation of multilingualism in fictional texts,[5] which describes a continuum from complete elimination of any other language but the base/standard language of the text/film to the full representation of different languages "within the reality of the story" (Bleichenbacher 2008: 23).

As illustrated in Figure 1, between these extreme poles there are two inter-mediate strategies for multilingual representation in cultural productions: One is signalization, where other languages are explicitly referred to by the narrator or

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3. See Matras (2009: Chapter 5) for an introduction.

4. See Matras (2009: 110–114) for a comprehensive discussion.

5. Sternberg (1981) also proposes a useful categorisation for the representation of linguistic diversity in fictional texts, which is discussed in Taylor-Batty (2013: 41–42).

Most distant from depicted	Continuum	Closest to depicted
multilingual reality	⟵⟶	multilingual reality
Elimination	**Signalization** **Evocation**	**Presence**
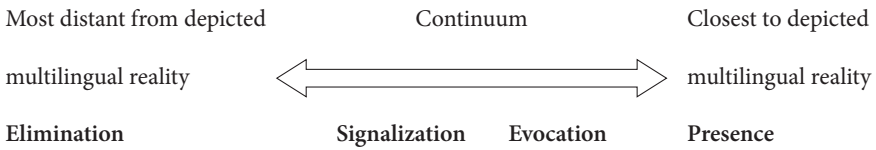
Figure 1. Depiction of multilingualism in film and literature[6]

by characters through metalinguistic comments. The other is evocation, where interference phenomena such as a foreign accent, or minimal, metaphoric code-switches, represent a conversation which is meant to be entirely in the other language (Bleichenbacher 2008: 24–25). Bleichenbacher also points out that the two may be combined and that, for instance, "evocation can be made more explicit by signalization" (2008: 25). Quite obviously, these two strategies also increase audience/readership comprehension, while the full presence of different languages limits the readership to the very few fluent in all the languages concerned.

In addition to these rather formal aspects of the representation of different languages in cinematic and literary productions, Bleichenbacher discusses a number of functional aspects motivating the use of different languages. Among these, he mentions the wish for realism and thus a desire for the most faithful representation of a particular setting, which requires the use of several languages (Bleichenbacher 2008: 26–27). However, as Hodson aptly points out, realism "is a notoriously difficult term" and "any attempt to represent the world 'as it really is' in art is always a representation, not real life itself" and therefore "any text or film that claims to depict the world 'as it really is' must be treated with caution" (2014: 197). Yet, the inclusion of languages other than the base language may serve as "indexes for cultural information" (Locher 2017: 298), and "we can learn more about how identities and ideologies are negotiated through linguistic indexing processes" (Locher 2017: 299). Hence, political motivations and social criticism (cf. Bleichenbacher 2008: 27–28) may lead to the use of different languages and language varieties in literary texts, for example, in order to challenge prevalent monolingual or standard language ideologies.

In this vein, I would like to investigate the representation of linguistic diversity in two Namibian novels. This will shed light on the prevalent language ideologies and identity formations at the time of their creation, through the representation of different language groups in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural make-up of the Namibian nation. This analysis will also show whether the author Joseph Diescho fosters or holds back those new Namibian identity formations, which, according to Melber (2018: 22) were "born in the liberation struggle" and "gave birth to a new, written Namibian culture".

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6. See Bleichenbacher (2008: 24, Table 2) for more details.

4. Text analysis

Despite the fact that "[t]he novel is not yet a flourishing genre in Namibia" (Frank 2018: 20) and that Namibian novels have not yet attracted much scholarly attention, they "give valuable insights into the immense cultural changes the country has faced during the last 150 years and into the challenges of integrating very different indigenous as well as imported lifestyles and value systems" (Frank 2018: 21).[7] Joseph Diescho is a native Namibian novelist who, with his debut novel *Born of the Sun* (1988), wrote "one of the first truly Namibian novels" (Melber 2018: 23).[8] However, while this novel "was written during the culminating years of the freedom struggle" (Hogan 2018: 81) and was "clearly aimed at fostering concerted support" (Hogan 2018: 76), Diescho's second novel, *Troubled Waters* (1993), "is the first Namibian novel published after independence" (Frank 2018: 22). Hence, it reflects retrospectively on the Namibian fight for liberation. Both works, *Troubled Waters* and *Born of the Sun*, are reflections on national and historic developments in the independence struggle sketched in Section 2 above. In this, they are representative of a Namibian literature that "from the outset [...] proclaimed a nascent nationalism in its exploration of the related themes of exile, home, resistance and liberation" (Chapman 1995: 22). This is why they lend themselves easily to an analysis of identity formation and the linguistic representation of the newly formed Namibian nation. This is particularly the case as both novels are typically 'post-independent' in that they are written in English, while Namibian literature in Afrikaans (and similarly also in German) "has a long and noteworthy history in Namibia, starting before independence" (Krishnamurthy & Vale 2018: 13).

4.1 *Born of the Sun*

Although not an autobiography or memoir, the story in *Born of the Sun* clearly shows fictionalised parallels to the author's life, as it describes rural-to-urban migration and involvement with the liberation movement. It tells the story of a young village man, Muronga, who is forced to leave his idyllic rural Namibian life, his newly wed wife Makena and their new-born son Mandaha, to work in a South African mine to pay the taxes imposed on his village by the South African government. In the mine, he experiences humiliation, physical abuse, racism and

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7. See also Frank (this volume).

8. However, Kornberg (2018: 241) notes that Ndeutala Hishongwa's novel *Marrying Apartheid* (1986) could actually be considered the first English-language novel in Namibia, which "has been erased from Namibia's literary history" to some extent.

exploitation and is eventually politicised. He participates in peaceful protests and joins the United Peoples Organisation. He encounters severe police violence in political detention and takes on a leading role in the liberation movement, and because of his political activity, the South African authorities send Muronga back to his home village in Namibia, where he is threatened with persecution and with being arrested again. He decides to cross the border to join the rebels and to become part of the guerrilla struggle. Thus, the novel is "a sacrificial familial separation narrative" (Hogan 2018: 82), but also one of the "important narratives of Namibian nationalism" (Hogan 2018: 87), whose "main orientation […] is toward cultivating reader compassion, rather than reader activism" (Hogan 2018: 75). The fate of the protagonist parallels that of many individuals from Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in the liberation struggle (Chapman 1995: 26), and the narrative "makes [its] readers aware of the human realities, of the human decencies of the situation" (Hallett 1989: 7).

That language, and in particular the choice of words, is one of the central themes of the novel becomes clear right from the beginning. The author states in a note preceding the main text of the book that he "is fully cognizant of the debate surrounding the usage of such anthropological words as, 'hut' and 'kraal', and the derogatory meaning they have acquired" (*Born of the Sun*, viii). But he chooses to employ these terms "deliberately, in part due to a paucity of better words in the English language" but also "for the purpose of re-establishing their positive character" (*Born of the Sun*, viii). These words, alongside other words that "convey a vivid picture of African rural life" (*Born of the Sun*, viii), appear in italics and are usually explained in the co-text, when appearing for the first time, but are subsequently used without further commentary:

(1) It is all fine, he thinks to himself as he rolls over on his flat *kafungo* made of long sticks held together by ropes. Supported by eight large vertical sticks, the bed is covered by a thin mat.   (*Born of the Sun,* 3)
Leaping like a mad fellow from the *kafungo* he lands almost on Makena, […].
                                                                                    (*Born of the Sun,* 6)
Muronga goes back inside his hut to rest on his *kafungo.*   (*Born of the Sun,* 8)
Muronga jumps from his *kafungo* and begins to dance by himself.
                                                                                   (*Born of the Sun,* 11)

(2) […] they were taken by his uncles and her aunts to Makena's parents' *ghutara*, a large, flat, grass-roof canopy near their hut.   (*Born of the Sun,* 10)
Entering the *ghutara*, close to Muronga's hut, he pulls two low stools near each other and seating himself on one, calls to Muronga […]. Standing up and shaking Muronga's hand, the older man joins him in the *ghutara.*
                                                                                   (*Born of the Sun,* 14)

(3)   But Makena was definitely not sick. She had been given some medicine by Shamashora, the best-known *nganga* in the village. According to the good healer, Makena was not supposed to move about as the child she was carrying was due any time within the next few days. And what the *nganga* says is more important to the young couple than all the sermons and admonitions of the priest.   (*Born of the Sun,* 3)

(4)   Muronga never tires of playing the drum. It is said that he was given *mbero*, an anti-exhaustion medicine by Shangoma when he was very young.
                                                   (*Born of the Sun,* 23)

As Examples (1) to (4) illustrate, these lexical words in italics mainly refer to every-day rural items or indigenous customs, but forms of address and kinship terms are similarly introduced:

(5)   Then the voice of Mushova, the mother of his friend Karumbu, or *Nyina-Karumba*, as she is commonly known, comes through the thatched door.
                                                   (*Born of the Sun,* 11)
        Opening the door he sees *Nyina-Karumbu's* smiling face and two bowls of steaming food in her hands.   (*Born of the Sun,* 13)
        What *Nyina-Karumbu* has said is indeed good news.   (*Born of the Sun,* 16)
        "Are you coming with me *Nyina-Mandaha*?" asks Muronga, addressing Makena by her newly acquired title as Mandaha's mother.   (*Born of the Sun,* 18)
        At home they will still be Muronga and Makena, or, since their child's birth, simply *Wiha-Mandaha* and *Nyina-Mandaha*, Father and Mother of Mandaha.
                                                   (*Born of the Sun,* 40)

Having these words italicized adds to their salience in the text and gives them an exotic appearance. This is somewhat disturbing, given that, although the novel's narrating language is English, the reader is to understand that the villagers' oral exchanges take place in the local language Mbukushu, as we learn later. Even the local priest, Pater Diekmann, referred to as *Muruti* (e.g. *Born of the Sun,* 32), seems to be able to converse with the local population in their vernacular without any problem. This vernacular, however, is only occasionally evoked by single lexical items, as shown in Examples (1) to (5) above.

    The rural (and monolingual) idyll depicted in the first three and a half chapters of the novel is disturbed when the Bantu Affairs commissioner arrives for a meeting. Along with the commissioner come other languages and apparently a loss of control for the villagers:

(6)   "Then we will be the first ones there today. In fact, it will be good to be there early, so that we can sit near the commissioner. That way, we will be able to hear what he says."

"You mean we will be able to hear what the translator, Makaranga, says," replies Kaye.

"Yes, he is the one from whom we will get the message, since the white man speaks a strange language that sounds like *vsvsvsvs*. Then we must be near Makaranga."   (*Born of the Sun,* 66–67)

After a while, Makaranga, the interpreter, who has been brought from Rundu, a nearby town, to translate for the commissioner, comes out of the oldest hut, better dressed than anyone else at the meeting. His appearance alone shows him to be much better off than the others. On top of that, he is not a muMbukushu. He is muKwangali from another tribe far down the river. He does not even speak the language spoken by the villagers. It makes it hard for them to understand what is said at meetings.   (*Born of the Sun,* 68)

As is evident, the villagers are not provided with correct information, and the sense of community is severely challenged by the introduction of the translator as an intermediate authority.

(7)   The commissioner joins Makaranga in the center, pats him on the shoulder and speaks. "Franz," he calls him, "tell them that it is a good thing that they have come to this meeting, this important, very important meeting."

"The commissioner says that men who attend big meetings are good men!"

"Tell them that I am bringing greetings to everyone from my government, the government of South Africa."

"The commissioner says that all men must listen to the government."
                                                             (*Born of the Sun,* 69)

Since the text in the novel is entirely in English, the reader has to imagine the other languages, which are sometimes not even signalled by metalinguistic comments. Furthermore, the reader does not learn immediately whether the translator wrongly translates the commissioner's language into Rukwangali or whether the villagers do not entirely understand the translations into Rukwangali, a language reportedly similar (but not identical) to their own Mbukushu (ethnologue.com, see also text excerpts in Example (6) above). However, further down the text makes clear, through the voice of a teacher also attending the meeting and apparently understanding the commissioner's language, that "This man is not saying what the commissioner is saying. He is not speaking the truth!" (*Born of the Sun*, 72).

Diescho shows in multiple ways that knowing other languages increases one's authority and control over one's own fate.

(8)   "Yes, that's what I mean. They look at the papers and can tell what is happening.
They know things, … new things. They speak *vsvsvsvs*."
"Exactly. We are at a disadvantage, my friend, by not speaking the white man's
language. Even today we could be sold and we would not understand what had
happened until we were being taken away."   (*Born of the Sun,* 85–86)

Diescho also reveals that White people treat the indigenous languages with as little
respect as they do their speakers, using derogatory terms for both of them:

(9)   "So, today is the day you have been waiting for," begins the white officer. "Okay,
so now you must listen very carefully." Addressing the interpreter, he says, "Tell
them, **Blackie**. Tell them in your ***funny*** language what I have just said."
(*Born of the Sun,* 126, emphasis added)

Finally, Diescho aptly illustrates that Muronga's long journey from his rural mono-
lingual home in Namibia to his new workplace in the mines of South Africa is also
an encounter of different languages:

(10)   "*Le yak ae, koRundu*?" he asks them, motioning to give him their papers. He
is speaking Setswana, and although Muronga and Kaye do not understand it,
they deduce that he must be asking them if they are going to Rundu. […] they
nod and reply, "Rundu, yes, Rundu."
The driver looks at the papers and at them, and handing back their papers,
he says in Setswana, but using more sign language, "Okay, get in. Here, let me
open the back gate for you. […]."   (*Born of the Sun,* 110–111)

(11)   Oh, my mother, some of these river birds really sound like people! Muronga,
who is not yet accustomed to hearing so many different languages, is relieved at
seeing the noisy creatures and resumes his meditation. I wonder what languages
Kaye is listening to there in the west.   (*Born of the Sun,* 137)

(12)   "*O dirang fa*?" comes a voice from behind Muronga. The policeman speaks
sharply to Muronga, who only hears the sounds of the words. […] "Are you one
of the men who arrived today?" asks the policeman in Setswana. Muronga, not
understanding one word […], can only continue to stare back in fearful silence.
[…] "Do you understand Sfanakalo, then?" he asks. Muronga, finally recognizing
a few words, shakes his head, now smiling slightly. "And Thimbukushu? You are
from South West, are you not?" queries the policeman. "I am a muMbukushu.
I speak Thimbukushu," replies Muronga at last, with a sigh of relief. The police-
man continues kindly but sternly in broken Thimbukushu […].
(*Born of the Sun,* 139–140)

(13)   The man shouts in *vsvsvsvs*. Tino, another man who joined Muronga's group in
Shakawe, speaks Thimbukushu, too. He also understands many other languages,
including *vsvsvsvs*.   (*Born of the Sun,* 152)

(14) The shunter […] putting on an air of importance as he checks his papers and shakes a loose coupling, he mutters loudly, "*Here God, die goed is los … demmet!*" (*Born of the Sun,* 155)

The reader is left as similarly estranged as the main protagonist by partly untranslated referential/situational code-switches and hence shares some of Muronga's experience. This journey into multilingualism eventually culminates in the amalgam of people and languages from different countries in the South African mining camp.

Here, Muronga encounters yet another language, Sfanakalo.[9] Muronga is instructed to learn this language in the mine school, alongside the handling of the mine equipment:

(15) "*Ena lo sgcoko.*"   (This is a hard hat.)
      "*Ena lo layit.*"   (This is a light.)
      "*Ena lo gogels.*"   (These are goggles.)
      "*Ena lo ovarol.*"   (These are overalls.)
      "*Ena lo madolo.*"   (These are kneepads.)
      "*Ena lo skatulo.*"   (These are shoes.)   (*Born of the Sun,* 163)

This new language opens up a new perspective for Muronga, who finds that "It really doesn't take long to learn this new language. […] and by the time they break for lunch, they understand most of the talk in the kitchen. Muronga is excited by this whole process and relieved to be able finally to understand some of what is being said to him" (*Born of the Sun*, 164).

Sfanakalo also becomes the language of the secret meetings with fellow Namibians from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the mining camp, who apparently have no other language to unite them (*Born of the Sun*, 202–206). However, the linguistic details of the meetings are mostly signalled by metalinguistic comments in the text:

(16) Nakare, who has been standing near the door, finally steps to the front of the room and begins to speak, but this time he speaks Sfanakalo, unlike during their earlier meeting with Ndango when he spoke Thimbukushu. […]
"Do you understand everything Nakare is saying, Muronga?" asks Ndango.
"Yes, I do. But I don't understand why he is not speaking Thimbukushu here. There are no white people here. These other men are not from our tribe, are they? They are foreigners. I thought we were talking about getting our land back. Do we want to share it with total strangers?" Muronga asks in a concerned whisper.

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9. Diescho refers to this language as Sfanakalo. In the linguistic literature, however, we find Fanakalo or Fanagalo.

"I understand what you are saying, and I agree. But you see, Nakare is not only for us. He is for everybody, the whole country […] He is a very knowledgeable man. He has learned many deep things. He talks about the whole land, about the whole people. You see, to him a tribe is too small. One group cannot stand against the big guns of the white people. This organization is about uniting people to be stronger, you see," Ndango explains quickly in a soft voice.

(*Born of the Sun,* 203–204)

Quite clearly, Sfanakalo is a language of wider communication, in this passage set in direct opposition to the local Namibian language Thimbukushu, and through its power to reach a greater audience and people from various ethnic groups it becomes a language of unification and of the liberation movement.

Elsewhere in the novel, the languages of resistance are made explicit, sometimes with complete translations and metalinguistic comments, sometimes without. Both techniques are employed, for example, in the following scene illustrating a commemoration service for Archie Bokwe, a South African fellow mine worker and leader in the liberation struggle, who had died under mysterious circumstances in prison:

(17) "*Amandla!*" shouts Maseko with his right clenched fist raised in the air.
       "*Ngawethu!*" respond the men thunderously, frightening Muronga who has never heard such loud shouts before.
       "*Matla!*"
       "*Ke arona!*"
       "Power"
       "Is ours"
       "*Mayibuye!*"
       "*IAfrika!*"
       "*IAfrika!*"
       "*Mayibuye!*"   (*Born of the Sun,* 229–230)

(18) Then, like a gathering storm, a thousand voices join in, rising toward the heavens in unison, singing in isiXhosa,
       Senzenina, senzenina   (What have we done?)
       Senzenina, se sifa nje?   (What have we done to die like this?)
       Sono sethu, ubumnyama   (Our only sin is the color of our skin)
       Ndango translates the words of the song for Muronga. "What have we done, to die like this? Our sin is being black." Exhilarated by the words and their meaning, the men clap their hands and stamp their feet to the music. Then they sing,
       Mabauyekhe umhlaba wethu (They must leave our land)
       Si khalela lizwe lethu   (We cry for our land)
       E'lathathwa ngamabhulu   (Which has been taken by the Boers …)
                                                        (*Born of the Sun,* 231–232)

Interestingly, Ndango translates the isiXhosa words for Muronga, presumably into their mutual native language,[10] but this language is completely eliminated in this passage. This certainly helps the reader to understand the words (although their translation is already provided in brackets), but at the same time underlines the importance of South African isiXhosa in the liberation struggle, at the expense of a local Namibian language.

In contrast to this liberating language, Diescho depicts Afrikaans as the language of oppression and of brutal police force. When imprisoned for attending the commemoration service, the prisoners are yelled at in Afrikaans. This is one of the rare instances in the novel where a longer stretch of this language is present, immediately followed by a translation into English:

(19) *Julle slapende gate! Julle het gedink julle is slim, ne? Nou le julle lekker hier by sterk manne. Julle fokken Bokwe het mos die sleutel vir die hemmel. Hy moet nou die tronkdeure oopmaak … laat ons sien. Kom, waar is julle vergadering en die gesingery nou? Hier het ek die sleutel. Julle le en kak hier!*
(You sleeping assholes! You thought you were smart, didn't you? Now you are lying fine where strong men are. Hasn't your fucking Bokwe got the key to heaven? Let's see now how he opens the prison doors. And where is your meeting and bawling, now? Here, I have the key. You lie and shit here!)
(*Born of the Sun,* 236)

This longer presence of Afrikaans underlines this language's connection to imprisonment and oppression, while the translation of the insults into English guarantees reader comprehension and possibly also already hints at the liberating force of English.

As a reaction to his imprisonment, Muronga becomes even more involved in the liberation movement and learns to read and write. "He has even learned some *vsvsvsvs* and knows now that it is called 'Afrikaans'" (*Born of the Sun,* 259). And while the multitude of languages he encounters shortly after leaving his idyllic home are depicted as being threatening (see Examples (10) to (14) above), towards the end of the novel a different stance towards multilingualism is taken. Here Diescho describes how Muronga helps to translate freedom songs from South African languages into a number of Namibian languages, such as RuKavango, Otjiherero, Oshiwambo, Nama, and Setswana (*Born of the Sun*, 270–271). Again, these are present in the novel and translated into English, similarly to the technique employed in Example (18).

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10. Most likely, this would be Thimbukushu, see Example (16) above.

As far as the English language is concerned, apart from being the language of narration, it is not highlighted, referred to or commented upon explicitly in meta-linguistic comments or elsewhere. This treatment of English changes in *Troubled Waters*, the novel analysed in the next section.

4.2   *Troubled Waters*

The plot of Diescho's second novel virtually starts where his first, *Born of the Sun*, ends – with the protagonist Muronga joining the guerrilla fighters at the Namibian-Angolan border. *Troubled Waters* takes place in the mid-1970s and tells the story of two young adults. Andries, a young White South African soldier is placed in rural South West Africa (today's Namibia), in the Kavango region near the Angolan border, to defend South African interests against SWAPO freedom fighters. He serves as a soldier-teacher at a local Black school, where he meets Lucia/Namvhura, a Black Namibian schoolteacher, who has come back from her university training in South Africa and who finds it difficult to reintegrate into her local community. The two fall in love and start an affair, Lucia/Namvhura gets pregnant (without Andries knowing) and they eventually separate, as their relationship is illegal in the South African apartheid system. The novel is a tragic love story, which, as Chanetsa argues, gives, at a deeper level "a brilliant insight into the workings of the Afrikaner mind and of the Namibian culture, from an African author both educated in South Africa, and born and bred in the very part of Namibia where the story is focussed" (2012: n.p.). The novel's "heterodiegetic narrator tells the story from the point of view of the two main characters" (Frank 2018: 22). The main parts of the story are narrated through the eyes of the White male protagonist, who learns to question the apartheid system and the war he has been sent to. He learns to value local cultures and customs, through his relationship with a Namibian woman, but also through his conversations with a senior White teacher colleague. Similarly, the female protagonist has to come to terms with the expectations of her community, the schoolchildren she teaches, and her own alienation through her education and experiences in South Africa. Hence, the main characters evolve and, in a way, their 'coming of age' can be linked to the 'coming of a nation'.

> The author does a good job of showing how the central characters, school children and the community around them, strive to survive in a system they are helpless to change. And how they must operate in an increasingly diminished space as the South African government – mindful of the influence of the liberation movement, SWAPO – extends its 'homelands' system to South West.   (Chanetsa 2012: n.p.)

As in Diescho's first novel *Born of the Sun*, the topic of language and language use is also omnipresent in his second one, frequently linked to educational and/or

political issues. The prevalent South African language policy, particularly the promotion of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at the time (see also Stell, this volume), and as a warfare strategy, together with the effects this has on the Namibian educational system, are made evident, as the following two excerpts illustrate:

(20) *Dearest Pa*
      […] *By the way, I am not in the bush. For some reason, I have been assigned to teach Religious Studies in the local Bantu High School here. […] The commander told me that teaching at this school is as good as fighting and defending our country. In fact, in teaching lies the real defence of culture and civilization. You would agree with that, wouldn't you Pa? The students are co-operative. They know how to speak to white people, not like the boys running around in Pretoria. […] The school principal says he is proud of me. […] I enjoy teaching as an act of love for my country. I am sure, as my supervisors said, that teaching is as important as combating terrorists in the bush. It is in the classrooms where we should win the war against the dark forces, rather than lose it on the battlefield* […].
      Your (strong) son
      Dries   (*Troubled Waters,* 41–42)

(21) The principal announces the page of the hymn to be sung. "Stand Up, Stand Up, for Jesus, Ye Soldiers of the Cross". It is to be sung in Afrikaans. He often repeats that it is mandatory to speak and sing in Afrikaans as much as possible. Certainly no other language can be taught. After all, education is not political, and teaching black children English, or even their own language, is a gravely political act.
      The children sing the hymn with great enthusiasm. It is one of the best-liked songs.

      Staan op, staan op vir Jesus,
      u helde van die Kruis!
      Verhoog sy kruisbaniere
      deur al die strydgedruis!
      Deur stryd lei tot oorwinning
      die Heiland keer op keer,
      Tot Hy oor elke vyand
      vir ewig heers as Heer.   (*Troubled Waters,* 56)

We get metalinguistic comments on the importance of education and the role of Afrikaans in controlling the region, as well as its relationship to English and indigenous languages, the latter being described as political languages as opposed to 'neutral' Afrikaans. But in (21) we also have the presence of untranslated Afrikaans. Quite obviously, monolingual English readers might well be expected to understand the hymn text, as they either know the song in English or can refer to the English

version in an English hymnal, and the text seems to suggest that the two versions are identical. This is, however, not necessarily the case when indigenous languages are present untranslated in a similar manner, as in (22):

(22)   After announcements, the students sing a song in their language, Rukwangali.

> *Ame Mugende Apa*
> *Kapisi Pwetu*
> *Nye mazedo manzi*
> *Pwange tunda po*
> *Pwange tunda po*

> Andries knows the melody. It is a song he used to sing in Afrikaans in school. "Here I am a Pilgrim, Not My Home," were the words. He hums along as the students sing beautifully. The foreign words sound stupid to Andries. All he appreciates is the music, the harmony and the smooth rhythm. The students' bodies move and their heads nod as they sing.   (*Troubled Waters,* 50–51)

The Rukwangali version of the song may be the same as the Afrikaans one, but most readers will never know. What the readers possibly get instead, however, is a feeling of alienation, which they are probably meant to share with the male protagonist, to whom the "foreign words sound stupid".

The male protagonist's perspective and linguistic background is also transferred to the reader in the letters he writes to family members and in which he comments on the situation he finds himself in. As we could already see in Example (20) above, these letters are given in English (as are the responses by the family members), but of course, are to be read as in Afrikaans.

(23)   *Hello Naomi*
        […]
        The school where I teach is only for black students, but almost all teachers are white. Boere to be precise. That is how they are waging the war. I am confused as to what this war is all about. You would think that the school is in the heart of Transvaal or the Orange Free State, except that it is surrounded by black townships and villages. It feels weird. And they don't speak English at school, as they do in South Africa. Here it is Afrikaans all the way. And there is no resistance from the black people. I didn't know it would be like this. When my supervisors told me I was being sent to teach, I asked myself how I was going to teach in English all day. […]
        Anyway, old sister, this letter was not meant to be long and draggy. Just a note to say I am thinking of you and wondering how everybody is at home. I will write again soon.
        Your Boet'
        Andries   (*Troubled Waters,* 44–45)

Quite obviously, the protagonist is not very confident in English ("I asked myself how I was going to teach in English all day"), and in the extra-literary reality he would probably not write in English to his relatives as their family language would be Afrikaans. This language, however, is only evoked; in this letter, for instance, by the metaphorical codeswitch to the Afrikaans word *Boet'* ('brother') at the end. Elsewhere in the text, a similar technique is applied, although in this scene, the Afrikaans kinship term is translated and its use is explained in a metalinguistic comment:

(24) "*Oom* Frank," Andries approaches him quickly. He has taken to the use of "uncle" in addressing him. After all, the man is almost family in this far-away place.   (*Troubled Waters,* 71)

What the reader has to understand, however, from the circumstances (the conversation taking place on the school premises) and the linguistic background of the two teachers (Frank van Zyl also being an Afrikaans L1-speaker) is that the entire conversation is meant to take place in Afrikaans, as the language of communication for White people.

Similarly, when Lucia/Namvhura returns to her home village towards the end of the novel and is discovered by the female elders to be pregnant, one of them cries out: "*Kwawanu gha di!* See how dark and awake these nipples are?" (*Troubled Waters*, 179). Here the codeswitch very obviously evokes the characters' home language and hence the language of the entire communication narrated. With this Lucia/Namvhura's function as a link to the rurality of the Namibian village and the use of indigenous languages in such environments is also highlighted.

In other instances, such as in (25), a letter to the female protagonist from a South African friend, a different type of codeswitching is employed:

(25) *Dear Namvhura,*
      You have no idea how happy I was to hear from you. I have been anxious about
      you and your family over there in Namibia. We hear so much about the war in
      South West Africa that one wonders if there is anyone still alive in that country.
      My family continually asks about my friend – you! They remember you so well
      from those few times I brought you home with me. In fact, my younger brother
      remembers you as la sisi othetha ungathi akakwazi ukuthetha isiXhosa-umgathi
      umlungu *(the sister who speaks Xhosa funny, who speaks like a white person).*
      He misses you, the little guy. [...]   (*Troubled Waters,* 156)

This codeswitching is referential, most likely translating what the younger brother is depicted as having said. The translation in brackets, however, is probably meant to help the non-isiXhosa-speaking reader, rather than the addressee of the letter, who is reported to have spoken isiXhosa while in South Africa, albeit with a 'funny' accent. However, the text does not always provide the reader with such scaffolding:

(26)   *Dear Nomawethu*

This is not one of my usual letters where I tell you about everything. This is just a note to thank you for your letter. And for your present. That was imaginative of you. You know I like those pantihose. As you say in your language, Ndiswele imilomo eliwaka ngendi kubulela ngayo. *The truth is that I do need a thousand mouths to thank you for everything, especially your friendship. It is always good to hear from you. Nothing has changed here since I last wrote.* Kunjani apho kuni? *Why do you ask about my* umlungu *friend here? He is difficult to get to know.* […]   (*Troubled Waters,* 117)

This codeswitch to isiXhosa probably is intended to promote the cause of realism as discussed in Section 3 above and "is motivated by the desire to represent a situation of language contact in the story as faithfully as possible" (Bleichenbacher 2008: 26). Furthermore, it may also indicate that the education the main female character received in the Eastern Cape in South Africa has – quite literally – left traces, as this language is not indigenous to Namibia but restricted to South Africa (ethnologue. com). With this, the female protagonist is shown as having estranged herself from the local Namibian community.

In large parts of the text, the technique of elimination is employed. Afrikaans, for instance, is frequently eliminated. A striking example of this can be found in Chapter 6, where Andries prepares his classes and reads passages from the Bible, which "he has to teach" (*Troubled Waters*, 109). However, the two Bible passages quoted, clearly marked by indention and italic font, are given in English, the language Andries obviously does not use in class, is not very comfortable with (see excerpts in Examples (21) and (23)) and is likewise rather unlikely to use for his class preparations. Similarly, the exchanges between Lucia/Namvhura and her pupils – for instances when they come to her place and complain about the dog food they were given for lunch (*Troubled Waters*, 118–119) – are rendered entirely in English, although they would probably take place in Rukwangali (or Rugciriku). As noted in Section 3 above, the elimination of these languages, of which the readers most likely have no command, definitely facilitates the readability of the text. At the same time, it reduces readers' awareness of Namibia's linguistic complexity.

Elsewhere in the novel, the author also uses signalization techniques to depict the multilingual reality of the story. This happens, for example, in the description of a visit of the Kavango Legislative Council to the school premises and a meeting between teachers, pupils, chiefs, and counsellors, where the incident of the dog food meal is discussed (*Troubled Waters*, 124–128). As "the white teachers do not understand the language of the chief" (*Troubled Waters*, 125), Lucia/Namvhura is asked to translate her speech into Afrikaans: "'Could we ask Miss Lucia to translate,'

the principal intervenes" (*Troubled Waters*, 125). Later she translates the principal's (presumably Afrikaans) words into the local language, probably Rukwangali (or Rugciriku) (*Troubled Waters*, 128).

Similarly, when a meeting between several local chiefs and the commissioner is described, we first get the impression that they are speaking the same language, in particular as the White commissioner seems to be very familiar with the local greeting rituals:

(27) The commissioner opened the meeting with the traditional greeting.
"Good morning, all of you!" he said in a low elongated way while lifting his hands, palms out, up toward the sky. Then he slowly brought them around and together again.
"Good morning!" The chiefs responded in the same fashion.
"How did you sleep?" the commissioner asked.
"We slept well."
"When did you come?"
"We came yesterday."
"How was the road?"
"The road was fine."
"How were the cars?"
"The cars were nice."
The commissioner knew that the chiefs did not really like to travel by car. It made them dizzy. He asked about the air, the trees, the rain, the cows, the things that mattered in the lives of the chiefs. He then brought his message.

(*Troubled Waters,* 94)

It is only two pages later that the reader learns that "[t]he translators, who were teachers that the commissioner had brought in, explained things differently" (*Troubled Waters*, 96) and actually distorted the commissioner's message in their translation. The languages involved are not made clear in the text, but the reader can assume that it is Afrikaans on the commissioner's side and Rukwangali or other languages from the Kavango region on the others' side.

These two scenes also illustrate how difficult political negotiations are if the people involved very literally do not speak the same language, and that the knowledge of several languages equals potency and leads to imbalances of power. *Troubled Waters* is very explicit about this, when the text says: "The teachers, brought to translate, saw how significant their own role would be in this new government and they worked to influence the chiefs." (*Troubled Waters*, 97) Thus, the novel also explains how the Kavango chiefs are tricked into a form of puppet self-governance:

(28)   "[…] If you are telling us that we are going to govern ourselves, we cannot refuse you. We appreciate the fact that you, the white people of whom we have been afraid, understand that the land is ours. We thank you. Tell your Government that we are willing to talk."

[…] The other chiefs nodded their heads as the elder spoke. But, in reality, a great deal of what he said was lost in translation. Some of the words could not be translated. And the teacher who translated wanted to be respected by the commissioner.

What the chiefs understood was simple. They were getting their land back. What people who could read and write would understand was that they were getting a homeland type of government. It was very confusing. In their language the word for self-government is the same word used for independence.

(*Troubled Waters,* 98)

Similarly, Lucia's/Namvhura's South African friend reminds her in a letter that she was in a better situation in South Africa than the local students were, because she spoke Afrikaans and hence could better understand (in a literal and a metaphorical way, it seems) the White lecturers:

(29)   *You were always more comfortable with white lecturers than we were at the university, remember? And they liked you very much because you spoke Afrikaans. I was jealous of you at times because you could* praat *and you could get into the white people's heads and understand them very well.*

(*Troubled Waters,* 156–157)

As these examples illustrate, the novel makes its readers understand that knowing Afrikaans means being culturally and intellectually aligned. Most importantly, however, the novel conveys the feelings which the characters have towards several different languages and how closely the use or non-use of certain languages is linked to the struggle for liberation as well as to identity formation, as the following scene clearly illustrates:

(30)   […] the principal clears his throat, the usual sign that an announcement is to follow. Everyone remains standing. "Robert, Angelina, can you lead in the singing of the National Anthem?"

Robert glances at Angelina, who begins humming the tune. He announces that they will sing it in Rukwangali.

Kavango muhafesi gwetu
Sirongo sompora esi
Tu rera zinyetu ove
Tu hafe ose moge

Tara wayi neyiyitji
Tayi hafesa vantu
Tara mukuro gwetu ogu
Omu guna kupupa
Tu hefesa ove zinyetu
Vana woge nyovelike
Twa pahuka tu vyukisa
Tu kare mombili moge

When they finish the singing in Rukwangali, the principal says, "Can we now sing it in Afrikaans?" The students continue to sing as if there were no interruption.

Statig vloei Okavango
Deur'n land van groen en grys
Ongeskonde maar verlore
Vind ons volkie hier 'n tuis
Deur die skeem'ring skeur die donker
Deur die chaos breek die lig
Soos perslelies deur jou modder
Vlam van hoop beskawingsplig
Ons was gedoem geen hoop en sig
O diep rivier, o donker stroom
Ons het ontwaak, ons vind die lig
O diep rivier, o wonderstroom

Lucia sings along with all the others, however, in the middle of the Afrikaans singing, she stops. **She feels a pain, a dagger in her chest. The two versions of the song are completely unrelated**.

<div align="right">(Troubled Waters, 123–124, emphasis added)</div>

The reader already knows that several versions of the Kavango National Anthem exist and that the versions in the local languages contain "truly words for a freedom song", while in English and Afrikaans "the words were something like, 'Then came the word of light through white civilization and saved us. We were doomed, but now we see light.'" (*Troubled Waters*, 100)

The novel not only illustrates the dangers of relying on translations, it also shows that knowing other languages is connected to getting to know, and ultimately perhaps also understanding, other peoples and cultures. In a letter to Andries, Lucia/Namvhura explains that this will eventually even help to overcome all sorts of divides:

(31) […] *Apartheid has taught us not to love, but to fear another.* […] *The most important thing in life is love and there is no issue greater than love itself. It is that thing in our being that speaks all languages and is understood in all languages. People don't hate each other; one cannot hate oneself. It is fear, not hate, that apartheid is about. And you can think that you hate what you avoid. Once you allow yourself to know and be known, you cannot hate. As the Afrikaans saying goes,* Onbekend maak onbemind, *you cannot love what you don't know.* […]

(*Troubled Waters,* 172)

As has been illustrated, the topic of language is ubiquitous in *Troubled Waters*, and as in *Born of the Sun*, the link to identity construction, the war of liberation and power relations is definitely one of the key topics of this book.

5. Discussion

Both novels are examples of Namibian literary "texts engaging with social realities before, during and after the independence process […]" (Melber 2018: 26). In both novels, Diescho employs all the techniques for the depiction of multilingualism presented in Section 3, from presence to evocation, as well as signalisation and elimination, the latter probably being the most frequent one. Furthermore, he uses different forms of codeswitching, referential as well as metaphorical. The author clearly exerts himself to represent several languages and hence to reflect the multilingual ecology of the depicted reality. Some languages are not translated, others are, but both novels seem to be addressed primarily to a readership that is not necessarily fluent in any indigenous Namibian language nor in Afrikaans. The elimination of most languages for major parts of both novels is certainly helpful for (but also privileges) the monolingual English reader and ensures comprehension. In some instances, however, it seems as if codeswitching is deliberately employed as a 'marked choice' to exclude parts of the monolingual, non-Namibian readership or to create some degree of alienation (as partly in Examples (10) to (14), or in Examples (17), (21) and (22)).

Furthermore, the author's inclusion of several languages from the Kavango region as well as, for instance, isiXhosa from South Africa certainly underlines that he is 'an insider': born in the Kavango region, active in the liberation movement, once a student at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa, and a worker in a diamond mine (Hallett 1989: 7). These languages increase the authenticity of the texts and add considerable realism. This also accounts for the inclusion of Sfanakalo/Fanakalo elements in *Born of the Sun.* This language is a Zulu-based pidgin Bantu, which originated in the 19th century and has no L1-speakers (ethnologue.com). The language "is closely connected with labour in the mining industry"

in South Africa, as "[t]he gold and diamond rush to the interior resulted in a new Babel containing a variety of European and African languages and some Chinese […]. Fanakalo became an important means for the mining bosses to communicate with – and control – the labour force." (Mesthrie & Surek-Clark 2013: 35). As Diescho shows (see Example (15)), the lexicon of Sfanakalo reflects the multilingual make-up of its speakers. Its main lexifier is Zulu, but we also find words of English, Afrikaans, and Portuguese origin.[11] In *Born of the Sun*, this language could also be seen as a metaphor for the linguistic amalgam in the mining camp and the force that can develop when several ethnicities (and languages) unite.

The English language as a topic features far more prominently in the second text. *Troubled Waters* considers the war in retrospective, as it was published shortly after independence and thus at a time in Namibia's history when the decision to make English the country's sole official language had just been made. Presumably, the text is intended, at least partly, to support this contested decision and to explain why Afrikaans was not a possible language choice to unite the newly founded nation, despite the fact that it was far more widespread, both as L1 and as L2, than English was at the time. Similarly, the novel shows well why English was so popular among the liberation fighters and was felt to be a language capable of overcoming the ethnolinguistic fragmentation caused by the apartheid regime. Both *Troubled Waters* and *Born of the Sun* also show why surmounting linguistic, ethnic, cultural, educational and ideological divides was of paramount importance for the newly founded Namibian nation.

What neither of the novels provides, however, is any clue as to the variety of English spoken (nor do they comment on different varieties of Afrikaans, for that matter). As noted above, English is present only as the language of narration in *Born of the Sun*. But even in *Troubled Waters* there is virtually no indication, neither in metalinguistic comments nor in the form of non-standard or semi-phonetic (re-)spellings, eye dialect, or grammatical differences, that the variety of English spoken by the protagonists is in any way different from the standard English used as base language. Only once do we get the metalinguistic remark that Lucia/Namvhura, when starting her university training in South Africa, "didn't know English initially and then spoke it with such a difficult accent" (*Troubled Waters*, 151), and that this view of her English is from a female, Black, South-African perspective. We do find occasional clues via Afrikaans vocabulary, such as *to be in one's noppies* (*Troubled Waters*, 10) or *kraal* (*Troubled Waters*, 58), the latter even in compounds, e.g. *kraal-head* (*Troubled Waters*, 86, 141). This happens sometimes also with lexical items from other languages: *mahangu* (*Troubled Waters*, 76), *ghutara* (*Troubled*

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11. See Mesthrie and Surek-Clark (2013: 39, Table 4) for details.

Waters, 76, 141), *mupindi* (*Troubled Waters*, 76), *nzambi* (*Troubled Waters*, 76), *kutwa* (*Troubled Waters*, 77), *nkata* (*Troubled Waters*, 78), *mutwaro* (*Troubled Waters*, 83), *mataratara* (*Troubled Waters*, 101), *wera* (*Troubled Waters*, 74), *tombo* beer (*Troubled Waters*, 101). As in *Born of the Sun* (see Examples (1) to (5) in Section 4.1), in *Troubled Waters* these are also interspersed in the text, usually highlighted by italicisation, and refer to cultural objects, functions or practices, local food, or particular people. Sometimes they are translated or explained; sometimes their meaning must be deduced from the context. Whether in this novel these isolated words constitute instances of codeswitching, nonce-borrowings,[12] or instantiations of lexical innovation in a new English variety is often difficult to decide, and perhaps finally undecidable. In the sense of Schneider's model, we could probably see in them the development of "an English vocabulary segment of local significance, largely consisting of loans" (2007: 39) from phase 2 in the Dynamic Model; *kraal-head* may actually already be indicative of phase 3, for which Schneider describes "new word-formation products", such as compounds (2007: 46). This also accounts for the occasional compound that is not even marked in italics in the text, such as *registration rondavel* (*Troubled Waters*, 12) or *veld shoes* (*Troubled Waters*, 12). However, these examples appear in a part of the novel that actually takes place in South Africa and thus possibly show the close relationship between the English used in the novel and South African English(es).

6.   Conclusion

The author of these two novels faced the obvious dilemma, in that he was trying to represent a multilingual country but wanted to reach a broad audience. He therefore resorted to writing mainly English texts with only some signalization or evocation of other languages. Diescho has been accused of not depicting "accents of direct speech that might strike a peculiarly Namibian note" (Chapman 1995: 25). However, I believe that the examples from his texts as provided in this chapter amply illustrate that the novels' 'Namibianness' goes beyond the mere party-propagandist praise-singing of which it [i.e. *Born of the Sun*] has been accused (cf. Haarhoff 1991: 235). As with other post-colonial novels which go beyond "an interest in a particular author as an individual in his or her cultural context" (Locher 2017: 317), these texts exhibit features of Africanisation and the appropriation of the English language. As in other literary texts, this Africanisation "is achieved through the techniques of glossing, leaving words untranslated, relexification, and the insertion

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12.   See Schröder (2016) or Matras (2009) for a more detailed discussion on the differences and similarities between codeswitching and borrowing.

of Xhosa proverbs" (Mofin Noussi 2009: 291), as well as the inclusion of songs in various indigenous and colonial languages in the English written text.

The author's Africanised style seems more evident in the second novel, *Troubled Waters*, than in the first, particularly with regard to the English language. This may be due to the fact that for *Born of the Sun* Diescho had a co-author, who, as he explains in the acknowledgements, "in the process of typing and editing each draft of the manuscript, contributed her valuable ideas and insights and, as such, co-wrote much of the story" (*Born of the Sun*, vii). Furthermore, *Born of the Sun* was written and published in exile in the US and hence probably predominantly addressed to an international readership. *Troubled Waters*, however, was published in Namibia and perhaps intended primarily for a local readership. Nevertheless, I believe that in both novels Joseph Diescho – like many other influential authors, such as Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe, or Leslie Marmon Silko "who write (primarily) in English rather than their ancestors' languages" – has "appropriated English to express [his] own cultural experiences and identities" (Locher 2017: 317).

Moreover, both texts take a clear stance on the relationship between language and power, oppression and liberation, language and identity, language and unity, or language and education, either through metalinguistic comments or through the presence of diverse languages in different functions. Furthermore, through the perspective of the first-person narrator, the readers are included, gain deeper insights and develop empathy towards the Namibian struggle. The two novels are thus good representations of linguistic diversity as well as providing instructive illustrations of language ideologies or identity formation and illuminating portrayals of marginalized language groups and resistance against linguistic hegemony in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural make-up of Namibia during the struggle of liberation and the years following independence.

Finally, with this analysis of two Namibian novels I hope to have shown that looking at fictional texts through a ficto-linguistic lens is a useful endeavour. "Fictional data […] is one very rich type of data and needs to be considered on its own terms" (Jucker & Locher 2017: 10). Looking at language in fiction provides the researcher with "a wealth of material for research questions" (Jucker & Locher 2017: 10), and hopefully this chapter has also provided its readers with some answers.

Acknowledgements

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Namibian English and beyond

The dynamics of English in Namibia

A World Englishes perspective

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This paper positions the volume's findings on English in Namibia in the wider context of World Englishes. After briefly summarizing generally important insights of the book's contributions, Namibian English is compared to other global varieties with respect to its sociohistorical embedding (being an exceptionally young variety), sociolinguistic settings (including multilingualism, language contact, linguistic mixing), language policy (found to be unique) and structural properties on the levels of pronunciation, morphosyntax and lexis (showcasing an idiosyncratic vowel split and many shared structures). Special attention is paid to Namibia's linguistic relationship with South Africa and other southern African countries. Finally, closer attention is paid to Namibia's role in several models of World Englishes, including traditional, established and more recent lines of thinking.

Keywords: Dynamic Model, models of World Englishes, Namibian English, South African English, southern African Englishes

1. Introduction

The aim of the present volume is to put "Namibia and the English language spoken there on the map of World Englishes" (Schröder, this volume, introductory chapter: 1) and consequently, the aim of this concluding chapter is to set the findings presented in this book into a wider World Englishes (WEs) perspective. Hence, we will discuss in how far Namibian English (NamE) compares with other WEs in a number of ways – historically, sociolinguistically, structurally, and with respect to its basic modelling or its contribution to the modelling of WEs varieties in general.

As indicated in the introduction to this volume, the variety status and hence the labelling of English as spoken in Namibia has been one of the core questions in the genesis of this volume, since in terms of Schneider's Dynamic Model, the change from *English in X*, i.e. English in Namibia, to *X English*, i.e. NamE, as variety label

signals a conceptual development from a language variety "without discrete character of its own" to one "with the status of a distinct type, set apart and essentially on equal terms with all others" (Schneider 2007: 50). This change in labelling is widely seen as indicating the transition from nativization (phase 3) to endonormative stabilization (phase 4), associated with the acceptance and subsequent codification of variety-specific features (Schneider 2007: 50–52).

The distinctiveness and the developmental status of NamE as compared to other WEs will obviously stand at the core of this summarizing and weighing chapter. Such an assessment will need to build on factual observation, however. Therefore, we will start out by recapitulating important findings of this volume's contributions with regard to fundamental ongoing discussions. Furthermore we will compare and contrast these findings with related observations from other varieties of English with regard to a number of relevant parameters, including sociohistorical background and sociolinguistic setting, language policy, language attitudes, multilingualism, etc. We will also be looking into structural properties of NamE and ask whether these are unique to this variety or shared widely with other varieties of the region or around the globe. Obviously, the most immediate point of reference for such a comparative perspective will be Namibia's direct regional context and will specifically involve other (southern) African as well as South Africa's ethnic varieties of English. Furthermore, we will discuss the role of NamE in established and emerging models of WEs, thus including a wider, more theoretically grounded perspective. Finally, contrasting NamE to other varieties of English on a more global scale will eventually enable us to establish the place of NamE in the WEs paradigm.

2. Select findings from the present volume in view of modelling NamE as a new variety

The present volume contributes to the debate on variety formation in many ways. Chapter 2 by Gerald Stell, for instance, highlights important aspects of the historical background to the variety of English spoken in Namibia. As this chapter makes very clear, English has been a prestige language for a considerable part of the Namibian population for an extensive period of time, and was prestigious even before independence. As Stell argues, English has developed into the country's dominant language, whose uses extend well beyond educational and into informal sectors and which is furthermore developing variety-specific features, particularly among the Black Namibian population (more on this below). The educational sector is more closely considered in the contribution by Helene Steigertahl (Chapter 3), whose study confirms that attitudes towards English are generally very positive and that it is very clearly the country's preferred Medium of Instruction (MoI). But at the

same time, Steigertahl shows that the acquisition process is often made difficult due to limited exposure to the language outside the classroom, at least in some parts of the country. Similarly, Chapter 4 by Nelson Mlambo illustrates that English serves important functions in the Namibian healthcare sector in the capital Windhoek, but given the multilingual nature of the workplace, healthcare practitioners need to resort to additional linguistic resources for successful communication. In Windhoek's public sphere, English is clearly the most favored written language, and its usage seems to have increased since independence in public as well as in private signage, as Marion Schulte shows in Chapter 5. Her contribution also illustrates that for oral interaction in Windhoek's public spaces language use is more diverse, and differences regarding language preferences between different speaker groups can be observed: While White Afrikaners frequently still seem to prefer Afrikaans as inter-ethnic means of communication, all other ethnic groups clearly favor English in such communicative settings. English also seems to be the preferred language for most young and urban Namibian YouTubers, regardless of their L1 background, as Frederic Zähres shows in his study of this recently established digital community (Chapter 7). Hence, it is obvious that mainly (though not exclusively) since independence English has been growing tremendously in importance and has made inroads into many domains of life. In the country's multilingual setup it is coming to be a widely shared second language (in addition to ethnic L1s) for many speakers and even an L1 for a few. English is also the preferred language of choice for formal and public communication with an interethnic appeal. In other words, while in 1990 selecting English as the only national language was a check for the future, in the decades since then, and increasingly in the recent past, this role has been filled with life, as the contributions to this volume show.

The development of a new variety of English is usually marked by "a high degree of cultural as well as linguistic independence […] reflected in the emergence of […] literary creativity in English, rooted in the new culture and adopting elements of the new language variety" (Schneider 2007: 50). That this process is well advanced for NamE is shown in Anne Schröder's ficto-linguistic analysis of two Namibian novels which display clear signs of both Africanisation and the appropriation of the English language, thematising linguistic diversity and identity constructions as well as language ideologies and marginalisation (Chapter 11). Kerstin Frank's comprehensive overview of Namibian literature in English (Chapter 10) further supports this assumption, as her contribution offers insights into Namibian identity rewritings and demonstrates that a considerable body of NamE literature and a variety of literary genres have been firmly established, especially after independence.

As for the development of variety-specific features, Anne Schröder, Frederic Zähres and Alexander Kautzsch very clearly state in Chapter 6 that NamE should not be defined as a sub-type of South African English. With their study on vowels

they confirm that the NURSE–WORK split can be described as a potential phonetic Namibianism. However, NamE also seems to share some features with (varieties of) South African English(es), such as a TRAP–DRESS merger. Furthermore, the authors suggest the existence of at least two distinct phonological sub-varieties of NamE, one resembling southern hemisphere Englishes and another one resembling West and East African Englishes. Their analysis is partly confirmed by Frederic Zähres' phonetic analysis of Namibian YouTube data in Chapter 7, who also finds a NURSE–WORK split and interesting phonetic differences between formal and more informal YouTube styles, resulting in two different patterns. As for pragmatic features, Anne Schröder and Klaus P. Schneider's observations in Chapter 9 partially confirm earlier findings and the preference for PLEASURE as default response to a thanks, while at the same time highlighting the multicultural complexity of Namibia's multilingual ecology and its influence on pragmatic behavior. This leads to the question of structural nativization in NamE, which is specifically addressed in Sarah Buschfeld's contribution and her discussion of progressive marking in NamE in Chapter 8. As Buschfeld herself concedes, the findings of her study remain rather inconclusive because of the complexity of the theoretical question and the small size of her data set. But her observations regarding interethnic and age differences as well as the relevance of identity constructions confirm observations made in the introductory chapter and several other contributions to this volume: Homogeneity and hence endonormative stabilization cannot be attested for NamE, and questions of structural nativization and WE modelling need to take linguistic heterogeneity into account. This is an issue that we will take up again in Section 4 below.

3.   Namibian Englishes compared to other World Englishes

3.1   Sociohistorical embedding and sociolinguistic settings

Remarkably, with respect to timing and its historical depth NamE is no doubt one of the youngest, if not the youngest, of the varieties which are conventionally subsumed under the heading of 'WEs'. Most of these varieties date back many centuries (Schneider 2020: 53–55). Indian English was triggered in 1600; the 'New World' varieties of North America and the Caribbean started to branch off in the early seventeenth century. 'Southern hemisphere' varieties originated late in the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century – Australia with the First Fleet in 1788, South Africa with the Cape Settlers in the 1820s (after authority having been assigned in the Congress of Vienna in 1815), and New Zealand in 1840 after the Treaty of Waitangi. In South-East Asia and coastal East Asia English started spreading at roughly the same time (Malaysia 18th c., Singapore 1819, Hong Kong

1840). Colonial rule in Africa was established later, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (e.g. Lagos 1861, Uganda 1893, Kenya 1920); the same applies, broadly, to the Pacific region. Compared to all of this, NamE, in its present-day status and character essentially a child of the third millennium (and the decade before), is exceptionally young. Unlike many other varieties it has something like an 'official birth date' or even 'birth certificate', with its special status formally established at independence. The language was there to some extent before that date as well, including a period of co-official status with Afrikaans and as MoI in a small number of schools (Stell, this volume). However, in terms of breadth and importance this does not compare to its role and development afterwards – a relationship which is mirrored only in a small number of former colonies, e.g. New Zealand, where sailors and whalers patrolled the island earlier but the real boost came with immigration after the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. So by comparison NamE lacks time depth, but shows an immensely vibrant recent development.

The reason for this is another factor which is remarkable and practically unique: Namibia's language policy, i.e. the decision to establish English as sole official language despite the absence of a British colonial history. Many postcolonial nations have English as one of two or more official languages; for example, Kenya has Swahili and English, Botswana has Setswana and English, Zambia has English as its official language plus several official regional languages, and South Africa has as many as eleven official languages, including English and Afrikaans. But we are not aware of any other comparable step like Namibia's, to decide for an official language at independence which had no backing in colonial history and at that time only extremely limited speaker numbers.[1] There would have been alternative options, and Stell (this volume) as well as Steigertahl (2020: 102–113) vividly describe the criteria defined and applied in the choice of a national language (a convincing and well-reflected list). Ultimately, there were a number of compelling reasons for the young nation to decide for English as its only official language. Interestingly enough, however, it was not only a logical decision, as human factors seemingly played a role as well. According to Stell, a primary cause was the positive association with English in SWAPO, which in turn had political, regional and to some extent personal reasons. In any case, "[t]he fact that English had by then become the linguistic symbol of the Liberation Struggle, largely led by northerners, led to its eventual imposition as a language of Namibian nationhood" (Stell, this volume: 21–22). This compares well with other former colonies which had to fight for their

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1.   Perhaps the closest comparable case is the decision of ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, in its Charter of 2007 in favor of English (rather than any widespread Asian language, like Malay) as its "sole working language" (Kirkpatrick 2010) – but that is a confederation and thus quite a different context from a nation state.

independence and whose early political leaders, usually former liberation fighters, got accustomed to English during long periods of exile and subsequently associated the language with an international orientation, including a search for political backing. In such contexts, English was thus often perceived as the language of liberation and hope rather than loaded with a colonial burden. Cases in point are, most evidently, the similar role English had for the ANC in South Africa, but also Ghandi's association with English during his South African exile, or Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion of the 1950s, led by English speakers like the first president Jomo Kenyatta. Certainly South Africa's League of Nations mandate period throughout most of the twentieth century played a role and also brought some English influx with it, but the language really promoted by South Africans in Namibia was Afrikaans. Hence, this historical period clearly does not compensate for a British colonial past with regard to the choice for English as the sole official language after independence.

Beyond those specific, local contextual factors there were also a few fundamental, general qualities associated with English that supported its promotion and choice, also listed by Stell (this volume): The criteria labelled 'science and technology', 'Pan-Africanism', 'wider communication' and 'United Nations' reflect the role of English as the language of very many international domains (thus offering access to international ties in those respects) including politics, business, the sciences and western technological knowledge. They also highlight the fact that English is widely and increasingly established in other African nations in a number of transnational and formal contexts. These utilitarian considerations are also very frequently found and operative in other WEs-speaking nations, a set of motives which led Schneider (2014a) to posit the "Transnational Attraction" of English as a decisive factor in the rapid global diffusion of English – in Namibia with the same effect as elsewhere. And finally, there is one more criterion that had some impact and that is to be identified as effective in the choice of English in many other postcolonial countries as well: its ethnic neutrality. In a multilingual setting such as in Namibia, selecting any of the indigenous languages as official would probably prioritize some and offend other speakers and ethnicities; English is thus a choice which avoids potential conflict (and was accordingly associated with the criterion of 'unity' in the language policy criteria listed by Stell, this volume). In Namibia there might also have been a potential for ethnolinguistic conflicts; by comparison, consider countries like Nigeria or India (discussed in Schneider 2007: 204 and 166–167, respectively) where obviously the choice of English was a decisive move to avoid ethnic riots.

An important context which NamE shares with most WEs is the multilingual nature of the linguistic ecology in which it exists: English is just one language out of many others spoken in the community and the region. Typically, most Namibians and speakers of NamE command two or more languages (see Schröder, introduction to this volume, and Mlambo, this volume). Consequently, we see the impact

of language contact processes shaping both the emerging varieties of English and influencing local languages. Even if the use of the term 'Namlish' is reported (albeit mostly simply for a local way of speaking English; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 127; Steigertahl 2020: 92, 127, 214–215), what we hardly see reported in Namibia (perhaps as of yet) is a genuinely mixed code comparable to Hinglish, Taglish, Camfranglais, and many others found in very many multilingual nations, with remarkable similarities as to their sociolinguistic settings (see Schneider 2016a).[2] We may speculate that English is not yet fully entrenched enough in Namibia for such types of systematic language mixing to emerge. We are also not aware of reports of 'grassroots' usage and acquisition of the type discussed in Schneider (2016b), Meierkord (2020), and Meierkord and Schneider (2020), though this is likely to occur in appropriate contexts in Namibia as well. This may also emerge with this research perspective gaining in visibility, just like the work by Zähres (this volume) shows that a recent wider interest in digital and social media usage in varieties of English has been picked up and accommodated to the Namibian context.

Several papers in this volume describe various roles of English in Namibia and touch upon speaker attitudes towards the variety and speakers' proficiency levels. Broadly speaking, these are similar to many other countries, but also changing strongly and rather quickly. To quite some extent this certainly is a product of the new status as sole official language, which assigns prestige to the language and implies the need for a solid proficiency as a prerequisite to being successful in formal societal domains on the national level. NamE is growing into the role of an identity carrier, especially for the younger generation, as a number of sources have shown. For example, Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 278) report that English is the language most people most strongly identify with. To some extent this applies to older people as well, as is illustrated by the fact that the speaker Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 279) quote is well in his sixties. But English is also a language of personal development and economic prospects; motivations to acquire it are often largely utilitarian, though with increased usage in the private domain a more personal and emotional attachment to the language is clearly visible. In this respect NamE seems similar to other WEs varieties which oscillate between ESL and EFL status, like Malaysian English: Plain EFL countries do not show much potential to move beyond the purely utilitarian motivations, while in ESL countries more exposure, higher proficiency levels and some association with local identities are to be expected.

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2. Sometimes codeswitching practices (German-English-Afrikaans; Oshiwambo-Afrikaans, etc.) are also referred to as 'Namlish'. But these are not comparable to what we observe elsewhere, and we do not see any mixed language similar to the ones mentioned emerging as of yet.

3.2   Structural properties

Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014) were the first to point out a number of structural properties that appear to distinguish NamE from other varieties. Since then further features have been documented, e.g. a wide range of morphosyntactic phenomena in Kautzsch (2019) and Steigertahl (2020) and phonological features in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016) and Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (this volume). What has to be considered here, however, is the fact that NamE is not a homogeneous variety; some features are constrained to specific ethnic groups within the country. The question to be asked in this section is to what extent features reported for NamE are unique or shared with other WEs. We are fortunate to have high-quality documentation of the global distribution of linguistic features in WEs, for phonology in the first volume of the *Handbook of Varieties of English* (Schneider et al. 2004) and, most accessibly, in the synopses by Schneider (2004, on a global scale) and Mesthrie (2004a, for Africa and Asia), and for morphosyntax in volume 2 of the same project (Kortmann et al. 2004), summarized in Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2004) and Mesthrie (2004b), and in the eWAVE project (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2012, and online at <https://ewave-atlas.org>).[3]

For the pronunciation of NamE, Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (this volume) offer the most comprehensive description to date, in addition to Kautzsch and Schröder (2016), a paper upon which the present one builds. For some details they also offer a comparative perspective, asking how widespread the features observed are beyond Namibia. On the level of phonology, clearly the most interesting feature of NamE is an allophonic split of the NURSE–WORK vowels, with an [ɔ] realization after /w/ but fronted variants in other environments. This is truly remarkable since it appears to be unique to NamE and not attested at all anywhere else. The central NURSE vowel is dispreferred and unstable in particular in African varieties, with backing found widely in central African and fronting in West and also southern African varieties (Simo Bobda 2003: 22)[4] – but nowhere is there any evidence of a systematic phonetically conditioned split comparable to NamE. The KIT-split, with realizations varying between [ɪ] (mainly "in velar and glottal contexts", Mesthrie 2004a: 1100) and schwa, is reported in Namibia with European-ancestry speakers, in line with a similar tendency in other southern hemisphere varieties. In contrast, a merger (or steps towards it) of tense and lax vowels (notably, of FLEECE and KIT as well as GOOSE and FOOT, respectively), is tentatively suggested for NamE

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3.   Unless otherwise indicated, these are the sources which our comparative assessments are based on.

4.   Similarly, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 146) associate the realization of NURSE as [e] primarily with Oshiwambo speakers.

speakers with a Bantu L1 background – this is a tendency which is extremely widespread in African and South-East Asian Englishes in general. The (partial) TRAP–DRESS merger (with a realization around an open [ɛ]) is strongest among black NamE speakers; it is attested for both White and (mesolectal) Black forms of South African English (SAfrE) as well (with similar tendencies found in other sub-Saharan Englishes), but otherwise not widespread. Various, largely unsystematic stress shifts (like *in'dependence* instead of *inde'pendence*, Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 146) occur in almost all WEs. For other processes found fairly widely in WEs, notably the fronting of the GOOSE vowel in the southern hemisphere and a few more varieties, evidence in Namibia is scant (though there is some in specific contexts).

Consonants are less conspicuous in NamE, and modifications are often similar to what happens elsewhere. TH-stopping (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 146) is extremely widespread in global varieties of English; in Africa it is more generally found in the west than in the east and south (Simo Bobda 2003: 26). Final consonant devoicing (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 146) is shared with Afrikaners and black South Africans, some West African varieties, and the Malay peninsula.

On the level of grammar NamE also situates itself variably and in distinct ways between rather strictly localized, wider regional and also almost global phenomena. In line with the basic observation made in Schneider (2007: 86–88), local innovations occur mainly at the interface of lexis and grammar, i.e. specific constructions are associated with specific words. Cases in point, and thus real grammatical peculiarities of NamE, are the apparently unique phraseology of using time adverbs with the preposition *on*, i.e. phrases like *on today, on yesterday* (Kautzsch 2019: 248–249), and also the frequent occurrence of a specific conversion, namely *pain* being used as a verb (Kautzsch 2019; Steigertahl 2020: 257–258). Other structures are not unique but also regionally or typologically constrained. Steigertahl (2020: 254–245) finds the form *busy* followed by a verbal *-ing* form, a construction commonly analysed as a "semi-auxiliary" which is typical of "all varieties of SAfE" (Mesthrie 2004b: 1134), and she also documents instances of reduplication (such as *now now* or *deep deep*, 2020: 274–275), frequently associated with high-contact, pidgin and creole varieties. The extended use of progressives especially to stative verbs, observed by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014: 145), Kautzsch (2019: 247) and Steigertahl (2020: 253–254) and thoroughly investigated by Buschfeld (this volume), is a "striking and almost universal characteristic among L2 varieties in Africa-Asia" (Mesthrie 2004b: 1134). Other structural phenomena which NamE shares with very many other WEs include variable prepositional choices (e.g. *depend in*; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 145; Steigertahl 2020: 277–278), the pluralization of non-count nouns (and other nonstandard plural forms) or, conversely, the lack of plural marking of nouns after quantifiers (Steigertahl 2020: 261–264, 266), and *was/were* generalization (Steigertahl 2020: 280–281). And there are several constructions which

are found in NamE and also in several other varieties, but the amount of overlap and also the precise nature and causes of similarities vary greatly and would require closer inspection than is possible here. Cases in point include the double comparison of adjectives (e.g. *more easier*, Kautzsch 2019: 248; Steigertahl 2020: 272–273), various types of lack of agreement such as *This are* (Kautzsch 2019: 249; Steigertahl 2020: 279–280), a nonstandard distribution of *a* and *an* before nouns, independent of their initial phoneme (Kautzsch 2019: 250–251; Steigertahl 2020: 264), or the use of *go and* + bare infinitive. Many of these types are interesting, and some appear innovative. For example, Steigertahl (2020: 270) documents frequent instances and different types of "pronoun copying", some of which are essentially familiar and found widely in many varieties of English, such as the patterns known as "subject doubling", "resumptive pronouns", or "left dislocation", with a full lexical noun phrase replicated by a pronoun, e.g. *my mother she has…* The plain copying of pronouns (e.g. *them they can* or *him he's…*), however, looks rather exceptional, and is possibly unique to NamE, as we are unaware of other systematic attestations.

In contrast, it is perhaps also noteworthy that certain nonstandard patterns which are fairly common in other WEs and regional varieties have not (yet?) been reported for NamE. Negation patterns, for instance, such as preverbal *no*, multiple negation, or *ain't*, are not documented, although rare uses of "non-emphatic" *never* are (Steigertahl 2020: 273). The same accounts for variation in interrogative patterns, in relativization or verb complementation, tense and aspect usage, and the like. But, of course, negative evidence is unconvincing by its very nature and we are unable to tell whether such features are non-existent in NamE or just happen not to have been identified so far in the corpora under scrutiny. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2004: 1150–1159) work out the morphosyntactic patterns which occur most and least frequently on a global scale, which constitutes an interesting baseline for comparison. It turns out that NamE does not participate strongly in either category and can thus be assumed to be neither a 'mainstream' nor an isolate variety: Of 18 least common features it (possibly) shares only one, i.e. double modals[5] (Steigertahl 2020: 251–252); and of 15 most widely distributed features only two (preverbal *never* and double adjective comparatives) are attested in NamE as well.[6]

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5. This correspondence is also both marginal (limited to black NamE and rare even there) and questionable when looking into structural details, namely constrained to *be able to* in the second modal position (which is also found in Standard English, e.g. *must be able to* …, unlike nonstandard forms such as southern American *might could*); many linguists would not analyze this as a true double modal).

6. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi's (2004) feature no. 17, "irregular use of articles", relates to superfluous or missing occurrences of articles, not the *a/an* distinction found in NamE.

The vocabulary of a contact variety tends to be influenced most directly by other languages around, and NamE is no exception. The most extensive documentation of noteworthy properties of the NamE lexis to date, based on a large corpus, is Kautzsch (2019). He shows a range of loan words from German (predominantly first names), Afrikaans (e.g. *bakkie* 'small vehicle with open back', *braai* 'barbecue', *lekker* 'superb'), and Oshiwambo (e.g. *kapana* 'barbecue meat', *marula* 'fruit'), and a few products of localized word formation processes (such as blending in *Nampol*, compounding in *born frees*, or semantic shifts in *learners* 'pupils'), all of which are variably productive in other WEs as well (Biermeier 2008).

Work on pragmatic differences between varieties of English clearly has been a stepchild of variationist linguistics and WEs research so far (Schneider 2020: 26, 44), so the approach taken by Schröder and Schneider (this volume) represents a most welcome and interesting starting point, showing that responding to thanks is realized in locally specific ways in NamE.

On the whole, NamE shows varying degrees of similarity with other WEs. Both on the level of phonology and with respect to morphosyntax, there is a very small set of some, rather specific, phenomena which appear practically unique to this particular variety. In contrast, some shared features, including a few so-called 'angloversals', are extremely widely diffused in WEs, and thus not regionally distinctive at all. Other features are somewhere in between – shared with some other varieties and regions (notably West Africa, it seems) but essentially in rather idiosyncratic patterns which apparently follow neither historical nor geographical regularities. The obvious exception to this rule (but also to some extent only) is South Africa, the former mandate country and large southern neighbor, to which we will therefore turn our attention in a little more detail in the next section.

3.3   NamE vs. South African and southern African Englishes

Given the historical relationship, the period of South Africa's mandate over 'South West Africa', and the geographical proximity of both countries, it is to be expected that NamE is more similar to SAfrE than to any other variety of English. In general, and hence not surprisingly since words travel most easily, lexical influence from SAfrE is apparent: Namibians also use e.g. *robot* 'traffic light', and specifically items from Afrikaans (*braai*, etc. – see previous section), including some loan translations, such as *catch a photo* 'make a photo' (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 144). However, SAfrE in itself is far from uniform and is conventionally subdivided into a set of ethnic varieties, and these relationships also have an effect across the border. Indigenous Africans in Namibia essentially share the same Bantu or Khoisan background (and, accordingly, transfer phenomena) as do black South Africans, and

similarly, so-called Afrikaners as well as Basters and Coloureds with an Afrikaans L1 show similarities with the ethnically corresponding variety in South Africa.

On the pronunciation level, NamE features shared with (varieties of) SAfrE include the merger of TRAP and DRESS – but on the whole Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (this volume) emphasize the point that despite some similarities NamE cannot be considered a sub-variety of SAfrE, and they highlight the importance of ethnic differences. These are often in line with what is found in corresponding ethnic varieties of SAfrE. In particular, speakers with an Indo-European L1 show features commonly associated with White SAfrE, or, even more widely, southern hemisphere Englishes (like the raising of DRESS or the KIT split); black and Afrikaner speakers in Namibia also share features with their corresponding ethnic groups south of the border. Steigertahl (2020) devotes an entire section of her book (Section 7.7) to showcasing morphosyntactic similarities between black NamE and black SAfrE, including double modals and some semantic idiosyncrasies of other modals, plural variation in nouns, differences involving adjectives and adverbs, preposition usage, agreement, and tags. Similarly, there are parallels between English as used by 'Boers' or 'Afrikaners' in Namibia to Afrikaans speakers in South Africa (Watermeyer 1996), for instance the use of the question tag *ne* from Afrikaans, which in Namibia mainly is found among Afrikaners (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 145; Kautzsch 2019: 250). Use of the '*busy* + Ving' pattern, mentioned above, aligns NamE with general SAfrE, disregarding ethnicity associations. Thus, cross-border linguistic impact from the south is variable but definitely noticeable. This is why in Section 4, we will briefly touch upon the theoretical discussion on whether South Africa constitutes a linguistic 'epicentre' in the region.

Geography may also suggest similarities between NamE and other manifestations of English in southern Africa, especially the adjacent states of Botswana (with a long shared border), Zambia, and also Zimbabwe (though not Angola, where English plays virtually no role). However, these other varieties are rather weakly documented and hence a serious comparison of NamE with them seems impossible at this stage. For Zimbabwe, for example, Mlambo (2009) discusses the language situation but no features. Similarly, Smieja and Mathangwane (2010) mainly give an overview on language policy and the sociolinguistic situation in Botswana in general. But they also – rather unsystematically – list a few linguistic features (2010: 223–224) to document the "acculturation" of this variety of English. Of these the raising in pronunciation of the vowel in BIRD (2010: 224) seems partly to compare to what we describe for the pronunciation of NURSE above, although an allophonic split with WORK is not mentioned anywhere. Furthermore, Arua (2004) presents a few structural properties of English in Botswana, of which two overlap with NamE: the doubling of pronouns (*me I…*; *us we…*) and the modal *can be able* – both appear to be regional phenomena.

4.   NamE and World English modelling revisited

Since WEs come in a rather bewildering variety of historical roots, locations, and sociolinguistic settings, from its very beginning research in the field has been characterized by a trend towards model-making with the goal of categorizing and introducing order, identifying similarities and differences. Recent useful summaries of the models suggested include Buschfeld and Schneider (2018); Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2020a), and Schneider (2021); recent volumes which focus on comparisons of the extant models are Deshors (2018) and Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2020b). Given this rich background, we refrain from introducing and discussing the models as such in greater detail but focus upon what role Namibia and NamE plays in them.

4.1   Early models

The oldest categorization of WEs, which can be traced back to the early 1970s, is based on the distinction between native and non-native speakers of English and classifies countries into ENL (English as a Native Language), ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language). For a long time it was rather prominent in the WEs paradigm, though it has increasingly been questioned because of its static nature. As for the Namibian case, the EFL or ESL variety status of NamE in terms of criteria developed from Buschfeld (2013) is discussed by Kautzsch and Schröder (2016: 279–280). In line with other studies (e.g. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014), they show that an expansion of functions can be ascertained with NamE being used in a wide array of intra-national functions, such as in education, in the media, in administration, but also for interethnic communication (cf. also Stell 2016; Buschfeld & Schröder 2020; Steigertahl, this volume; Mlambo, this volume). Hence, by way of language acquisition, English in Namibia is also acquired outside the EFL classroom. Furthermore, the language meets at least some aspects of the criterion of institutionalisation, as Namibian creative writing in English, for instance, is attested (Frank, this volume; Schröder, this volume). However, Kautzsch and Schröder see "no signs of the acceptance of a local norm or its codification" (2016: 279) and suggest that "this language is on its way to becoming a second language variety" (Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 287). Hence, English in Namibia cannot be defined as an EFL variety anymore, but seemingly has not yet fully achieved ESL status either. It shares this intermediate status with other varieties, and thus strengthens a recent trend towards recognizing that due to vibrant developments in the recent past some of the older, clear-cut categories are becoming increasingly blurred (Schneider 2014a, 2020: 232–235). Buschfeld (2013) was the first author to argue that the ESL–EFL distinction is better viewed as a continuum (applying this

to the case of Cyprus) – a claim which is clearly strongly supported by the case of Namibia (see Steigertahl 2020: 304–306). Similar transition cases which have been discussed recently include Malaysia and Tanzania moving 'back' from ESL to EFL status due to a deliberate endoglossic language policy (with reversals of the directions of language policies caused by internal debates, though), the Netherlands (once clearly an EFL nation which, however, has embraced English to the extent of showing strong ESL traits) or Singapore, which appears to be transiting from an ESL status to increasingly becoming ENL because of high L1 speaker proportions amongst local children. Notably, all these transitions are rooted in multilingual settings.

Braj Kachru's 'Three Circles' model essentially matches the ENL–ESL–EFL distinction but relabels these categories as 'Inner', 'Outer' and 'Expanding Circles', respectively, and, more importantly, argues against the predominance of the Inner and for the growing independence, norm-developing character and 'ownership of English' of the Outer Circle (and also, though less explicitly, the Expanding Circle). This model became enormously influential, especially in the early phase of building the WEs paradigm, and is still regarded as the major theoretical framework by some scholars. However, it has increasingly come to be criticized for its failure to acknowledge strong ongoing trends and the linguistic complexities of most modern societies, most notably its lack of flexibility and inability to handle change (although from the very beginning Kachru also conceded that "grey areas […] do exist" (1985: 17)). To the best of our knowledge, Namibia is not mentioned in any of the classic publications and listings of this approach, including Kachru (1985), the first published version of the Three Circles proposal. In Kachru (1992), the most widely known and influential early survey volume, Namibia occurs once only, in Lowenberg's contribution, as part of a long list of "former colonies" (1992: 108) – which obviously is an error (and the connection is not pursued any further). In fact, with Namibia being a classic instance of status change, it would have been interesting to see how it would fit into Kachru's framework. Presumably, at the time when the model was developed Namibia clearly would have been seen as part of the Expanding Circle, while today it might be associated with the Outer Circle.

In a similar vein, Tom McArthur (1987) and Manfred Görlach (1990), two early great representatives of the field of WEs, published wheel-shaped visualizations of the relationships between major varieties of Englishes around the world (reproduced, for instance, in Buschfeld & Schneider 2018: 33–34). However, these representations do not include Namibia – in those days apparently there was no awareness of Namibia being a country in which English played a serious role.

4.2 NamE in the Dynamic Model and the Extra- and Intra-territorial Forces Model

Schneider's Dynamic Model (DM) of the evolution of postcolonial Englishes (PCEs) posits strong and fundamental similarities across all PCEs, claiming that they typically go through five consecutive phases of political and sociolinguistic accommodation (with characteristic structural consequences) experienced from the sides of colonizers and colonized. The model has been regarded as "ground-breaking" (Seoane & Suarez-Gomez 2016: 4), and it has come to be strongly influential and has been very widely adopted, tested, discussed and accepted. The most comprehensive and classic presentation of the DM (Schneider 2007) details 17 case studies from all around the globe – but does not mention Namibia at all. Schneider (2014a), in addition to some stock-taking of reactions to the DM, enquires into its applicability to Expanding Circle countries, including Namibia in one extended paragraph (2014a: 23), summarizing observations made by Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2014). In addition to the fact that a colonizing "foundation" period is missing, Schneider (2014a: 27) finds "some weak parallels with phase 2 components, […] substantial indicators of nativization […] and some indicators of an endonormative orientation […] if only weakly", and concludes that the DM "is not really, or only to a rather limited extent, a suitable framework" for non-postcolonial countries, positing the notion of "Transnational Attraction" instead (2014a: 28).

Similarly, Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2017) note that English in Namibia cannot easily be placed in terms of Schneider's DM originally designed for the description of PCEs because "Namibia lacks a (post)colonial background and consequently important sociopolitical and sociolinguistic factors postulated by the model" (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017: 110). The authors then proceed to take Namibia as a test case for their Extra- and Intra-territorial Forces Model (EIF), a model that attempts to unify the description of developmental processes in PCEs and non-postcolonial Englishes (non-PCEs), explicitly conceived as an "add-on" and expansion of the DM. However, they concede that Namibia "is not a very proto-typical case" (2017: 119) for a non-postcolonial country either. Nevertheless, they put NamE in an early phase 3 and thus in the nativization phase of their EIF model (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017: 120). Likewise, NamE is placed in a similar develop-mental stage, i.e. "moving towards structural nativisation and hence phase three" (Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014: 148) in earlier attempts to describe this variety in terms of the DM (cf. also Buschfeld 2014: 195–196 for a discussion). Similarly, Steigertahl (2020: Chapter 8) situates the English spoken by black Namibians within the DM, claiming that Black NamE went through the first two phases and is in phase 3 now, roughly since the early 2000s. However, Buschfeld et al. (2018: 27)

mention "a plethora of contact scenarios" possibly giving "rise to ethnic differences in the use of English". Schröder and Zähres (2020) take up this debate and point out that Namibia challenges the development of a non-PCE in the EIF model from phase 3 onwards, most notably because they observe ethnic differentiation possibly preceding or overlapping with an endonormative stabilization phase (2020: 55–56). Furthermore, Schröder and Zähres (2020) question the view that Namibia is a non-PCE country and that "South Africa was never a colonizer in the strict sense" (Buschfeld 2014: 194). They point to the influence of the South African "colonial style of rule that lasted almost 70 years" (Tonchi et al. 2012: 6) and that continues until today (see Schröder & Zähres 2020: 46–50 for details).

In view of this and the discussion concerning the developmental stages in the DM or the EIF model outlined above, Schröder and Schneider (2018) conclude that this variety of English should be referred to as English in Namibia (EiNa) rather than NamE. However, they refrain from doing so because they want "to stress the fact that" one should "view this variety as a variety in its own right" (Schröder & Schneider 2018: 342). This view is supported by the fact that a number of studies illustrate that English seems to have become a language of identification for the Namibian youth and a popular means for interethnic communication within roughly a quarter of a century only (e.g. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016: 278–279; Buschfeld & Schröder 2020). In some more detail, Schröder, Zähres and Kautzsch (2020) as well as Schröder and Zähres (2020) explain that while cultural identity constructions in Namibia are determined by membership to a particular ethnic group, which is in turn is largely determined by one's respective L1, with regard to linguistic identity constructions "a shift of identification from the respective L1 to English seems to be happening" (Schröder & Zähres 2020: 46). Apparently, this goes along with the establishment of some pan-Namibian phonological features, most notably the NURSE–WORK allophonic split (see above) first described in Kautzsch and Schröder (2016), which, according to Schröder and Zähres (2020: 53), is "spreading from the numerically and politically dominant Bantu/Oshiwambo L1-speaking group to other ethnicities and L1-groups".

Given that the phases proposed in the EIF model match those of the DM, occasional queries of where Namibia should be placed in the overall dynamic process serve to highlight some of the fundamental theoretical questions concerning the evolution of both PCEs and non-PCEs. What may be seen as problematic, for instance, is the applicability of the criterion of literary creativity. In the DM it is typically linked to phase 4, i.e. a phase of endonormative stabilisation, which would be preceded by the emergence of variety-specific features and accompanied by an emphasis on linguistic homogeneity at the structural level (Schneider 2007: 51). Namibia shows literary creativity (Schröder, this volume; Frank, this volume) and thus fulfils this advanced criterion, though it is questionable whether the variety

really has advanced that far, and with its ethnic differences (pointed out to some extent above) it clearly does not meet the criterion of homogeneity accompanied by awareness and acceptance of the variety (also typical of phase 4). If at all, therefore, Namibia might assumed to be in a late phase 3, with early but essentially premature signs of transition to phase 4. In this, however, NamE does not seem to be an exceptionally odd case. As noted by Hackert et al. (2020) for the Bahamas or Meer and Deuber (2020) for Trinidad, "the assumption […] that […] postcolonial Englishes are likely to achieve (full) endonormativity is problematic in view of the multidimensionality of norms prevalent in […] sociolinguistically complex post-colonial speech communities" (Meer & Deuber 2020: 293). In general, we believe that the question of where precisely in the advancement of phases any particular variety stands, and whether it has already achieved the stage of endonormativity (intensely discussed for the Philippines, for instance – see Martin 2014; Borlongan 2016) should not be overemphasized. As Schneider (2019) pointed out, elaborating on thoughts already voiced in Schneider (2007: 55, 57), all phases of the DM are associated with different components and characteristic defining parameters – but not all of them are always met at the same time, so some fuzziness and periods of overlap and transition are to be expected in the application of this model (while the basic sequential pattern is considered robust). In particular, the concept of linguistic homogeneity as a phase 4 indicator requires a more detailed delineation, in line with the above quotation from Meer and Deuber (2020). Variability in human linguistic performance is ubiquitous (by class, style, and other parameters, as sociolinguists have shown), and especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts (such as countries with PCEs) some ethnolinguistic differences (most evidently in pronunciation) are likely to persist throughout their history (as is the case in Namibia). Hence we should not and cannot expect perfect linguistic uniformity in a phase 4 setting (Schneider 2019). Instead, this characteristic feature is to be expected less in linguistic performance than in public discourse, an emphasis on and awareness of homogeneity as a symbol of national unity.

4.3   Recent and other modelling approaches

Modelling WEs has been a fashionable activity recently – there have been a few more suggestions, such as Mair's (2013) proposal of a "world system of Englishes", with American English being the only "hyper-central hub", or Onysko's (2016) attempt at classifying contact influences. We refrain from going into these any further, however, since they do not mention nor bear any specific relevance for NamE at this stage. In the following, we will briefly touch upon three more approaches which may be considered pertinent, however.

Buschfeld and Kautzsch (2020b) invited applications and comparisons of the DM and the EIF model to a wide range of countries, including Namibia in a separate chapter (Schröder & Zähres 2020). As already hinted at in the previous section, some of the contributions to this volume offer appealing new insights and facets. A very interesting and ambitious chapter certainly is the one by Meer and Deuber, who, based on attitudinal data from Trinidad, suggest that norm orientations and developments may be multifaceted rather than directed towards a single internal norm. As they elaborate, "multidirectional forces form an equilibrial steady state in which different forces are balanced out and simultaneously impact normativity" (2020: 288), so that different, alternative norms may be striven for in varying contexts. Consequently, in addition to endonormative stabilization they suggest "multinormative stabilization" as an alternative manifestation of phase 4 (2020: 289) and view endo- and multi-normative orientations as poles on a continuum (2020: 290). That seems a point well taken, especially so in highly multicultural and multilingual settings. Trinidad, with British, American and Jamaican Englishes respected, other Caribbean varieties known, and a lot of internal socio-stylistic and multilingual variability, presents an ideal, perhaps somewhat extreme location for this case study and line of thinking, but clearly the basic idea can be applied elsewhere as well. Hackert et al. (2020: 259), for instance, believe it may be appropriate for the entire Caribbean. To what extent it could be fruitfully applied to Namibia still remains an open question, but Namibia's multilingualism and also the co-existence of different varieties of English obviously renders the concept provisionally meaningful. Time will tell whether Namibia will be moving towards a single norm or alternative targets.

The notion of a linguistic 'epicentre' is one that has been referred to and suggested repeatedly, without having been generally established or accepted. It derives from the concept of 'pluricentric' languages, popularized by Clyne (1992) and, in English linguistics, Leitner (1992), which proposes that some languages have different national varieties and norms (such as British, American, and Australian English). 'Epicentres', then, are (typically larger, well-known) language varieties which are models for and exert influence upon other (typically smaller, adjacent) varieties. Schneider (2014b: Section 2.3.5) discusses South African English as a possible epicenter influencing southern Africa on a broader scale, including Namibia. This hypothesis is most thoroughly considered in Schröder and Zähres (2020: 46–50). They document South Africa's sociohistorical influences on the Namibian territory both prior to and during the mandate period, essentially accept the possibility of epicentric influence (2020: 49), and actually view its extra-territorial force "as decisive" (2020: 54). This presents a strong case for considering a theoretical concept which in general is often viewed as elusive and a bit problematic, lacking

accurate definitions and methodological steps to clearly pin down epicentricity (Hundt 2013). However, we agree that the role of SAfrE (as well as other target varieties such as American or British English) in the development and formation of NamE "need[s] to be investigated in far more detail" (Schröder & Zähres 2020: 54).

This brings us to another theoretical concept that has recently been discussed in connection with NamE, i.e. Mufwene's (1996) well-known notion of the 'founder principle', and hence the assumption that the earliest settlers have a disproportionally strong impact on the formation of an emerging language variety and norm. Stell (2020) seeks to identify the most important founder population of NamE but finds no clear answer; he argues that White South African models, Namibia's Afrikaans-speaking settler population and, importantly, after independence "returning Black Namibian exiles with mostly Oshiwambo as a first language" (abstract) were strongly influential.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, NamE is definitely comparable to and on a par with other WEs, and it is increasingly attracting scholarly attention, a process to which the present volume will certainly contribute significantly. It shares some sociolinguistic relations and as well as structural properties with other varieties, especially with respect to its southern African neighborhood, and also seems to be singled out by an idiosyncratic phonological process, the NURSE–WORK split. Furthermore, it is unique in some other respects, especially considering the effects of the language policy decision to make a language its only national language which at that time was very marginal, spoken only by a tiny minority of the population. There are parallels to this in other countries and world regions (e.g. in ASEAN), but with different sociopolitical parameters and in a less radical fashion. Hence, Namibia's language policy and the emergence and development of NamE indeed constitute a remarkable, possibly unique social and sociolinguistic experiment.

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The English language as spoken in Namibia has virtually been overlooked in most textbooks, handbooks, and surveys of varieties of English around the world, or else has only been mentioned in passing. However, this variety of English has recently attracted the attention of several researchers and the present volume brings together most scholars actively involved in the research on English in Namibia from various linguistic fields to present their current research. It covers a wide range of linguistic issues, such as empirical analyses on various levels of linguistic description and use, as well as the application of diverse methodologies, from questionnaire surveys, sociolinguistic interviews and focus group discussions, to corpus linguistics, linguistic landscaping, and digital ethnography. This book represents the first comprehensive collection of articles and in-depth discussions of this emerging variety of World Englishes.

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