

STANDARD ENGLISH AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract: In this paper, we first present a brief sketch of the standardization of English in the United States, from Noah Webster to the present, focusing on spelling. We then review the methods by which contemporary standard American English is defined and pedagogically implemented, especially with respect to the preparation of teachers in primary and secondary education. Our data is based both on published sources and on the results of questionnaires sent to educators in all 50 states. The questionnaire asked about formal and informal standards for teacher certification, and their enforcement. Our findings showed an astonishing lack of uniformity among educators' attitudes and standards with respect to standard American English and its implementation in teacher preparation.

Keywords: Noah Webster, standard American English, Ausbau, orthography, teacher preparation, teacher certification, minority teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we first present a brief sketch of the standardization of English in the United States, from Noah Webster to the present — a process which we view as a textbook example of Ausbau, the long-term effort, for nationalistic reasons, to differentiate American English from British (and World) English. We focus on spelling, although syntax and

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lexicon were similarly planned to move a small distance away from written British English. We note that the language distance (Abstand) thus produced was largely symbolic, rather than substantial, and that the conservative British tradition of decentralized planning for English language standardization continued to be promoted in much the same way in the United States.

We then review the methods by which contemporary standard American English is defined and pedagogically implemented, especially with respect to the preparation of teachers in primary and secondary education. Our data is based both on published sources and on the results of questionnaires that we sent to state commissioners of education and educators at universities engaged in the preparation and certification of teachers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Responses were received either from the state commissioners or from the educators, or from both, representing all but nine of the 51. The questionnaire asked about formal and informal standards for teacher certification, and their enforcement. We included a section on the influence of minority populations on the standards for teacher certification, especially with respect to the assessment of skills in Standard English and in the language arts.

We note that there exists an informal consensus in the United States, based on a markedly conservative tradition, which involves the maintenance of a symbolic distance from British English language standards; this informal consensus acts in concert with national institutions, such as leading textbook publishers and national professional associations of English and language arts. In its own way, the informal consensus for standards of English is as conservative as it is in Britain. Up to now, there has been little room in the educational curriculum for the social dialects that act as competitors to this tradition, such as African American Vernacular English, or Ebonics.

In a society based increasingly on control of specialized knowledge and the language it is couched in, our survey provides more evidence of an increasing disparity between the professed ideals of American education and the language standardization required of students and teachers for success in a knowledge-based society. The absence of both a formal national curriculum and a national consensus on the purposes of education contributes to this increasing difference.

2. STANDARDIZATION OF ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES

At the time of the American revolution, most people simply took for granted that English would continue as the language of government, education, and printed materials in the newly independent country. The widely-held belief that German might have been a serious competitor was true only of the state of Pennsylvania; there was no question of replacing English by German in any of the other states. Even so, in the revolutionary fervor of the time, there were proposals by armchair patriots to embrace Hebrew or Ancient Greek as the United States' national or official language. As it turned out, English remained in control, but in a slightly altered spelling.

Noah Webster was the American counterpart to Britain's Dr. Samuel Johnson (Strevens,

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1972, p. 64). He acquiesced to the spirit of his time by proposing limited spelling reforms that would lead United States English toward cultural autonomy, but not distance it inconveniently from the language of the British Empire. After all, the northeastern part of the country was then as now called "New England."

Webster's changes were limited largely to spelling; even so, American printers balked at carrying out the great majority of his reforms. Remaining differences between British and American spellings today represent the residue of what they did agree to. As George Philip Krapp (1925) put it,

> What [the Americans] might have done is, of course, quite a different affair from what they have done....On the whole, Americans, like the British, have been conservative in their treatment of spelling, and the notion that American spelling is radical and revolutionary seems indeed to be mainly a survival from eighteenth and early nineteenth century political feeling. (p. 328)

As the 19th century progressed, a serious rival to Webster arose in the form of the Joseph Emerson Worcester dictionary, closer to British spelling norms and especially popular in eastern New England. The eventual triumph of Webster and the demise of Worcester was due to "judicious editing, manufacturing and selling" (Krapp, 1925, p. 372). It was also due in no small part to the directive, signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1864, that all Federal Government documents should follow Webster's model. It was perhaps no accident that this initiative took place during the Civil War when the Southern states were unable to oppose it.

Another potential rival to Webster was the beginnings of a home-grown textbook industry in the Slave states in the decade before the Civil War (Venezky, 1992, p. 446), a tendency that was egged on by the perceived abolitionist tendencies of the New England textbook writers; subsequently, an almost total separation of textbook writing and publishing took place during the war itself. Even today, the lingering tendency toward strong state control of a centralized curriculum is still very pronounced in the southern half of the United States, which includes the area of the old Confederacy (see Map 2, based on Pipho, 1991, pp. 68, 77). This may have had its beginnings in either the tight control of curriculum imposed upon the area by the Confederacy, or by Northern military governors and freed slaves during the period of military rule and reconstruction in the years immediately following the War.

Later Presidential attempts at implementing, or accelerating, Webster's reforms did not work as well as Lincoln's. President Theodore Roosevelt, for example, in 1906 ordered the adoption of 300 additional simplified spellings, not included in the 1864 directive, by the Government Printing office "which resisted, as did most departments. In the end the use of the twelve new spellings [*tho, altho, thru, thruout, thoro, thoroly, thorofare, program, prolog, catalog, pedagog, and decalog*] was restricted to the White House" (Mencken, 1963, p. 490). (While entering these 12 words in the computer, it is interesting to note that our word processor [WordPerfect 7, spring, 1997], which is set to American English spellings, flagged for misspelling all but *tho, thru, program, prolog, and catalog* [our word processor also allows the user to select American, British, Canadian, or

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Australian grammar and thesaurus, as well as spellings].) Thus, this particular reform, far from making it easier to spell, has introduced additional complications for learners.

More telling in the standardization of American English was the issuance of the first Webster Style Manual in 1887. H. L. Mencken, reverently known for his influence on American journalism via the Baltimore Sun as the "Sage of Baltimore," writing in the 1930s, noted that "a copy of this work is in the proof room of nearly every American magazine and newspaper. It favors American spelling in all cases, and its rules are generally observed" (Mencken, 1963, p. 484).

The spelling of American English today is the product of such alternating pressures and counter-pressures; the distance that the language moved away from the British model was brought about step by step just as surely as if it had been centrally planned. The same processes have been applied to other areas of the language such as morphology, syntax, and to a lesser extent, lexicon.

3. STANDARD ENGLISH AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Considering the key role which teachers are currently assumed to play in the implementation and maintenance of American English, with its standardized spelling, morphology, syntax, and lexicon, it is astonishing how difficult they find it to define or describe what the standard is. To find out more about the role that knowledge of the standard plays in teacher education programs (TEPs) in the United States, we now turn to our mail survey, conducted in fall and winter 1996–1997.

The geographic distribution of the returned questionnaires in the two categories is shown on Map 1, which is derived from the figures in Table 1 "Surveys Sent and Received by State." At the state level, there is a high rate of non-response in the Southwest and in Florida, areas with large non-English-speaking minorities. The standard language issue may be more politicized there than elsewhere; in other words, knowledge of the standard language may be viewed by educators in those areas as a discriminatory factor, an element hindering the inclusion that educators currently view as desirable.

3.1 Major questions of the survey

1. Do TEPs or state agencies attend to issues of Standard English proficiency among teacher education candidates; if so how do they do so?

2. Does teacher preparation for meeting requirements for certification criteria in Standard English vary among universities within a state or among states; if so, how does it vary?

3. To what degree and in what manner are the university or state regulations regarding proficiency in Standard English enforced?

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4. To what extent does minority representation in universities or state agencies influence policy regarding setting and enforcing requirements for Standard English proficiency?

3.2 Methods

A total of 132 surveys was mailed to state teacher licensing agencies and individual university and college TEPs. Fifty-one surveys were sent to the appropriate teacher licensing or credentialing body of each state and the District of Columbia. (From here on, the term "51 states" will be used to include the 50 states and the District of Columbia.) Another 77 surveys were sent to colleges and universities. Universities in 47 out of the 51 states were sent questionnaires. Our list of universities was generated from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) accredited TEPs (Patterson's, 1996, pp. 708-791). In states where there were NCATE accredited TEPs in both rural and urban areas, more than one college or university was sent a survey. (See Table 1.)

3.3 Instrument

Our survey was designed as a pilot study to explore the major questions of this inquiry. On the questionnaire, items on the state agency form and on the university form addressed the four major questions of the study (see above). Table 2 presents the relationship of items on each form of the survey to the major questions of the study.

Although questions on the two forms of the survey were framed to be more appropriate either for state agencies or for university TEPs, they were expected to generate similar information about the main questions of the study. The 11 questions on the university form were more specific to the on-site management of teacher education programs. For example, Question 2 asked, "How many credit hours of English at the college or university level do student teachers need to fulfill their course requirements for certification?"

State agencies were asked nine questions pertaining more particularly to the agency functions of licensing. An example is Question 4 on the agency form which asks, "Does your certification program define Standard English? Please describe." The survey did not expressly ask for a distinction between spoken and written English.

The rationale for having two forms of the survey was that in general the determination of many aspects of public education in United States schools is decentralized. That is, decisions are not made by the federal government or wholly at the state government level. Although some state governments make many decisions about such issues as certification requirements, they leave a number of decisions to the individual TEPs. Thus both the states and the universities within a state may have unique requirements affecting various groups differently — such as speakers of English as a second language. They may also have different means of enforcing those requirements. For example, some universities and state agencies may have neither an entry exam nor an exit exam of Standard English proficiency, whereas others may have both. Some may use formal tests of spoken and written English, while others may depend on informal observations of students or grades

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in English course requirements. TEPs are strongly influenced by the licensing or certification requirements of the state in which they prepare teachers, but in some cases their overall requirements for graduation may be different (usually more rigorous) than those of the state. Therefore, although there are likely to be more similarities than differences, TEP course, field, and clinical experience requirements do vary within and among states.

Table 1 Surveys sent and received by state

States	University		Agency		Total	
	Surveys sent	Surveys received	Surveys sent	Surveys received	Surveys sent	Surveys received
Alabama	2	1	1	1	3	2
Alaska	1	0	1	0	2	0
Arizona	1	0	1	0	2	0
Arkansas	1	1	1	0	2	1
California	4	1	1	0	5	1
Colorado	1	1	1	1	2	2
Connecticut	1	0	1	1	2	1
Delaware	1	0	1	1	2	1
District of Columbia	2	0	1	1	3	1
Florida	2	0	1	0	3	0
Georgia	2	1	1	0	3	1
Hawaii	2	0	1	0	3	0
Idaho	1	0	1	1	2	1
Illinois	2	1	1	0	3	1
Indiana	1	1	1	0	2	1
Iowa	2	1	1	1	2	2
Kansas	2	2	1	1	3	3
Kentucky	2	0	1	1	3	1
Louisiana	1	0	1	1	2	1
Maine	0	0	1	1	1	1
Maryland	1	1	1	0	2	1
Massachusetts	3	3	1	0	4	3
Michigan	2	2	1	1	3	3
Minnesota	1	1	1	0	3	2

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States	University		Agency		Total	
	Surveys sent	Surveys received	Surveys sent	Surveys received	Surveys sent	Surveys received
Mississippi	2	1	1	0	3	1
Missouri	3	2	1	1	4	3
Montana	2	0	1	1	3	1
Nebraska	1	1	1	0	2	1
Nevada	0	0	1	0	1	0
New Hampshire	2	1	1	1	3	2
New Jersey	1	1	1	1	2	2
New Mexico	1	0	1	0	2	0
New York	3	0	1	1	4	1
N. Carolina	1	1	1	1	2	2
N. Dakota	1	0	1	1	2	1
Ohio	1	1	1	1	2	2
Oklahoma	2	0	1	0	3	0
Oregon	0	0	1	1	1	1
Pennsylvania	2	1	1	0	3	1
Rhode Island	2	1	1	1	3	2
S. Carolina	2	1	1	1	3	2
S. Dakota	1	1	1	1	2	2
Tennessee	3	1	1	1	4	2
Texas	2	2	1	1	2	3
Utah	1	0	1	0	2	0
Vermont	1	0	1	0	2	0
Virginia	1	1	1	0	2	1
Washington	0	0	1	1	1	1
W. Virginia	1	0	1	1	2	1
Wisconsin	2	1	1	1	3	2
Wyoming	1	1	1	1	2	2

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Table 2 Relationship of items on the survey to major questions of the study

Major Study Question	University TEP Form		State Agency Form	
	#	Item Content	#	Item Content
Q 1[a]	1	Who is responsible for testing prior to teacher certification?	1	Is there an entry or exit exam of knowledge of Standard English for certification?
	3	Is there an entry or exit exam of knowledge of Standard English?		
	6	How does the university or state define Standard English?	4	Does your certification program define Standard English? Please describe.
Q 2[b]	2	What is the number of credit hours of English at the college level required for certification?		
	4	What is the nature of the exams (oral, multiple choice, composition)? What is the name of the exam? Who scores exams? How is the passing score determined?	2	What is the nature of the exams (oral, multiple choice, composition)? What is the name of the exam? Who scores exams? How is the passing score determined?
Q 3[3]	5	Are some students assessed differently from native English speakers? How is the assessment different?	3	Are some students assessed differently from native English speakers? How is the assessment different?
	10	To what extent are the state's requirements [for Standard English proficiency] enforced?	9	To what extent are the state's requirements [for Standard English proficiency] monitored and enforced?
	11	To what extent are the university's requirements [for Standard English proficiency] enforced? How?		
Q 4[d]	7	To your knowledge, what part do racial and ethnic minorities play in setting and administering the state or university standards and tests [for Standard English proficiency]?	5	To your knowledge, what part do racial and ethnic minorities play in setting and administering the state or university standards and tests [for Standard English proficiency]?

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Major Study Question		University TEP Form		State Agency Form
			6	Do some do racial and ethnic minorities have more influence than others in setting and administering the state or university standards and tests [for Standard English proficiency]?
	8	Which minorities have the most or least power in setting and administering policies regarding Standard English proficiency?	7	What part do racial and ethnic minorities play in developing and administering the state's certification criteria for Standard English proficiency?
	9	To what extent are racial or ethnic minorities in positions of authority in the state department of education?	8	To what extent and in which positions are racial and ethnic minorities in positions of authority in your state's department of education?

[a]Do TEPs or state agencies attend to issues of Standard English proficiency among teacher education candidates; if so, how do they do so? [b]Does teacher preparation for meeting requirements for certification criteria in Standard English vary among or universities; if so how does it vary? [c]To what degree and in what manner are the university or state regulations regarding proficiency in Standard English enforced? [d]To what extent does minority representation in universities or state agencies influence policy regarding setting and enforcing requirements for Standard English proficiency?

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Responses to surveys

A total of 30 (50%) of the 51 state agency forms were returned. There were 35 (45%) university responses returned. Together, these represented 42 different states. Five surveys were sent back by the post office as undeliverable. The total combined return rate for all surveys, delivered to addressees (127 surveys) was approximately 51% (N = 65 responses). Nine states are not represented by any response (see Map 1). Both the state agency and at least one university respondent replied in 17 states and four states had three or more replies (see Table 1 and Map 1).

4.2 Definition of Standard English

Both survey forms solicited the present definition of Standard English, and requested information about the manner in which the definition was applied to licensing or TEP

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exit requirements. On three of the 65 completed forms, respondents indicated that there was a definition for the term "Standard English." One respondent wrote that "[the state's definition is] common use if not too incorrect," and "[the university's definition is] correct use of Standard English. It is required in student teaching." The second respondent stated that the definition was whatever the test determined it was, since student teachers had to "pass the [state's] test in reading, writing and standard English." The third reported that "edited American English" was the standard. The remaining 62 respondents stated that they were unaware of any state or university definition.

4.3 Entry and exit tests

Forty-six percent of the respondents (13 state agencies and 17 universities) representing 13 different states indicated that they use either an examination as part of the basis for admission to the TEP or an examination just prior to certification on which licensing decisions depend. Neither an entry nor an exit examination was used by 23% (seven state agencies and eight universities) of those responding, representing 12 different states. Of the 30 responses affirming use of testing, 77 % (23 respondents) cited the Praxis Series, Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers, including the National Teacher Exam (NTE), Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), and Computer-Based Academic Skills Assessment (CBT).

The *PRAXIS I: Academic Skills Assessments, Tests at a Glance Bulletin* includes the following information to examinees regarding the essay-writing portions of the tests: "[these]. . . provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your command of *standard written English* [italics added] . . . ." (p. 6). The holistic scoring guide for one of the specialty area tests in the *PRAXIS II: Subject Assessments* series, *English Language, Literature, and Composition: Pedagogy* states ". . . demonstrates superior control of language and syntax," and ". . . demonstrates mastery of the conventions of *standard written English* [italics added] (grammar, usage, mechanics)" (p. 27). Some respondents indicated that their states used a certification examination developed by and used solely within the individual state. Texas and Illinois, for example, have such an examination. No respondents from such states indicated they had a definition of Standard English. However, according to the university respondent from Texas, the *Texas Academic Skills Profile* (TASP) assesses both "reading and writing in Standard English."

Although the lone respondent from Illinois indicated there was no state or university definition of Standard English, on examination of *The Registration Bulletin* (Illinois State Board of Education, 1996) for the Illinois certification test, we found a definition. In the section "Preparing for the Writing Test, " candidates are told, "Finally, make sure that you use *standard written English* [italics added]: in other words, make sure your composition is grammatically correct" (Illinois State Board of Education, 1996, p. 39). The candidates are directed to read Section V: Test Objectives — Grammar (p. 43) for further information on exactly what is considered Standard English. Here, one learns that standard use of verbs, pronouns, modifiers,

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sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling constitute the test objectives. Objective 4 states "Understand how the appropriateness of language varies according to the context in which it occurs" (p. 43). Items in the multiple choice section contain opportunities to ". . . identify standard and nonstandard English and formal and informal language in various situations."

4.4 Nature of examinations

Multiple choice or short answer was the most frequently used format for tests, as reported by all of the 30 respondents using tests. In addition, 21 (70%) of the 30 using testing described using written composition as well. According to Andrews (1996), 14 states do not have a writing component included in their Basic Skills Proficiency Examination. Five (16%) of the 30 using tests also reported using an oral format to test spoken English. Andrews (1996) indicated that 47 states do not have a speaking component and 39 do not have a listening component. Only Virginia (Andrews, 1996) tests all four basic language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Eleven (37%) of the 30 did not know how or by whom a passing score was determined. Many credited ETS with establishing the passing score despite the repeated announcements in the ETS test bulletins that the agency or university requesting the tests sets the cut scores. Of the remaining 19, all those whose states have their own certification tests were well aware of who sets the cut scores. Several respondents gave us lengthy descriptions of the make-up of state wide committees and the levels at which reviews are made regarding these scores.

4.5 Accommodations

Bilingual and minority students are not assessed differently from native, "non-minority" English speakers according to 82% (27 state agencies and 26 universities) of the respondents. This finding is suspect due to the wording of the question. Some respondents wrote comments such as: "no, we don't [assess differently], but in my opinion we should," and "the teacher education program seems to be assessed on an equitable basis." Two university respondents replied, "Yes, [they are assessed differently]." The first respondent indicated that the "TESOL [test]" was used "on the basis of individual need." The second explained:

> Students who exhibit poor speech are referred to speech therapy at the speech clinic in the nursing department. No one really benefits. This is a difficult position because we have so many minority students and they usually return to their own schools . . . . Deans and the director of the program waive the standards for . . . students who fail to meet them. Waivers are based on individual appeals.

A typical response from those who use nationally developed tests indicated that "whatever the testing company allows, we allow."

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4.6 Minority representation in policy setting

Four (13%) university participants and one (3%) state agency representative did not respond to the questions concerning minority representation in policy setting. One university participant wrote a letter addressing the reasons for not responding, and one state agency representative wrote a long letter refusing to respond to the entire survey. Several others wrote comments in the spaces provided on the forms; not all comments were negative.

Twenty-four (65%) of the university participants and 29 (97%) of the state agency participants responded to the questions on their respective surveys regarding racial and ethnic minority representation in policy setting for Standard English proficiency. Thirteen (37%) of the university participants believed minority representation was about equivalent to their numbers in the state's population, although they went on to report that there was hardly any representation at the state level. On the other hand, 16 (55%) of the state agency participants indicated they believed that minority representation was about equivalent to their numbers in the state's population.

Twenty-three (79%) of the state agency participants and 16 (54%) of the university participants did not respond to the question which asked whether any particular group was perceived to have more influence in policy setting decisions. Sixty-five percent (19) of the state agency participants declared that there was no difference among minority groups with respect to the perceived amount of influence at the state level, while 40% (14) of the university participants perceived that there was a difference. At the university level, 12 (34%) of the university participants reported that there was a difference in the amount of influence among groups with respect to criteria setting for Standard English proficiency. Explanatory comments were made by university and state agency participants. For example, two state agency participants indicated that "the testing service has control of the standards;" and a university participant stated: "[there are] not many minority voices on campus. The most vocal are in the English department."

Eight-six percent (29) of the state agency participants and 77% (27) of the university participants responded to the question concerning the extent of racial or ethnic minorities in decision making positions in the state department. Of those responding to this question, seven (27%) of the responses from university participants and five (20%) of the state agency participants indicated they perceived the numbers to be in proportion to the population. Six (23%) of the university participants and nine (36%) of the state agency participants believed there were none to hardly any. Five (14%) of the university respondents and eight (32%) of the state agency respondents perceived that there was some representation.

4.7 Enforcement of state or university standards for Standard English proficiency

Eighteen (62%) of the state agency participants and 26 (74%) of the university participants responded to the question regarding the enforcement of state

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requirements for Standard English proficiency. Nine (30%) of the state and 16 (46%) of the university respondents indicated that the state's requirements are enforced rigorously. Seven (38%) of the state and six (24%) of the university participants believed the requirements were adequately enforced. University respondents commented: "conditions depend on who, what, and where." "We follow the state guidelines by the book." "If they don't pass the cut test they don't get certified."

Eighteen (51%) of the university participants responded to the question regarding enforcement of university criteria for Standard English proficiency. Seventeen (94%) of those who responded to the question believed the university's requirements were rigorously enforced, and eight (47%) reported that they were adequately enforced. Comments included: "depends on the persons for supervision." "We worry about it [rigor of the tests] and sometimes we take less than we should." "We are working on standards based TEP with more performance based assessment in all programs." "If the student doesn't pass two English courses, they can't continue. No other objective measure is used [at the university, if they don't pass the state certification test they don't get certified]."

Our survey respondents informed us that their students of teaching are required to have from 3 to 20 credit hours of English course work depending on the level and subject matter endorsements. However, according to Andrews (1996) 15 states do not require *any* English courses in their undergraduate major *before* entering the TEP. One state, Alaska, currently has neither a Basic Skills test prior to entry or exit, nor any English requirements in the undergraduate major before entering the TEP (Andrews, 1996). Andrews (1996) also informed us that 15 states have an English or English-related endorsement on elementary teaching certificates and 21 states have such an endorsement on the middle level or junior high teaching certificates. Of the 50 states that offer endorsements (one state has no endorsements whatsoever), 43 have English or English-related endorsements on secondary teaching certificates (Andrews, 1996).

5. LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Language in the survey

Some questions in the pilot survey appeared to be less informative than was expected. We believe this was due primarily to the manner in which we stated the questions and the way in which it was interpreted by the readers. For example, when we requested information about language requirements, we did not qualify the question with the phrase "Standard English" to distinguish them from other types of requirements. Presumably if any standards are enforced, then all standards are enforced.

A second example is represented by Question 5 on the university form and Question 3 on the state agency form which inquired about the manner in which state and university Standard English proficiency requirements are set and enforced. (See Table 2.) Our intent was to discover what policies, if any, were in effect to deal with issues

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presented by various groups such as speakers of English as a second language. Asking "what if any accommodations are made" rather than whether the same standards are applied to all students in all cases would probably have generated more useful responses. As the question was stated, nearly everyone on both forms responded that the same standards were used equitably for all students. There is concern among some that requiring the use of Standard English in written and oral communication unduly penalizes some individuals. Others point out that there are societal expectations for schooling of children and youth which include the teaching of (and presumably the personal use of) Standard English. These concerns represent the issues of the rights of the individual versus the rights of the group. (See our comments in the section Standard English and Teacher Education Programs in the United States, above.)

A set of items (Questions 7–9 on the university form and Questions 5–8 on the state agency form) asking about minority participation in policy setting for the development and implementation of requirements for, and tests of, Standard English also seemed to generate less than reliable information. The five who did not respond to these items seemed to view the questions as racist or biased based on additional comments they wrote. This was not the intent of the survey, and we do regret any impression of that nature it may have created. In one case, the response was a two page single spaced letter from an agency in a South Atlantic state challenging the use of such a "controversial subject as standard English," and the use of terms such as "power" and "authority" relating to minority participation in the standard setting bodies. This particular respondent believed that very unreliable "opinions" were all that could be generated from such a questionnaire.

A respondent in a Southwestern state answered questions on the university form but omitted responding to the questions regarding minority representation on standard setting bodies. "Your questions . . . lend the appearance of potential bias . . . especially since there is some concern that historic assessments have always contained cultural biases." Other university respondents wrote, "I am disturbed by the numerical phrasing . . . . It should be in terms of experience on the issues." "There is much talk about diversity but its [sic] a problem at hiring time."

5.2 Sample

That nine states form the Southwest were not represented may have been due in part to an error in office procedures which failed to flag the five questionnaires returned by the post office. The failure to readdress those questionnaires may have resulted in lack of opportunity for some states to respond. However, the survey responses we did receive correspond well with the published data in Andrews (1996).

5.3 Definition of Standard English

This term appears to be infrequently used by school personnel. Among those who do

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use it, the concept strikes a very sensitive note. It appears to be bound up in the current movement toward a more global perspective, especially tolerance for cultural differences. It is also subsumed within the belief that there should be no standard enforced, since all languages are of equal value. It is a stance taken by some who support those dialects farthest from the present standard. An example of this way of thinking is the widely publicized controversy involving the Oakland (California) School Board and Ebonics.

In this study, most agencies and nearly all university respondents stated that they were not aware of a definition for Standard English in their state or university guidelines. Yet they relied on tests which directed examinees to write essays that would demonstrate their "command of standard written English." Respondents seemed unaware that the tests they used, including those developed and used by individual states, defined Standard English via the items, tasks, and scoring of the test itself. For example, *Praxis* defines standard written English as "language, syntax . . . and conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanics)." It seems that the definition of Standard English held by some state agencies and TEPs is determined by the contents of the Praxis Series of tests used by them

While we have not yet seen a copy of the Texas Academic Skills Profile (TASP), according to the respondents from two Texas universities, TASP assesses both reading and writing in Standard English. We were able to examine the Illinois *Registration Bulletin 1996-1997* for the Illinois certification test and discovered that a definition is embedded in the directions to candidates, although one must read several different sections of the *Bulletin* to garner a complete picture.

Based on the number of responses to the survey and the 29 states identified by Andrews (1996) that require Basic Skills Tests which include "standard written English," we believe that Standard English is thought of as a very basic literacy skill by many teacher educators. Indeed, during informal conversations, teacher educators expressed surprise that students of teaching might not use Standard English routinely in all forms of communication.

5.4 Entry/exit exams

Although most respondents knew whether a test was used for entry to (or exit from) the TEP, some were unaware of which tests were used, what content was covered, or what tasks were required of examinees; and they were unaware of how and by whom the standards for passing were set. It is clear that the faculty in TEPs and state agency representatives who responded to the questionnaire were unaware of the definition of Standard English presented in the testing materials used for either certification or TEP entry. This lack of knowledge about the tests used to determine competency in basic skills or licensure may be indicative of a kind of blind faith in testing to resolve issues of accountability. The choice of these tests by the university or state agency must imply that whatever standard is held by the testing company's scoring is the accepted standard for the agency or university.

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Twelve states reported neither an entry nor an exit exam of Standard English proficiency; however, many individual comments indicated that informal observations of students during presentations, practicums, or the English course requirements served as a check on their proficiency. States which did not have an exit exam or certification exam said that the universities were responsible for assurance of competencies of candidates forwarded to them for certification. It was generally accepted that TEP entry standards were sufficiently rigorous to ensure the competencies of future teachers, even though according to our respondents these standards did not include a standard for written or spoken English. Furthermore, while some had no exit or entry tests, they indicated that the selection of the student ensured the quality of the graduate.

In some cases the standards for English use in all forms of communication are explicit. In others, they are assumed. Whether standards for English use in all forms of communication are explicit or implied, they may still be waived by deans and program directors based on individual appeals.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While it may be argued that the opinions generated are not "statistically valid" as charged by the state agency respondent, or may appear to "lend the potential for bias" as the university respondent indicated, a number of our findings merit further investigation.

First, we discovered that although current writers of English language tests, especially at ETS, seem to be increasingly influenced by less hard-line sociolinguistic terms and concepts such as "Standard (more often with a lower-case initial *s*) English" or "appropriateness to context," teacher educators and state licencing officials continue to rely largely on the circular standards examined in the entry or exit tests themselves (the tests define the standard, and the standard defines the tests), or on ill-defined consensus knowledge ("you know what I mean"), when pressed to define such terms.

Second, American educators seem much less concerned with the problems stemming from Noah Webster's carefully limited, essentially conservative Ausbau of American English vis-à-vis World English (as for instance in the salient area of spelling) than they do with the explosive educational issues involving nonstandard social dialects and minority children.

Finally, a reform of teacher training in English seems urgently called for, both with regard to setting clear definitions and goals for the kind of English skills expected of prospective teachers and for preparing them to give better instruction to the increasing percentage of pupils who do not speak the same kind of English that they do.

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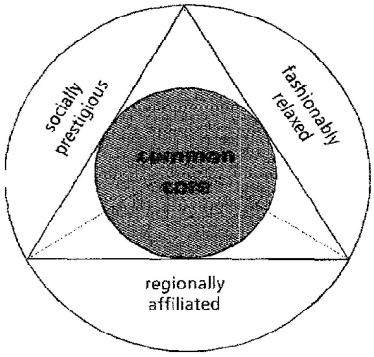
CONCLUSION: THE EEE CONCEPT AND MODEL

The proposed concept of *Educated English English* (EEE) has been conceived as a tool for research into the large variety of educated speech forms, unabridged by the traditional constraints of RP-centered issues and methods. It is an alternative to RP insofar as it does not regard the traditional prestige accent as a measure of educated speech nor necessarily refer to RP characteristics in order to define educated articulatory features or discuss their social acceptability. However, EEE is not ment to replace the RP-concept - however controversial the term may be in itself - in its function to assess characteristic features of socially prestigious articulation, but includes the prestige accent in its conception of educated speech. The concept of *Educated English English* is based on the existence of a range of common features and tendencies acting as bonds between the parts of the educated continuum and is, at the same time, open to special features of each variant. The common features and tendencies are, to varying degrees, exhibited by educated speakers of different generations, sexes and social backgrounds, thus providing the unifying basis of the concept, while considerable variation in the application and realization of features and in the structuring of tendencies serves to maintain the characteristical articulatory outlay of each variant. Consequently, a common core has been conceived, with evidence from all parts of the continuum and supplemented by features either overlapping or specific of a particular variant.
The EEE-model consists of a core area representing the common traits and tendencies, zones for overlapping features, and fields for special traits of the respective variants:



Educated English English (EEE) is defined as the pronunciation of educated speakers of English English, regardless of their social background, generation or sex and with considerable variability within and around a common core.

FOOTNOTES

For criticism of RP cf. David Abercrombie's accusation of an "*accent bar*" deviding educated speakers of English English "*like a colour bar*" (*Abercrombie*, 1965, 13 ff.) and Ronald Macaulay's more recent condemnation of an accent that "has probably outlived its usefullness" (*Macaulay*, 1988, 123 ff.).

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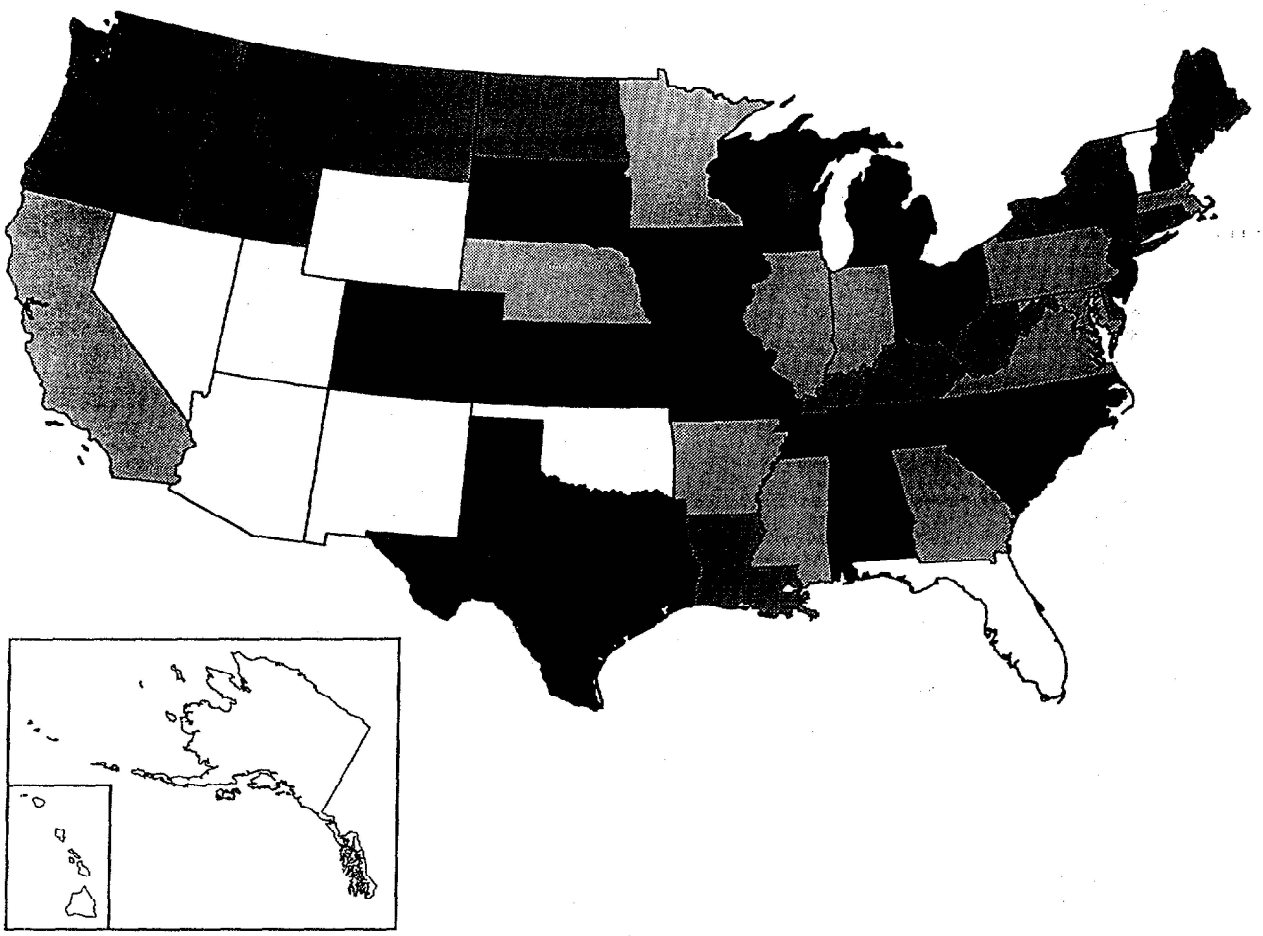
Map1. Surveys Received from Universities and State Agencies by State



Surveys Received
- No Response
- University
- State Agency
- Both

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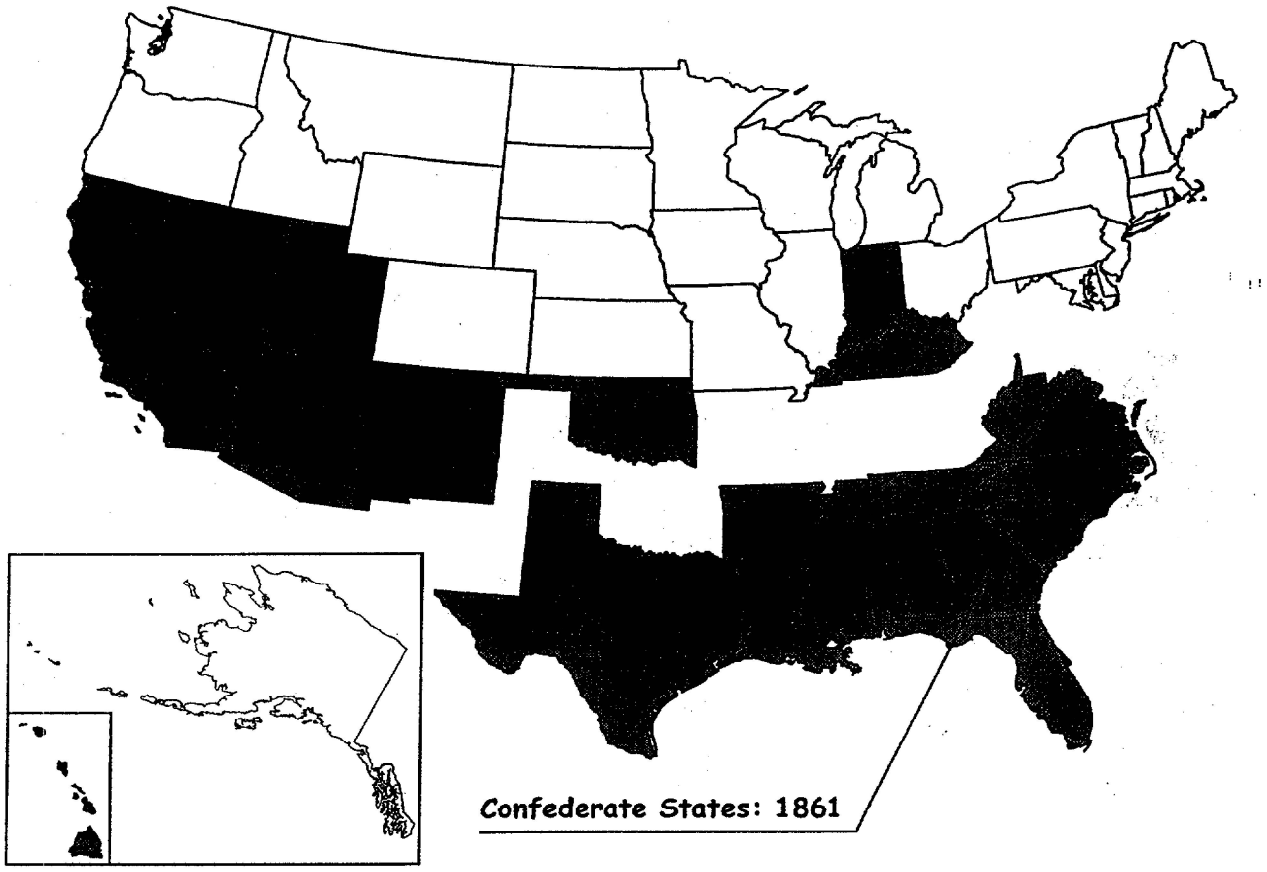
Map2. States with Highly Centralized State Control of Curriculum



States

Without high centralized control
With centralized control

Source: van Geel, 1976; cited in Pipho, 1991.

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