The Paradigm of Zimbabwean English: Implications for ESL Teaching

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Abstract

'New Englishes' in non-native English-speaking countries present challenges in English as a second language (ESL) teaching. So far, the secondary school English syllabus in Zimbabwe disregards the emerging variety of Zimbabwean English, which is structurally diverse from native Standard English. This study explores the place of Zimbabwean English in the teaching of ZIMSEC Ordinary Level English. It examines classroom teaching methodologies, materials, assessment practices and teacher training. Semi-structured interviews were used to solicit perceptions from ten Form Four English teachers from various schools in Zimbabwe. Guided by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, the study established that, teachers of English are not qualified for variety-related instruction. Moreover, the teaching methods, materials and assessment practices exclude the Zimbabwean variety of English. Acknowledging Zimbabwean English as an appropriate model of instructionwill eliminate variety-related challenges in the ESL classroom, and mirror the sociolinguistic reality of English diversity.

Key words: *Zimbabwean English; ESL Teaching; ZIMSEC; CLT; Implications*

Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing scholarly interest towards describing native and non-native varieties of English (Burridge &Kortmann, 2008 and Labov, Ash &Boberg, 2005). This comes at a dawn of new varieties of English, a language that has gained the status of a world lingua franca. The vast varieties of English are popularly known as 'New Englishes', recently popularised and currently occupying a centre stage of applied and theoretical linguistic research worldwide. The term 'New Englishes' refers to the regional and national varieties of English, which are different from the historically established British and American standards, used in areas where English is non-native to the majority of the population (Jenkins, 2006; Dawson, 2011 & Guerra, 2014). Jenkins (2006) elaborates: "New Englishes covers a large number of varieties of English which are far from uniform in their characteristics and current use" (p. 22). Zimbabwean English is a type of New Englishes, spoken by the majority of indigenous people in the country. It emerged following linguistic contact between indigenous languages

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and Standard British English, introduced by the former colonial administration (Kadenge, 2009; Makoni, 1993 &Ngara, 1982). Subsequently, this variety displays distinct linguistic features from Standard British English as shall be explained later.

To distinguish the categories of New Englishes, Kachru's Three Circles Model (1985 and 1992) identifies three types of world Englishes. According to Kachru (1992), the world is divided into three circles defined by ways in which English is distributed, guided by the users' "patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (p. 12). While the criteria for inclusion is not clear, Kachru distinguishes English language use along countries of the 'inner circle', 'outer circle' and 'expanding circle'. The 'inner circle' countries are those in which English became a native language, alternatively referred to as native speaker (NS) countries. For example, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and parts of South Africa. Kachru (1985) notes that the variety of English spoken in these countries is referred to as English as a native language (ENL), Native Speaker English (NSE) or Mother Tongue English (MTE),which is prestigious, commonly known as 'norm-providing'.

The 'outer circle' is comprised of countries which once had strong colonial or commercial ties with Great Britain and now use English as a second language for official purposes (Kachru, 1992). Examples include Zimbabwe, Botswana, Nigeria, Singapore and parts of South Africa. The variety spoken in the 'outer circle' is described as 'norm-developing', developed through years of contact between the standard variety and the L1. It is a non-standard norm which has its own conventions that are now considered acceptable indigenized norms of English (Kachru, 1992). Kachru's 'expanding circle' is a more recent phenomenon in which English continues to expand in usage as a lingua franca (Bieswanger, 2008). The variety spoken in this region is, therefore, labelled 'norm-dependent' as it refers to the 'inner circle' variety for models. The 'expanding circle' countries include most European, Middle Eastern, South American, Francophone African and Asian countries. (Kachru, 1992).

Given the wide spectrum of 'New Englishes', teaching English as a second language (ESL) in the 'outer circle' regions is now a challenging experience (Mareva, Kaburise and Klu, 2016; Prashanti and Bhavani, 2016; Alimi, 2011 and Bieswanger, 2008). In particular, the questions of which varieties should be learned by non-

native learners of English and the issue of acceptability of linguistic variation in the ESL classroom, have become topical in sociolinguistic research and present serious concerns (Bieswanger, 2008 &Gnutzmann, 2005). According to Bieswanger (ibid), the problem is exacerbated by the fact that the increasing significance of 'New Englishes' in non-native countries remains undermined, resulting in their exclusion from the ESL or EFL curricula. Further, the urgency of New Englishes cannot be deferred, given their increasing self-confidence and autonomy, fostered by their systematic linguistic descriptions (Kortzmann and Schneider, 2004).

The aim of the study is to investigate the extent to which Zimbabwean English is accommodated in the teaching of Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) Ordinary Level English. Zimbabwean English is a non-standardised variety, belonging to Kachru's 'outer circle', spoken by the majority as a second language. Comparably to other African 'Englishes' such as those spoken in Malawi and Zambia, and contrary to Nigerian and Ghanaian 'Englishes', Zimbabwean English remains undocumented and has not yet gained autonomy and legitimacy. Thus far, research on Zimbabwean English amounts to narrow descriptions of its linguistic properties, merely enabling its identification (Marungudzi, 2016 &Kadenge, 2009). In terms of Schneider's (2007) five-stage Dynamic Model of language stabilisation, this varietyis at the second stage known as 'nativization', encompassing indigenization of English before its full adoption. Thus, in cognizance of the status of Zimbabwean English, this study examines English teaching methodologies, instruction materials, assessment practices and teacher training, in order to establish the role of education in its alleviation. It is pertinent as it explores some pedagogical contradictions that arise following the emergency of a new variety of English, in a context where only the standard variety has been used as a model for language teaching.

Language in Education Policy in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a speech community where, approximately twenty-three languages are spoken, and only sixteen are officially recognized according to the 2013 National Constitution. These languages are: Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Khoisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa. Designated by a wide spectrum of languages spoken in the country, Zimbabwe is a diglossic community where there are functional specialisations of language use within various domains of interaction. Thus, owing to the history of colonialism,

English is privileged as the sole official language in all spheres of communication including education. This scenario is true in other African countries that are also former colonies of Britain. Further, whereas Shona and Ndebele are privileged national indigenous languages, in terms of prominence, Shona is of a higher status, assuming a second position after English, followed by Ndebele in the third position (Hachipola, 1998).

Virtually, given its superiority, English in Zimbabwe is the main medium of instruction, from primary to university level, whereas indigenous languages (Shona and Ndebele) are studied as subjects. This diglossic situation is heavily condemned as English appears to be elevated, whilst indigenous languages are denigrated through low variety functions, leading to their underdevelopment (Ndlovu, 2013). In corroboration, Kadenge and Nkomo (2011) criticize linguistic practices which are perceived to have led to the dominance of English at the expense of local languagesin education and other public sectors.

Kadenge and Mugari (2015) allude to a school of language activiststhat defendsthe status of indigenous languages in education, arguing that Zimbabwe's language situation is mainly a colonial inheritance (see Ngara, 1982; Mkanganwi, 1992; Chimhundu, 1998; Hadebe, 2006; Magwa, 2006; Mutasa, 2006; Makoni and Mashiri, 2006; Hungwe, 2007; Ndhlovu, 2009; Mashiri, 2009; Kadenge, 2009; Magwa, 2010; Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011; Ndlovu, 2013; Nhongo, 2013; Maseko and Ndlovu, 2013 and Mhute, 2015).These severely criticised the language-in-education policy for excluding the majority of Zimbabweans who are not proficient in English as well as deterring the development of local African languages which remain non-functional. Similar criticisms have also been levelled against national languages (Shona and Ndebele) for dominating minority languages. Nevertheless, all language debates in Zimbabwe implicate English and lament the side lining of indigenous languages.

According to Kadenge and Mugari (2015), the 'problem' with the Zimbabwean language situation arises from the fact that there is no documented language policy; what exists are declarations of how languages should be used without implementation guidelines, such as the national constitution declarations. A good example is the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013 that imminently changed the status of most indigenous languages through granting them an official status. Prior to that, the

constitution was silent about language. Nevertheless, this turns out to be a mere declaration given that, in reality, English remains the dominant language for all official discourses such as education, media, legislation, business, politics, as well as science and technology, followed by the two national languages, Shona and Ndebele (Kadenge and Mugari, 2015). Essentially, English in Zimbabwe remains the main medium of communication in all formal domains. In addition, unlike indigenous languages, English has a nationwide geographical coverage, conveying a higher status than the rest of the languages (Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011).

According to Marungudzi (2009), the interest in language policy research was spurred by the nature of post-colonial policies in the country, which determine the roles of English and indigenous languages in education. As Mkanganwi (1992) posits, the general scholarly concern on the topic of language policy and planning in Zimbabwe is that English has been imposed on indigenous languages, not only in education, but in all other key domains of communication in the country. Marungudzi (2009: 6) also elaborates that "the educational function of language is one of the most critical aspects in the study of language planning and language policy". To this end, Marungudzi cites Stewart (1968) who sees "the function of a language (other than the provincial or official function) as a medium of primary or secondary education, either regionally or nationally" (p. 6). In this context, the 1987 language policy, based on Section 62 of the Education Act of 1987 (Chapter 25: 4), which was amended in 2006, generated controversy by making English a school subject throughout the education system, positioning it as a medium of instruction from the fourth grade upwards and a measure of educational achievement as one has to pass it in order to proceed to higher learning or any form of training (Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011). Mlambo (2009) confirms that English in schools is more dominant than what is specified in the policies and scholarly research.

Theoretical Orientation: The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

This study employs the CLT approach in order to understand and evaluate the ESL teaching practices in selected schoolssince, according to Cook (2003), this model is "the dominant orthodoxy in progressive language teaching." The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model, also known as the 'communicative approach', is a relatively recent and a widely used hybrid approach to language teaching, viewed as a progressive twenty-first century model. CLT

has its roots in the functional view of language, and it particularly developed from Hymes' (1972) concept of "communicative competence". Hymes dismisses Chomsky's distinction between linguistic competence (language knowledge) and linguistic performance (language use context).According to Hymes (ibid), "competence is dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use" (p. 282). The concept of 'communicative competence' formed the foundation of CLT which mainly views language competence as based on both knowledge and use. Richards and Rodgers (2005: 69) note that, CLT "starts from a theory of language as communication", whose goal is to develop communicative competence.

There are various scholarly definitions of the concept of CLT. According to Savignon (1997: 1) "Communicative language teaching (CLT) refers to both processes and goals in the classroom learning". Richards and Rogers (2005) add that CLT in an approach that "develops procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication" (p. 66). Later, Richards provides a more elaborate definition of CLT and posits that "Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom" (Richards 2006:6). In essence, CLT can be viewed as a set of goals and processes for teaching and learning of the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing), which recognizes the interdependence between language and communication. Richards (ibid) delineates ten principles of the CLT approach as follows:

1. Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.
2. Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.
3. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.
4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.
5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.

6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.
7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.
8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.
9. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator that creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.
10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing. (Richards, 2006: 22).

Richards's (2006) CLT principles outlined above point to particular teaching methods and ultimately teaching techniques that characterise this approach. One major trait of CLT classroom is that, language is functional, and its function is to facilitate communication. Meaning in this regard is principal as opposed to traditional focus on grammatical rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2005). In CLT, there is need to be aware of the language learning needs of the student in order to design meaningful tasks. According to Whong (2011), needs analysis in CLT settings would involve the teachers' continuous assessment of the learners' language needs and planning lessons accordingly. Fluent use of language takes precedence over accuracy, to encourage learners to maintain engagement in language use. Leaners are thus encouraged to focus more on articulate language production (successful communication) than on errors. Teachers on the other hand need to pay attention to the overall message, and less of it on grammar, vocabulary and spelling as these may only be signaling a level of development yet to be achieved (Whong, 2011).

Moreover, CLT classrooms should necessitate authentic language use situations, which reflect communication in reality (Widdowson, 1984). For instance, simulations, games, projects, dramatizations and role-plays invigorate real life situations of communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2005). In addition, CLT encourages collaborative learning where learners learn from each other, making it a learner-centred and experience-based approach. The role of the

teacher here is to manage learner activities and analyse their needs (Richards and Rodgers, 2005). Additionally, in CLT, language is perceived as interrelated to cultural practices and contexts, hence the cultural environment in which the target language is used should be created. Further, the CLT approach to language teaching involves integration of language skills. Whereas in traditional methods of teaching the focus is on writing and reading, in a CLT classroom an activity is likely to make use of all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening (Whong, 2011).

Methodology

This study employs qualitative research methods. According to Creswell (2009:2) qualitative research is "an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting." The basic advantages of qualitative research include the fact that it is appropriate for small samples, and it offers a complete description and analysis of a topic without limiting the scope of research or participants' responses (Collis and Hussey, 2009). However, the main disadvantage of qualitative research is that its outcomes are difficult to measure or quantify as this is subject to rational, explorative and intuitive analysis of data (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Below is an outline of the various research methods used in order to carry out the study.

Research Questions

In an attempt to investigate the extent to which Zimbabwean English is incorporated in the Ordinary Level ESL classroom, the present study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the attitudes of ESL teachers towards the use of Zimbabwean English in the classroom?
- How do the teachers perceive the ideaof integrating the local variety into the teaching of English?
- To what extent does the Ordinary Level English curriculum and its materials accommodate the Zimbabwean variety of English?
- What is the effectivenessofthe language teaching methodologies used in the ESL classroom?
- How practical are the assessment criteria used by the ESL teachers?

- To what extent is the ESL teacher trainingadequateforteaching varieties?

Sample

The sample of the study comprises ten Ordinary Level English teachers, selected from five schools around Harare in Zimbabwe. Generally, there are three key methods of sampling in qualitative studies: opportunistic, theoretical and purposive sampling (Burns and Groove, 2009). This study employedpurposive sampling. It is a form of non-probability purposeful sampling technique where subjects are selected based on their personality, knowledge or expertise and any other traits that define them (Freedman, Robert and Roger, 2007). Using the purposive sampling method, a set of two teachers were selected from five different types of schools found in Zimbabwe: mission schools, private schools, trust schools, urban public, and rural public schools. Teachers were chosen based on their area of specialty and the level of their learners. Thus, guided by the aim of the study, the researcher selected only those teachers who taught Ordinary level English language. Ordinary level English is crucial in Zimbabwe as it is a passing requirement for learners to proceed to higher learning or any profession.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected usinginterview instruments. These were conducted to explore the teachers' views and experiences since, they allow participants to offer their own perceptions and interpretations of reality(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The interviews were used to gain insights into the activities involved in the teaching of English as a second language at schools. Thus, face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews involving both closed and open-ended questions were conducted. This framework permitted both a degree of flexibility and consistency of the topics of discussions, as open-ended questions are flexible and allow the interviewer to probe. The researcher sought clarification from the participants through use of probing questions and altered wording based on the demands and context of the interview. The interviews took place between 4 April and 25 April 2019 within respective school premises, to ensure familiarity of the setting to participants. These lasted between twenty and thirty minutes eachto avoid disruption of the teaching and learning activities. For purposes of ethical considerations, prior to the interview, the researcher requested permission to record, and the interviews were recorded using a mobile phone. Further, the interviewees were informed that their identity as well as that of the

schools would remain confidential. Although the interviews provided rich information, these were inevitable subject to interviewee bias(Cohen et al., 2011). To enhance reliability, the researcher's findings were backed by literature from similar previous studies.

Data Analysis

For analyses' purposes, interview datawas transcribedandlater analysed using the thematic analysis method. This involved first identifying themes and patterns emerging from the participants' responses in which they reveal their knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and views concerning teaching and learning English as a second language in their respective classrooms. Clark and Braun (2013: 81) state that "thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality". The identified themes were used as categories under which the interview data was presented. From an interpretive paradigm, thematic data was explored guided by expectations and reviewed literature, addressing the research questions raised earlier in the study.

Data Presentation

Several themes emerged from the interview data relating to teachers' views and knowledge concerning the instruction of English as a second language in various schools in Zimbabwe. These themes correspond to the interview questions, which derive from the research questions listed above. As presented below, these are teachers' attitudes towards the use of Zimbabwean English in the classroom, teachers' views on incorporating Zimbabwean English in the English language curriculum, the status of Zimbabwean English in the curriculum, teachers' English language teaching methodologies and teacher training and skills. In this presentation, the interviewed teachers are coded as follows: Teachers 1 and 2 (private schools); Teachers3 and 4 (mission schools); Teachers5 and 6 (Trust schools); Teachers7 and 8 (public urban schools) and Teachers 9 and 10 (public rural schools).

Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Zimbabwean English in the Classroom

This is the first theme developed in relation to the first interview question which sought to elicit information about the teachers' awareness of the new variety of Zimbabwean English and their attitudes towards its use. During the interviews, most teachers (eight) indicated awareness of the existence of an emerging local variety of English in Zimbabwe, which they all referred to as

responsible for 'errors' made by second language learners. Teacher 2 specifically stated that his classroom is actually a mixed race group, and those 'errors' are mainly performed by non-English speaking students. Generally, all teachers identified three sources of the Zimbabwean English variety as code switching and mixing between English and mother tongue languages (Shona and Ndebele or other), slang or street lingua resulting from social media usage, and media influence which imports various languages and mannerisms. When asked how they felt about the existence of both standard and nativized varieties of English, Teacher 5 indicated that it is very tough for them as they "have to consistently correct the 'inappropriate' use of language". Teacher 3 revealed that there is corporal punishment given for speaking a non-standard variety of English, which has a disproportionately large amount of Shona, Ndebele or other local language features. This indicates that pupils in these schools are expected to use the native standard variety of English.

Teachers' Views on Incorporating Zimbabwean English in the Curriculum

The second interview question enquired whether the teachers considered it necessary to accommodate the Zimbabwean variety of English in the existing syllabus. Responses varied; Teachers 4, 6, and 9 expressed a general consent, stating thatthe Zimbabwean variety of English is a useful marker of identity. Teacher 9 noted that "This so-called Zimbabwean English is very vital in revealing the pupils' identity, not everyone should sound like the native speaker". Teacher 4 specified that it distinguishes Zimbabweans from other nationalities as it derives from local languages such as Shona.Nonetheless, Teacher 1 expressed concern over the recognition of the Zimbabwean English variety in the school curriculum, as it was likely to cause problems in international communication or for learners who are taking English examinations from an international board such as Cambridge. Teacher 10, however, indicated preference for the integration of both varieties. This, as concurred by Teacher 9, "would allow the learners to code-switch when necessary, bearing in mind that some learners are not competent in the language given the non-English background especially here in the rural settings."

The Status of Zimbabwean English in the English Language Curriculum

The third question addressed whether or not the ZIMSEC English language curriculum and its materials accommodates Zimbabwean

English. Responses to the question of materials used to instruct English at Ordinary level varied according to schools and their board of examinations. Teacher 1, 2, 5 and 6 from private and trust schools specified that they used Cambridge Ordinary Level English syllabuses and their board of examination is the University of Cambridge. Consequently, the teaching materials focus on Standard British English norms. Some of the stated key textbooks include *Complete First Language English* and *English Language Course Book,* authored by British writers.

Teachers 3 and 4 specified that they used both ZIMSEC Ordinary Level English syllabuses as well as Cambridge, and their examinations are regulated by both boards. As such, these expressed that they make use of both local and Cambridge materials. Some of the local textbooks include *Focus on English, English for Communication, Structures and Skills in English (New Syllabus Editions), Focus Study Aids in English, English Today, Step Ahead New Secondary English* and *English Alive*. These are the same textbooks used by teachers 7, 8, 9 and 10. However, interestingly, all these textbooks employ Standard British English as the norm; they do not incorporate the local variety of English. In Teacher 7's words, "The ZIMSEC syllabus requires us to focus on Standard English, it does not refer to our ownlocal variety. As you can see the textbooks are also silent on thisaspect. For now, we are just guided by the ZIMSEC syllabus alongside the prescribed materials".

Teachers' English Language Teaching Methodologies and Assessment Criteria

In the fourth question, the respondents were asked to explain the teaching methods they used and the assessment criteria employed. All respondents stated that they adopted the communicative language teaching approach as prescribed by the existing syllabuses (ZIMSEC and Cambridge). In this approach, they indicated that they did not teach language. They are just facilitating acquisition, and learners are acquiring skills on their own. "The syllabus indicates that the four language skills: written, spoken, reading and listening should be complementary, and hence are not taught in isolation" (Teacher 8). Teacher 2's approach also included online videos of grammar lessons which enhanced the communicative approach to teaching.However, despite the claims that they are guided by the communicative approach to language teaching, some of the participants had earlier on indicated that they corrected what they perceived to be "errors".

Moreover, the teachers revealed that language proficiency assessments focus only on the written component which is evaluated through several written tests and examinations at the end of the course, despite the curriculum requirement that teachers should assess proficiency in all four skills: reading, speaking, writing and listening. Further, in all situations, the Standard British English norm are used as the model of assessment. The teachers disclosed that any form that is not Standard English is marked incorrect.

Teacher Training and Skills

The final question made inquiry into English teachers' training and skills. In Zimbabwe teacher qualification is taken very seriously, and the ZIMCHE board ensures that all teachers employed in the country's public schools are well trained for the jobs. This has exerted a lot of pressure in the employment and hiring of teachers by the Ministry of Education department, or the private schools for that matter, who are also guided by ZIMCHE's regulations. Thus, the minimum qualification for secondary school teachers is a National Diploma in Education. All the teachers interviewed in the study revealed that they wereat least holders of National Diplomas in Education acquired from various National Colleges.

However, Teachers 2 and 5 indicated that they were alsoholders of post graduate certificates in education. The rest of the teachers specified that they do not have any further training beyond National Diplomas in English language teaching, since they are already qualified for the job. Nonetheless, Teacher 7 indicated that she is planning to advance her education into a degree level. Teacher 1 from a private school expressed that his training is on-going as he is constantly engaging in online programmes and training arranged by his school. He believed that those 'refresher courses' are very helpful in enriching his teaching skills. When probed if those courses actually equip him with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach English varieties, Teacher 1 indicated that the design of the online short courses draws from the existing syllabus, which in itself does not exactly account for the instruction of varieties.

Discussion

The data presented above denotes the ESL teachers' attitudestowards the Zimbabwean variety of English, perceptions concerning incorporating this variety into the English curriculum, teaching methodologies and assessment criteria, as well as teacher training and skills. These views show that the English language instruction practices in schools are mainly centred on the standard

variety norms, as shall be indicated below. They also shed light on therole of education in the alleviation of the Zimbabwean variety of English.

It is quite significant that, althoughsome of the teacher participants were against the use of Zimbabwean English in the classroom, the majorityare aware of thisemerging variety. The fact that they recognisethe dynamics of the intersection between the standard and nativized varieties in the vocabulary of the learners, is very positive. It strongly points to the prospects of the growth of the Zimbabwean variety of English, through identification and acknowledgement by language users. In fact, this has implications for ongoing nativisation, which includes the need for variety awareness by the speech community. As Platt et al. (1984) observe, in order to localise a variety of English, its norms should be recognised by the speech community, before acceptance and functionality can occur. Thus, the ESL teachers' acknowledgement of Zimbabwean English may be vital in resolving the controversies surrounding its existenceandfunctional role.

As Lee (2012) posits, with reference to English, "The relentless expansion of the language in diverse sociolinguistic contexts has also brought about the development of new recognised forms and norms of English in local contexts." (p. 191). Kirkpatrick (2007) also alludes to the emergence of nativized varieties of English as "... newer varieties that have developed in places where English was not normally spoken and which have been influenced by local languages and culture." (p. 5). In Kadenge's (2009) view, the African Englishes which were once perceived as non-standard are gaining recognition and are now "... a distinct, systematic, endo-normative variety of English, which cannot be judged by the norms of the older varieties such as British English or American English." (p. 158). This alludes to autonomy and recognition of new African 'Englishes'. Given the occurrence of new varieties of English in non-English speaking countries such as those belonging to Kachru's (1992) 'outer circle' or ESL regions, for instance Zimbabwe, Groves (2010) calls for the absorption of the local varieties into ESL classrooms. According to Groves, the inclusion of the non-native varieties can be achieved through a CLT approach which promotes language learning and understanding as opposed to the structural approach.

In this study, the hesitancy by some teachers to the idea of incorporating Zimbabwean English into the language curriculum may be resultant of the fact that, the variety is far from standardisation, and hence difficult to implement in the classroom. Thus, although the teachers are prepared to adopt this local variety into their classroom activities, this may be futile, given that there is no developed corpus showing its grammatical patterns and vocabulary usages. Certainly, grammar constitutes an integral part of language teaching and learning.However, with the advancement of the communicative approach, which involves inductive or discovery (trial and error) learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, the traditional structural approach becomesextraneous. In this context, the learning of Zimbabwean English would involve a gradual processincorporating creative language use and communicative competence.

At this point, it is important to note that, incorporating Zimbabwean English into the school curriculum remains a cumbersome task owingto the existing rigid education systems. Inthis regard, Norrish (1997) posits that the side lining of local varieties of English in the 'outer circle' and 'expanding circle' countries is influenced by the requirement of the conservative local and international examination boards, which stipulate specific standardsof English phonology and syntax.The participants in this study concur that, the two main Ordinary Level examination boards in Zimbabwe; ZIMSEC and Cambridge, prescribe Standard British English norms and models for language instruction. It becomes apparent therefore, that, to enable the adoption of Zimbabwean English into the ESL classroom, the education system should be flexible in this regard. Mareva et al., (2016)comment that those teachers who prefer to continue teaching the Standard (British or American) varieties of English in the ESL contexts are motivated by the fact that these dominant privileged varieties maintain higher statuses over other sub-varieties. However, the point remains that varieties of languages need to be allowed to exist owing to the dynamic nature of language.

Bieswanger's (2008) rational for integrating new varieties of English in ESL classrooms is that it creates general awareness that there is a considerable amount of variation in English language use, and perception that English is not monolithic. Matsuda (2017) emphasisesthat "to overlook alternative uses of English can actually work against the goal of helping students develop an accurate understanding of how the English language works and how it changes over time" (p. 327). Further awareness of local varieties of

English prepares learners for the sociolinguistic reality of increasing regional variations of English usage worldwide. As Klippel and Doff (2007) rightly observe the "… school is supposed to prepare children and teenagers for successfully coping with their lives." (p. 36).

The ability to effectively communicate in English enables individuals to deal with the communicative challenges in the world, considering that English has become a world language and an undisputed global lingua franca (Bieswanger, 2008). Hence, the curriculum should focus on the ability to communicate and has to align with the tradition of CLT methodology. In the light of this, it is important that ESL teachers interrogate whether or not their English syllabuses are useful in producing communicative competent learners.

The call for teaching of the Zimbabwean variety of English bythe majority of the study's participants corresponds to research findings of some studies carried out in the 'outer circle' regions. For instance, Mareva, Kaburise and Klu's (2016) study investigated the ESL teachers' perceptions on the relationship between code-switching and the emerging local varieties of Englishin Zimbabwe, as well as the teaching of such varieties. These conclude that secondary school ESL teachers acknowledge the relationship between code-switching and new Englishes and argue that Zimbabwean English is an autonomous, legitimate variety that can be taught in schools. In a related study, Alimi (2011) examined the viability of using standard British English as the model for teaching high school learners of English in Botswana. Based on its findings, this study proposes the recognition of Botswana English as an appropriate variety for teaching in schools in Botswana, arguing that this initiative will eliminate challenges in current English teaching. Another example is that of a study by Prashanti and Bhavani (2016) on secondary school teacher views on the teaching of English pronunciation and accents, as well as New Englishes in India. It established that teachers prioritised local varieties to preserve native identities rather than emulate L1 speakers of English.

Further, although the interviewed teachers reveal that the instruction of English according to their curricular is learner centred, influenced by the CLT method, this is not applied in practice. Teachers are in control and the lessons seem to be teacher-centred as a result of emphasis on grammatical appropriateness in the ZIMSEC and Cambridge syllabuses. They, therefore, employ the traditional methods of drilling and coaching. The CLT method is further

constrained by the fact that English language examinations assess the written skill of grammar, disregarding the rest. Hargett (1998:6) explains that in ESL situations "to be proficient in a second language means to effectively communicate or understand thoughts or ideas, through the language's grammatical system and its vocabulary, using its sound or written symbols". The grammatical systems referred to here are standard norms (British and American). Critics, therefore, interrogate if proficiency is recognisedwhen learners can effectively communicate and understand thoughts or ideas through the grammatical system of local varieties. This echoes Kachru's (1992) position on the inappropriateness of imposing native speaker standards in 'outer circle' contexts. Thus, as Lowenberg (1993) rightly observes:

> …in order to assess this proficiency accurately, examiners must be able to distinguish deficiencies in the acquisitions of English from varietal differences in the student's usage resulting from their having previously learned such nativized features (Lowenberg, 1993: 101, quoted in Hamp-Lyons and Zhang, 2001: 102).

Moreover, since ESL teachers in this study do not have any training on varieties of English, or in-job short courses to that effect, these, as expected, are inadequately prepared to cope with variety related issues in the English classroom. Unpreparedness resulting in discomfort in teaching varieties of English partially accounts for the treatment of varieties of the standard forms as 'errors' or 'deviations' from the norm. It is observed in this study that, generally, teachers in private and trust schools are more competent than those in the public schools as these carry refresher courses from time to time. Nonetheless, training for teaching varieties of English in not yet a reality, and, warrants urgent attention.

Pedagogical Implications

Notwithstanding the fact that this study is not of a large scale, some pedagogical implications on the teaching of ESL in Zimbabwe can be drawn based on the findings discussed above. First, to eliminate the uncertainties and dilemmas surrounding the use of Zimbabwean English in the ESL classroom, it is conceivable for the curriculum designers to recognize the reality of the changing status of English, reflected in the wide spectrum of its emerging varieties. This calls for the remodeling of the Secondary School English Language curricular to incorporate the naturally occurring local variety of English. By so doing, the functional roles of both the native and non-native varieties

are strengthened. Variety-inclusive curricular will not only allow language growth through use but will also enable learners to keep up with the sociolinguistic reality of multiple varieties of English. Learners would thus become linguistically competent and socially relevant. Further, seeing that the language-in-education Act of 2006 sparked scholarly controversy, entrenched in the view that the Zimbabwean education system needs to assign a functional role to indigenous languages (Kadenge&Mugari, 2015; Kadenge&Nkomo, 2011), the recognition of the local variety of English will go a long way in resolving this debate.

Second, the amendment of the curriculum is key to the modification of the teaching materials that seem to be excluding the existing varieties of English. In this scheme, variety-oriented teaching materials would be more useful in the ESL classroom, since they are likely to reflect the communicative reality as recommended by the CLT approach to language learning (Richards, 2006). Teaching varieties can in fact enhance students' confidence in using English, based on gained language experiences, thereby raising levels of proficiency. The material re-adoption entails developing local textbooks and reading materials, using local varieties as models and drawing examples from local contexts, depicting genuine reality of language use and experiences.

Third, there is need to introduce variety-related training for prospective and active ESL teachers. The variety-related training for in-the-job teachers entails taking short correspondence courses or refresher courses, whilst on the job, to accommodate the constantly changing linguistic environment. For prospective teachers, variety-related training can be implemented in the curricular of respective colleges and universities where teacher training takes place.

Finally, considering the implications for ESL teaching raised above, the CLT approach, which emphasizes authenticity and cultural relevance of materials, as well as student participation and involvement during the lessons, would be most appropriate. As Richards and Rogers (2005) explain, the teacher's role is secondary, "The teacher is a facilitator or guide and he involves in the Communicative Language Teaching with the learner in equal terms. The learner can do, involve, negotiate or change the lessons or other components of their task in the target language." (p. 36). Moreover, as illuminated by Cook (2003) the communicative language teaching approach is "the dominant orthodoxy in progressive language teaching." (p. 36).

Conclusion

As this study concludes, it is necessary to recall its underlying aim, which is to investigate the extent to which the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) Ordinary Level English curriculum accommodates the Zimbabwean variety of English. It is reasonable to conclude that the Zimbabwean variety of English is not represented in the current ESL teaching in schools. This finding holds true to ESL situations in many other countries in the 'outer circle' region, excluding the likes of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and others, who have achieved full standardization of their varieties of English. In addition, most ESL teachers are still unreceptiveof the use of the local variety in the classroom, as they are not trained for variety-related instruction. It was also established that the teaching methods, materials and assessment practices are not yet accommodative to the new variety of Zimbabwean English.

It is suggested that learners should be exposed to the existing varieties of English in the classroom, to develop appreciation and awareness of linguistic diversity. To achieve this, the English language curriculum and its teaching materials should account for both the native standards and the local varieties, by means of a CLT approach. In this scheme, successful language learning involvesthe use of effective communication strategies, rather than themere ability to produce appropriate grammatical structures. The ultimate goal of learning English wouldbe to gain ability to use both the standard and its new varieties accurately and fluently. Accordingly, the ESL teachers need to be well trained for a variety-based classroom. Thus, curricular designers, teachers, language planners, textbook authors, corpus linguists and researchers must refer to the body of research outputs on new varieties of English, to enable a modification of traditional linguistic practices in ESL teaching, making way for the progressive CLT model.

The prospects of integrating Zimbabwean English into the education curriculum through a hybrid approach to language teaching would not only endorse variety recognition, it will go a long way in promoting its alleviation, and hence standardisation. As Kachru (1992) posits, variety standardisation occurs because of the gradual adoption and acceptance of its linguistic norms. Hence, a recognition and integrationof the Zimbabwean variety of English into the education system, wouldcertainly assist inaccelerating its journey to standardisation.

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