

Participant information leaflet and consent form

Title of the research project: A Pragmatic Profile of Namibian English - Exploring norms of communicative behaviour in a multilingual ecology

Ethics number: EUB-2023-270-S (Bielefeld University), SHS 0042 (University of Namibia)

Name of principal investigator: Prof Anne Schröder (Bielefeld University)

Address: Universität Bielefeld, Universitätsstraße 25, 33615 Bielefeld, Germany

Telephone: +49 521 106 3658

Local research partner: Prof AS Coetzee-Van Rooy (North-West University, South Africa)

Contact: 016 910 3442 or susan.coetzeevanrooy@nwu.ac.za

You are being invited to participate in a study that is part of the research project PraProNE (homepage: www.uni-bielefeld.de/praprone). Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. You can contact the researchers or the local research partner with any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand (see contact information below). It is very important that you are fully satisfied and that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part initially. Prior to the study's results being used in academic presentations or publications, you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the ethics committees at Bielefeld University, the University of Namibia and several other universities and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study about?

This project aims to find out how speakers of English use the English language to communicate in everyday situations, comparing differences in use between different varieties of English spoken in different countries. It originally looked at Namibian English in this context, and now South African English data is being gathered for a comparison with the findings in Namibia.

Why have you been invited to participate?

All participants for this study are university students speaking South African English as one of their languages. You have been invited to participate because you are enrolled in the NWUs module for Academic Literacy in English. All students taking this module are eligible to participate and there are no additional criteria by which you have been selected.

What will your responsibilities be?

You will first be prompted to answer a few questions about yourself, concerning e.g. your study programme and linguistic background. In the main part of the study, you will then read situation descriptions and be asked to imagine you are one of the participants in a conversation described there. You will then be asked to write down (type in the appropriate space) the next utterance that the speaker would make in this scenario.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

Taking part in this study will help you to gain an increased understanding of how this type of linguistic survey is conducted. It will also afford you the opportunity to consider how you use English in conversations. At a larger scale, the insights you provide will help to establish a better understanding of how English is used to communicate in different countries and by different speakers, both in the scientific community and beyond.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

There are basically no risks for participants in this study as it only comprises an online questionnaire with written answers (typed online) and there are no offensive, brutal, intense, or otherwise psychologically stressful contents included. Furthermore, your knowledge of the English language is not tested or graded in any way. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions in this study. As for potential sources of discomfort and how these will be managed, see the table below.

Possible discomforts	Strategies to minimise discomforts
Participating in this study (as in any other research) will take up some of your time that e.g. is not available for activities directly related to your study programme	In addition to participation being entirely voluntary, you are free to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences to you. Additionally, the questionnaire is supposed to only take between 20 and 30 minutes and, due to the online format, can be taken any time that is convenient for you. It is also fairly entertaining in that it deals with communication in everyday university scenarios, so it is unlikely to become boring or exhausting before being completed.
The questionnaire deals with everyday language as participants would use it, so it might feel like you are giving the researchers insights into a somewhat personal aspect of your life.	As explained below, all data gathered in this study is fully anonymised and it will not be possible to trace specific questionnaire answers back to individual participants. Furthermore, a large number of answers are collected for every questionnaire scenario, and the analysis later focuses on overall trends and variation, not on individual participants or questionnaires.

We do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the discomforts we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will fully respect your decision.

Who will have access to the data? What will happen to the data?

All data provided via the online questionnaire will be anonymised, that means it will not be connected to your name or person. The personal information in the demographic part of the questionnaire is only necessary for group statistics and will not be used to identify individual participants. Only the research team will have direct access to the questionnaire that you completed, and the data on the online survey platform will be deleted later in the process. Only the information necessary for the study's purposes will be retained in aggregated form, and it will be shared only in this form with project partners and – in the form of research presentations or reports – with a larger scientific audience. The data will only be used in the context of scientific activities connected to or aligned with the overall research project's aims.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be compensated for your participation as for this study there is no funding for compensation. Fortunately, the online questionnaire can be taken anytime and anywhere you choose, so no costs to you will be involved either.

How will you know about the findings?

The data will first be categorised, coded and analysed, which takes some time. Eventually, the findings will be published in a research article or a similar academic text. Where possible, we will make sure to publish in an open access format, so that there are no pay walls or other access restrictions. All current and future publications based on research activities in the project are or will be listed on the project website (www.uni-bielefeld.de/praprone), where you can also find more general information on the project background, the methodology used, and the researchers involved. If you have any specific questions about our research, feel free to contact us at praprone@uni-bielefeld.de. Remember that we cannot provide feedback on individual results, though, as all data is anonymised and analysed in an aggregated format only.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact the PraProNE research team headed by Prof Anne Schröder at praprone@uni-bielefeld.de if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.

You can contact the chair of the Ethics Committee for Language Matters (Prof Johanita Kirsten, at johanita.kirsten@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.