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Dis, That and Da Other: Variation in Aboriginal Children's Article and Demonstrative Use at School

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Introduction

In many Australian Indigenous communities today, the home language of school children is neither a traditional language nor is it a standard or close-to-standard variety of English. Rather, the dominant community language is an English-based variety born out of sustained contact between Indigenous Australians and English-speaking colonists—typically called a creole language or a variety of Aboriginal English. Children in these communities often enter school with little prior exposure to Standard Australian English (SAE), and so, like children from other non-English-speaking backgrounds, they must learn a new language variety in order to properly access curriculum content and ultimately to gain the necessary skills to fully participate in mainstream

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Australian society. This chapter looks at how a group of children in one of these communities use and learn one subsystem of SAE during the first three years of compulsory mainstream schooling.

Teachers and academics have long recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland who do not speak SAE as a first language will need to learn it in order to succeed at school (e.g. Flint 1968; Flint 1976; Angelo 2006). Children are expected to both comprehend and produce Standard Australian English in increasingly sophisticated ways as they pass through school, thereby creating opportunities for employment, further education and social inclusion more generally (Wigglesworth and Billington 2013). However, although programmes have been developed within the Queensland Department of Education and Training to raise awareness of language differences between home and school and to incorporate explicit teaching of SAE in Indigenous classrooms, there remains little systematicity in the approaches that are taken by schools and teachers to provide explicit SAE teaching to Indigenous children statewide (Sellwood and Angelo 2013).

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland live in towns, cities and communities where traditional languages are no longer spoken. They usually speak an English-based variety at home, either a creole language (such as Cape York Creole—Crowley and Rigsby 1979), a variety of Aboriginal English and/or sometimes SAE. In communities where the home variety has a high degree of both actual and perceived similarity to SAE, the fact that children in these kinds of communities are often not already proficient in standard varieties of English, and must learn SAE as an additional dialect, can be obscured. For example, children in this schooling environment may not receive targeted second language teaching support of the kind that is offered to children from language backgrounds that are more distinctly different from English (McIntosh et al. 2012). Work on these language varieties in Queensland, including their relationships to SAE and one another, is ongoing (e.g. Sellwood and Angelo 2013; Munro and Mushin 2016; Mushin et al. 2016), although as Meakins (2014) notes, there has historically been limited linguistic work in this area. Students speaking these varieties may be further disadvantaged by a lack of language awareness of the systematic differences between varieties among teachers, educational institutions

and the wider community. This may lead, for example, to misinterpretations of children's actual understanding of curriculum content. Even when teachers are made aware of the systematic differences between home and school language varieties, they usually lack time, expertise and resources to explicitly teach SAE as a new variety (Angelo 2006). Without explicit teaching of English as an additional language or dialect, children largely only have access to the language in the form of 'exposure' through their teacher and teaching materials. This exposure may be reinforced outside of school only through Australian media, where content may reflect American or British varieties, or through intermittent interactions with other Standard English-speaking people.

State Schools policy under the Department of Education and Training in Queensland requires teachers to support English as an Additional Language or Dialect learners to acquire SAE (Queensland Department of Education Training and Employment 2012),[1] which is defined by ACARA (2014) as '… the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings, such as for official or public purposes, and recorded in dictionaries, style guides and grammars.' The 'P–12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework' policy of Queensland State Schools includes the statements:

[teachers and schools are required to…]
(1.1) (d) Use Standard Australian English as the basis for teaching, including the teaching of spelling.
(1.2) (j) Provide for students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) by:
identifying and monitoring their development of English language proficiency using the Bandscales State Schools (Queensland) for English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners.
supporting their learning informed by English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners.

At the school from which our data was obtained, both the Principal and senior staff stated that they understood the need for students to learn English in order to access the curriculum and assessment that is delivered in English. However, in the approximately 70 hours of classes recorded

for this study, we found very little evidence of explicit English language teaching through the first three years of schooling.

As the children we have recorded for this study speak a variety of Aboriginal English at home (Gardner and Mushin 2013), we have considered their use or non-use of SAE in the classroom over time as indicative of *Second Dialect Acquisition* (SDA), which, as Siegel (2010, pp. 169–174) argues, shares features with the ways in which children may acquire the school language variety as a new *language* (i.e. a form of Second Language Acquisition) but differs from SLA in some important ways, including general attitudes towards and awareness of the students' home varieties and their features.

Most studies of SDA in the classroom, however, involve children who have moved away from their first dialect (D1) speaking communities to a place where most people speak the second dialect (D2) at home and school (e.g. where a Canadian child migrates to England and attends a British school where most children speak British English at home and school—see Tagliamonte and Molfenter 2007; Siegel 2010). In studies such as ours, where children are schooled in SAE within their D1-speaking community, and where most children speak D1 at home, but most teachers do not, we might expect further differences.

Dixon's (2013) study of an English-instructed school in a small, central Australian Aboriginal community illustrates one aspect of the challenge facing teachers who are working with Aboriginal children acquiring SAE as an additional dialect. For example, she shows how it can be difficult for a D2-speaking teacher to know when the children are attempting the D2 and when they are using their D1, especially in cases where the D1 is undocumented (Dixon 2013). She argues that if teachers only observe what students are producing in terms of whether it is SAE or not, they will miss when students are attempting, but not attaining, their target variety, that is, moving through an interlanguage. She also shows that there are some forms and usages found in the home language of the children she describes that were *never* recorded in her classroom corpus and quite different patterns of variation for the two different contexts (Dixon Chap. 11, this volume). The difficulty in identifying when children are speaking their D1 and when they are attempting the D2 is less of a problem when the children's home variety is perceived by teachers systemati-

cally to be a different language, than when teachers lack awareness of systematic differences. It also differs from contexts where the D1 children are the minority and where the other children share the D2 with the teacher and curriculum expectations.

Berthele (2002) has shown that social networks and prestige of language varieties may affect D2 acquisition. Students who were born and grew up in an Aboriginal community and who then attend that community's school spend almost all of their lives in their D1 social networks and have relatively low motivation to acquire the D2 as an additional language variety. The main D2 speaker they regularly interact with would be their teacher, who, in Payne's (1980) terms is 'peripheral' to the network: less likely to influence or be influenced by the dialects spoken by those around her (there are other D2 speakers in communities like these, including shopkeepers, doctors, nurses, police, chaplains). Yet SAE is the language of 'mainstream' Australia, widely used in media and public discourse, and the prestige of SAE is usually recognised by Indigenous community members who expect children to learn SAE as part of their schooling. The positive view of SAE as the language that children should be acquiring, not only for school but for inclusion in mainstream Australia, should be a motivating factor in promoting children's acquisition of the D2 in school, the environment where the children we recorded encounter SAE most regularly.

Another factor shown to be relevant to the success of SDA is the extent to which children learn to control variation in forms across a range of contexts (Berthele 2002). In classroom contexts teachers might hope that their students will attempt to use SAE during English literacy and other school subjects and tests performed in and through SAE. In addition, students will change their language use when speaking with different types of interlocutors: those who share the students' D1 and those who only know the students' D2 (Trudgill 1981).

In summary, there is an official imperative in Australia for children to acquire SAE and use it in the classroom, and wider community expectations that learning SAE is part of a school education. However, in schools where Indigenous children speak a variety of Aboriginal English as their first language, teachers may lack resources for explicitly teaching SAE. This includes a lack of awareness that such teaching is even required,

the challenge of ascertaining when and whether children are targeting SAE, and limited training around what to do to support these language learners.[2] Do we find evidence that children increase their use of SAE over time? If so, this would be evidence that mainstream classrooms like those recorded in this study are capable of supporting language and dialect learning without modification. If not, educators should seek out effective language teaching methods to support students to learn and learn through SAE at school.

In this study we investigate whether children increased their use of SAE forms in classrooms over three years of early schooling and the contexts in which SAE forms were more likely to occur. Our results provide evidence of the ways that children were or were not acquiring SAE over this period. Our focus was on all language use in the classroom, regardless of addressee, and regardless of whether it concerned curriculum content or not. The analysis we present here is, however, constrained to the use of one grammatical subsystem: articles and demonstratives (a subset of 'determiners'). Determiners are highly frequent in both the home variety of children in this community, and in SAE, and so provide a useful starting point for understanding the use of SAE by these children.

More generally, this chapter represents the first attempt to investigate the acquisition of SAE as an additional dialect in the Australian Aboriginal context by focusing on whether and to what extent children used SAE determiners in their classroom discourse over their first three years of school. Our focus on the first three years of school is deliberate, as this is a period where we would expect at least the development of the use of SAE as a school language, even if they do not use it with their peers. We suggest that if there is no evidence of increased use of SAE from school entry to Year 3, then it would be much more difficult to introduce the more sophisticated uses of SAE required in later years, thus compounding the educational disadvantages facing non-SAE-speaking Australian Indigenous children.

Our results are both somewhat counterintuitive and revealing. Contrary to our initial expectations, they show little evidence of significant increase in the use of SAE articles and demonstratives over the study period. Indeed, as we report below, there appears to be a *decrease* in SAE article and demonstrative use in the third year. Our results also show a

clear demarcation of contexts in which SAE forms are more likely to be used. This raises questions about whether children are in fact acquiring skills in SAE as an additional language variety or whether they have simply learned to use their best approximation to SAE while conducting literacy and related school-based tasks.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: In the next section we outline the language variety and language ecology of the community and school that participated in this study, including the use of article and demonstrative forms, and we also outline the key hypotheses that formed the basis of our coding strategies for the quantitative analysis and outline our quantitative approach; we then, present the results of our quantitative analysis; and in the final section we discuss implications of these findings for understanding how young speakers of a variety of Aboriginal English acquire (or do not acquire) Standard Australian English in their early years of school.

Data and Hypotheses

The Recordings

The data we have used in the analysis come from a larger corpus of regular classroom activities recorded at a community school in Queensland (QLD) between February 2011 and November 2013, conducted over 12 visits (one visit a term for three years).[3] The full corpus consists of nearly 70 hours of video and audio recordings of three cohorts of children from Prep[4] to Year 3 (ages four–seven). Some of the recorded sessions were group work, others were whole class teaching and others included individual work. Many types of activities and topics were recorded, including science classes and cultural activities, but the curriculum's heavy bias towards literacy and numeracy made these kinds of activities the more usual subject of the recordings.

The classes consisted almost entirely of Aboriginal students from the same Queensland community. Almost every student wore an individual lapel microphone plugged-in to a digital voice recorder. Video was recorded using two digital cameras fixed on tripods that captured the

whole room and showed the orientations and positions of the students as they moved around, and gave some clearer images of what they were working on or doing during the sessions.

The home variety of children in this community is a local variety of Aboriginal English that had its origins in twentieth-century contact between nineteenth-century QLD Pidgin, colonial English varieties and QLD traditional Indigenous languages (e.g. Mushin et al. 2016; Mushin and Watts 2016). The home variety is considered by most of its speakers to be a variety of English, albeit a deficient or 'rubbish' variety. For this reason, children have historically been enrolled at school as speaking English at home, even though these children have typically had minimal exposure to Standard Australian English—the language of instruction (Gardner and Mushin 2016). Note that, unlike the language ecologies surrounding many other schools in Queensland, the home community of the students in this study seems to be somewhat homogenous: i.e. most Aboriginal people in the local area use the same variety for most communicative purposes most of the time.

Determiners in SAE and D1

A substantive study of uptake of SAE in the community school we have recorded should ideally include a range of linguistic forms for which we can establish systematic variability between SAE and home variety forms and functions (e.g. Mushin and Watts 2016). As linguistic description of the home variety is still underdeveloped, we have selected one frequently occurring grammatical feature—the class of determiners—that is both phonologically and syntactically distinct between the students' home variety and SAE.

In SAE, determiners include the words which serve to delimit reference in a noun phrase and occur in initial position in a noun phrase. They include articles (*a/an*, *the*), demonstratives and quantifiers such as *this*, *that*, *all*, *some*, *many* and so on. As function words, they indicate old and new information (e.g. *the dolphin* presupposes that an addressee can already identify which dolphin is being talked about, while *a dolphin* does not presuppose identification), number of participants (*a dolphin*

refers to only one dolphin) and can also mark generic categories (*a/the dolphin is a mammal* = dolphins are mammals).

As essential tools for tracking participants and delimiting reference, they are foundational not only for sentence construction but also text cohesion. Correct use of determiners in oral and written work is taught as part of the Australian National Curriculum for English from the first year of school. For example, they are part of the first set of 'sight words' taught to children in early literacy. This early literacy work however scaffolds what is assumed to be the SAE use of determiners in talk at the time of school entry, transferring children's existing oral capacities to the production of written and oral texts.

In this study we have limited our analysis to the SAE articles (*a/an* and *the*) and demonstratives (*this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, *there*, *here*) and non-use of a determiner in a noun phrase (*ø)*, only as there were insufficient uses of other determiners to warrant statistical analysis. The corresponding non-SAE forms included in this study were: *ø*, *one*, *da*, *dem*, *dis*, *dat*, *das*, *dere*, *and ere* (see Fraser (2015) for a more detailed description of determiners in the home variety).

The articles and demonstratives we have examined also neatly encapsulate the problem of perceived mutual intelligibility for this type of SDA context, where the superficial similarities in many of the forms (e.g. *da*/*the*, *dat*/*that*, *dis*/*this* etc.) make the learning task appear to be one of simple phonological substitution, whereas the reality is that each of these forms has a different function and distribution in the students' home variety than it has in SAE.[5] For example, when a student in this study asks a peer *Who da girl dere la?*, where the particle *la* indicates that the speaker is drawing the hearer's attention to something new to be jointly attended to (Gourlay and Mushin 2015), we can see that *da,* rather than serving a tracking function to mark shared knowledge between speaker and listener about the identity of 'the girl', was in fact introducing the referent as new information, better translated to the SAE 'that' than 'the' (i.e. introducing and selecting a specific girl, new to the discourse). Simple post hoc phonological substitution would lead an SAE listener to misunderstand the knowledge state of the student; when these misinterpretations exist in nearly every sentence passing between teacher and student, they can add up to cause larger, still hidden problems with

communication. A more detailed study, along the lines of Nicholls (2016), including data recorded in the students' homes, would be required to build up a more complete understanding of the functions of each determiner in the students' first language. Furthermore, we do not assume that each article and demonstrative exhibits the same degree or kind of variability, as presumably this would depend on the extent of overlap between SAE and the children's home variety with respect to individual morphemes.

Pine and Lieven (1997) show that by the age of four, children learning English as their first and only language from birth use the determiner system in a mostly adult-like way. There are still a few ongoing non-adult uses (Warden 1976, Warden 1981), but under the criteria used to define SAE and non-SAE determiners in this chapter, children with English as a first language at and above this age would be using adult-like English determiners 100% of the time or very near to it.[6]

Second Dialect Acquisition studies tend to focus on the change in use of a particular feature or class of features over time, such as our analysis of determiners here. However, Prince (1987) and Foreman (2003) demonstrate for Yiddish and Australian English, respectively, that closed-class words are less likely to include D2 variants than open-class words, in spite of their relatively higher frequency. Prince (1987) describes the changes in five vowel productions of Yiddish folk singer Sarah Gorby, who increased her use of her D2 (Standard Yiddish) variants in her recorded songs over several decades, gradually lowering the proportion of D1 (a regional variety of Yiddish spoken around Kishinev) variants used. Comparing the proportion of D1 to D2 variants across open- and closed-class words showed some significant effects for three of the four relevant vowels: the singer was more likely to use D2 variants in open-class words. Foreman (2003) found a similar result in her study of 34 North American immigrants to Australia: closed-class words were less likely to include D2 phonological features than open-class words. Our study examines the production of closed-class words in the D2 of a group of children. We further narrow the notion that different word-classes will have different trajectories of acquisition by looking at whether a particular subclass of determiners (specifically the indefinite articles *a/an*) are more likely to be used in an SAE-like way by our participants.

Hypotheses

The overall goal of this investigation was to establish whether children from one Aboriginal community showed evidence of increased SAE use over three years of schooling and whether there were systematic contexts in which any changes in SAE use were observed. Because we have observed that children in this community have variable exposures to SAE outside of their schooling, we expected individual variation between the selected students, and this was factored into the statistical analysis. We also considered, after initial observations, whether SAE articles and demonstratives were used uniformly by children or whether there was a higher rate of use of the indefinite article *a/an*, which would be evidence that this form, unlike the others, is the same across the two varieties.

We also considered the context in which articles and demonstrative were used. If students are acquiring SAE as a D2 school language (i.e. the language used for school activities), we might expect students to increase their use of SAE in talk directly related to curriculum activities. In particular we hypothesised that SAE forms were most likely to occur in literacy activities such as reading aloud or repeating teacher prompts as these are direct responses to SAE input associated with written language and a large part of the early literacy pedagogy used in the recorded data and related observations at the school. An increase in SAE article and demonstrative use in literacy tasks or other school-related tasks could, however, be evidence of increased skills in literacy, rather than SAE as a mainstream language variety per se. If children were acquiring SAE not only as a D2 school language but also as the variety of mainstream Australia, we might expect more usage when addressing SAE speakers they encounter, such as their teachers, as an accommodation to the more prestigious variety (cf Trudgill 1981).

We developed four hypotheses to test these factors:

H1 Students use more SAE with their teacher than with their peers.
H2 a. Students use more SAE during all classroom learning activities than when talking about personal matters.
b. Students will use the most SAE during literacy activities.

H3 Students increase the overall use of SAE over time, particularly in learning activities.
H4 Students are more likely to produce SAE indefinite articles in an SAE-like way than the other articles and demonstratives included in this study.

Method

In order to test these hypotheses, we selected six individual children from the same class over the three years. These were selected on the basis of who produced the most determiner tokens regardless of whether they were SAE or non-SAE forms. By tracking six children over three years, we were able to gauge whether there was evidence of increased usage of SAE forms and whether SAE was more likely to be used by children in some domains for certain purposes than others. An increase in SAE usage is not categorical evidence of language learning: students may be gaining *confidence* as speakers rather than *ability*. We took the amount of SAE used to be an indicator both of a child's recognition of SAE as the appropriate language to use in a given domain in the school context, and evidence that they had the ability to use the language, either as a result of overlap between home and school varieties or learning the language of the school. By limiting the analysis to these six children, it was possible to more completely account for individual variation in the data set; students who produced fewer tokens do not have a clear profile of determiner use, so could skew the results. The number of children, however, is sufficient to take into account differences in the baseline number of SAE forms children already used at the beginning of Year 1.

The six students we selected used a total of 1629 tokens over the three years in the data recorded. A 'token' was a single production of one of the 18 forms in the subset of articles and demonstratives listed above. This count is commensurate with similar studies and thus provided us with a foundation for testing the four hypotheses.

We analysed the variation in determiner use based on what was SAE and what was not. We considered SAE to be the Target Dialect (D2) for the students examined in this study, since it is explicitly described as the

target variety in policy documents in the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (2012) and is the language that the students will need to produce for standardised testing throughout their schooling, as well as for later success at university and various workplaces.[7] We were not able to positively claim that non-SAE use was indicative of home variety use as we lack a comparable database of home language; in fact, Dixon (Chap. 11, this volume) gives reasons to suspect that we are unlikely to glimpse the full richness of the students' home language usage in these kinds of classroom recording.

To address hypotheses 1–4, all tokens were coded by the first author for:

Dependent variable

SAE determiner (Y)es, (N)o

Was the token pronounced and used in the same way that a first language SAE speaker would use it when speaking SAE?

'Yes' indicates that the student used an SAE form that, in the context, also matched an appropriate SAE syntactic distribution to form a grammatical sentence. 'No' could indicate that the form used was non-SAE (i.e. a non-standard pronunciation) or that a form was used in a place in the sentence that we would not expect to find from a fluent SAE speaker, or both.

Examples:
SAE-like sentence, including definite articles:
The lyrebird lives in **the** forest.
Sentence essentially repeated from teachers' writing on the board. Note that depending on conversational context, the first 'the' may not be appropriate, if, for example, the preceding discourse had not introduced the lyrebird. The context of the whole discourse was known and examined for all coded tokens.

Non-SAE article *form*:
Dey givin us fella **da** broken one.
Determiner found where we would syntactically expect 'the', pronounced 'da'

Non-SAE article *function*:
Somebody wants you on **a** phone.
SAE form of 'a' correct, but we would expect 'the' in this situation.

Non-SAE *form* AND *function*:
Miss, you was in **da** black car.
SAE would use 'a' in the context where the student is talking about bumping into teacher on the weekend in her car which is black, rather than selecting from a set of different coloured cars visible at the time or owned by the teacher, or talking about a car the conversational participants have shared knowledge of. More than simple phonological substitution, this 'da', along with example 3, shows the student may have a different underlying distribution of da/a/ ø, which does not map directly onto the SAE distribution of the/a/an/ø.

Independent variables

Addressee: teacher, peer

Was the utterance containing the token addressed to a teacher or to a peer?

The category 'teacher' was also used for the few tokens addressed to one of the researchers present in the classroom and for SAE-speaking teacher aides. The category 'peer' was used for all students in the class, and one teacher aide from the community who had a less structured and formal (i.e. more peer-like) relationship with the students, seemed to share their D1, and was certainly using non-SAE utterances with them most of the time. We omitted tokens recorded as part of self-talk as there was no clear addressee and not enough tokens in this category to generate statistically significant results (see Fraser 2015 for a longer discussion of determiner use in self-talk).

Activity: literacy, organising, personal, classroom

What kind of activity was the utterance about or what kind of activity were the interlocutors engaged in while speaking?

Interactions were observed for a range of purposes during many types of activity in the classroom. These were divided into:

- Personal: speaking about topics not related to school, for example, what they did on the weekend, going fishing, gossip and so on
- Organising: interacting to organise classroom objects, space, or needs, but not directly on school-related topics, for example, arranging to borrow an eraser from a friend or asking the teacher for permission to go to the bathroom
- Classroom: working on classroom activities as mandated by the teacher, including colouring in, maths problems and so on
- Literacy: either directly reading from a book, paper, or the board, or writing and reading aloud. This category covered activities where the teacher made the expectation to use a particular way of talking and writing clearest

Year 2011, 2012, 2013

During which of the three years was the token uttered?

Target a/an vs. other

In the communicative context, would the SAE equivalent of the form used be 'a or an', or would it be one of the other 'targets' included in the study?

We included this variable because of the overall higher rate of SAE uses of *a/an* in positions where an SAE speaker would use them. The few clear non-SAE uses are mostly null and occasionally *da* and even *the*. Possible reasons for this are briefly touched on below, but more descriptive work on the students' D1 is needed before this can be appropriately explained. We posit that, unlike other related varieties, the students' D1 *does* include

a determiner *a* (but not *an*), so the higher rate of SAE-like use is due to overlap between the two varieties, rather than acquisition. This variable is therefore required to avoid skewing the statistics towards a false appearance of successful SAE acquisition; students may not have learned this as a new SAE form, it might just happen to already exist in their D1.

Random variable

Speaker: one of six different children from the same class

The statistical model we applied to the data was a generalised linear mixed model (GLMM) with logistic link function (glmr; glm2 package in R)[8] (Marschner 2011). The GLMM analysis is appropriate for data in which the dependent variable is binary, that is the determiner used is either SAE or not. The use of a logistic link function is necessary when the independent variable levels are categorical, that is Y/N, teacher/peer, literacy/organising/personal/classroom, rather than a numeric range. The GLMM analysis, like other multilevel logistic regression models, also allows an analysis of the effect of individual variables as well as the combined effect of variables at their different levels. This was important for this dataset since the combined effect of addressee and activity gave one of the most significant results (see results). This analysis also takes into account both fixed and random effects in one procedure. In particular, the specification of 'Speaker' as a random effect means the model takes into account that speakers disproportionately contribute to the data under analysis (with differing numbers of tokens) and that individual speakers behave more like themselves than other speakers.

Results

The results show that five of the six students had quite similar overall rates of SAE article and demonstrative production, somewhere around 20–30% of total article and demonstrative use, but one student produced considerably more (over 60% of total use). This is illustrated in Fig. 10.1, which

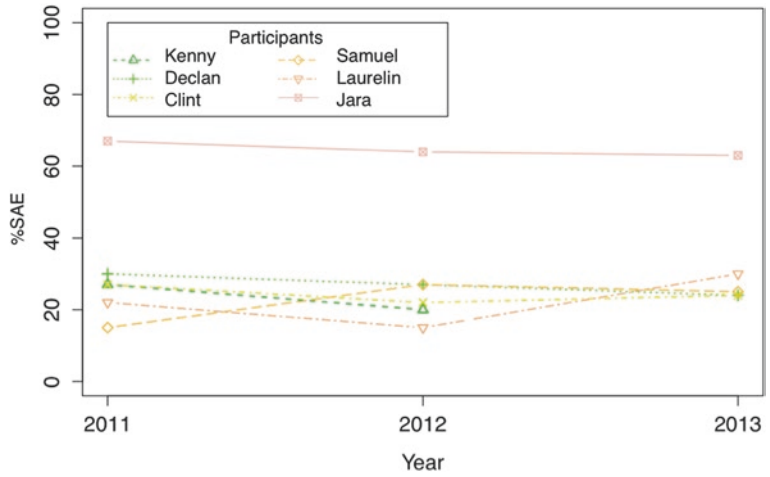

Fig. 10.1 Individual variation in overall production of SAE articles and demonstratives over time (Note that one student left at the end of 2012, which is accounted for in the statistical model. The names are pseudonyms)

plots the amount of SAE article and demonstrative use over the three years of the study. Note that none of the six students significantly increased the amount of SAE use over the period of the study. This first result therefore shows no evidence of further D2 acquisition of articles and demonstratives beyond the starting point for each child. However, this result does not show whether there were changes in the ways that children used SAE determiners over the course of their schooling, even if the overall frequency did not change. These are the results we consider next.

The GLMM method compares variables and combinations of variables to a baseline condition or 'intercept'. A positive *z*-value indicates that the students were more likely to produce an SAE token given a particular set of factors compared to this baseline, while a negative *z*-value indicates that they are less likely to do so. Table 10.1 shows the output of the GLMM analysis for all variables, with the significant results in bold. The *p*-value shows whether the result is significant or not.

These results show that children are not significantly more likely to use SAE with teachers than with peers (when activity is taken into consideration) or with any particular classroom activity. However, children are

Table 10.1 Output of GLMM analysis on 1629 tokens of determiners

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	*p*-value
(Intercept)	1.0839	0.3676	2.949	$p < 0.001$
Addressee (teacher)	−0.6306	0.657	−0.96	0.337135
Activity (organising)	−0.3559	0.2105	−1.691	0.09087
Activity (classroom)	0.3861	0.216	1.787	0.073858
Activity (literacy)	0.209	0.3217	0.65	0.515835
Year (2012)	−0.2752	0.1472	−1.87	0.061415
Year (2013)	−0.654	0.1956	−3.344	**$p < 0.001$**
Target (other)	−2.4357	0.1788	−13.619	**$p < 0.001$**
Teacher:Organising	1.7334	0.7056	2.457	**$p < 0.05$**
Teacher:Classroom	0.82	0.6911	1.187	0.235416
Teacher:Literacy	2.1734	0.7491	2.901	**$p < 0.001$**

significantly more likely to use SAE articles and demonstratives when they are talking to a teacher during literacy ($p < 0.001$) and organising activities ($p < 0.05$). They are also significantly *less* likely to produce SAE in their third year of school ($p<0.001$) and when they are **not** using *a* or *an* (negative *z*-value, $p < 0.001$). The model accounts for a good amount of variation (R^2=0.35) and performs significantly better than a model which does not account for Activity and Addressee as a combined effect (ANOVA, $p < 0.001$).

The four significant results support hypotheses 1 and 2 outlined above, and we interpret the rest of the results as evidence against hypotheses 3 and 4. These results showed that students did use significantly more SAE articles and demonstratives during specific kinds of literacy-based classroom activities than other types of activities, but only when directing their utterances to their SAE-speaking teacher (H1 and H2). Equally, the students usually addressed their teacher in the same way they addressed their peers; this only changed during those specific, targeted, literacy-based activities. There was no evidence that their tendency to use SAE articles and demonstratives increased over time in any of the four activity types or when speaking with their teacher (H3). These children were also significantly more likely to use SAE *a/an* appropriately than any other 'target' SAE determiner form (H4).

H1: Students Use More SAE with Their Teacher than with Their Peers

The first hypothesis predicted that students would be more likely to speak with their teacher using SAE articles and demonstratives than with their peers, following Trudgill's (1981) findings that people tend to accommodate to the dialect of their interlocutor, particularly in cases where the dialect itself or its speaker has a higher status. We would predict that students tend to accommodate to the teacher's use of the prestige SAE variety, while peer interactions remain predominantly in the home variety that they would use with those same peers outside of the school.

On the surface it appears that the students we observed did accommodate to teacher's SAE because they used more SAE when talking to the teacher than talking with peers. However, when the relative proportions of each activity type are taken into account, the result was not significant. The only activity where children did in fact use more SAE with the teacher than peers was in literacy activities, which are prejudiced towards SAE use by virtue of their focus on written forms of English.

H2: Children Are More Likely to Use SAE Forms When Engaging in Curricular Activities

H2a: General classroom learning activities and literacy activities were not significantly more likely to be conducted using SAE articles and demonstratives than classroom organising activities and general non-school-related conversations.

H2b: SAE articles and demonstratives were more likely to be used in literacy activities than in other kinds of classroom activities but only when addressed to their teacher.

These findings support the notion that children learn to associate SAE forms with learning to read and write, rather than more generally

as a variety of language to be used in 'formal' contexts, such as the domain of the classroom. The students in this study regularly used non-SAE forms and utterances to discuss classroom concepts with one another and with the teacher and to manage the day-to-day business of the classroom, for example, 'Dis suppose to be big ay when we colour it in then ay'.[9]

There is further evidence that these students were aware that they were required to use a different language variety during certain activities through the way they practise using SAE even when not performing for the teacher (e.g. during on-task self-talk; see Fraser 2015: 50). We argue that they are tending to use SAE more during literacy tasks because they are simply performing certain taught structures within it to get the particular classroom activities 'right', rather than understanding it as a distinct language variety and approaching the activity as a language learning task. For the teacher, this means they might have a false impression of students' levels of SAE proficiency if they only examine this through the lens of reading and writing. Successfully performing the earlier levels of these tasks by rote (e.g. as sight words) does not prepare these children to apply the linguistic knowledge that ought to underpin these productions when they are required to build on them for more complex linguistic structures in later years, such as the selection of an appropriate determiner for text cohesiveness.

H1+H2: Children Are Most Likely to Use SAE Forms When Addressing Teachers During Curricular Activities

Although children were not significantly more likely to use an SAE determiner with teachers than with peers, or in any particular classroom activity, they were more likely to use an SAE determiner when they were speaking to a teacher during literacy activities and to a lesser extent in organising activities. This is illustrated in Table 10.2.

The combined effect of addressing a teacher in literacy and organising activities is shown in the plot in Fig. 10.2. Figure 10.2 shows that children

Table 10.2 Combined effect of activity and address on the use of SAE determiner (significant levels **bolded**)

		Use of SAE determiner				
Activity	Addressee	N		Y		Total
Personal	Peer	251	75%	83	25%	328
	Teacher	18	78%	5	22%	23
Organising	Peer	273	79%	73	21%	339
	Teacher	96	65%	52	**35%**	137
Classroom	Peer	150	63%	87	37%	219
	Teacher	202	65%	110	35%	279
Literacy	Peer	48	60%	32	40%	78
	Teacher	51	34%	98	**66%**	135
Total		1089		540		1629

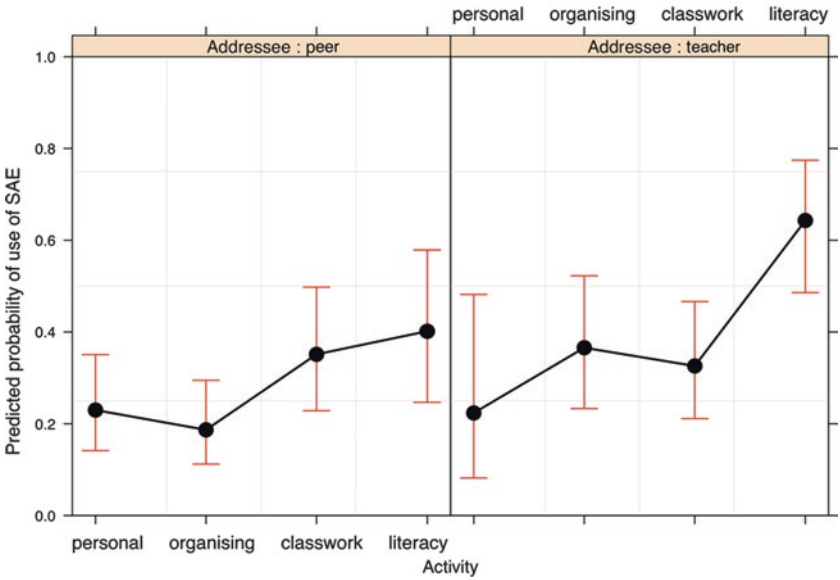

Fig. 10.2 Predicted probability of the use of an SAE determiner according to addressee and activity

use similar numbers of SAE forms when they are addressing either a peer or teacher when they are undertaking personal activities or classroom activities but are more likely to use the SAE form when they are talking

to a teacher in organising activities and literacy activities. This in turn supports the notion that SAE forms used by the six children, regardless of how much SAE competence they started with, are mostly associated with skills in reading and writing, and provide little evidence that SAE is being used by these children as a formal spoken variety, even when speaking with teachers.

H3: Children Will Increase Their Use of SAE as They Progress Through School

While the overall proportion of SAE and non-SAE article and demonstrative productions remained relatively steady over the three years of this study, when target form, addressee and activity are taken into account, the analysis showed that these children produced significantly fewer SAE articles and demonstratives in the third year of this study (2013) in comparison to the preceding two years (2011–2012).

The results in Table 10.1 show that there was a significant decrease (negative *z*-value, $p<0.001$) in the rate of use of SAE articles and demonstratives in 2013 when compared to 2011. There was also a measured decrease from 2011 to 2012, but the *p*-value was below the threshold for significance. The relevant lines of Table 10.1 are repeated here:

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	*p*-value
(Intercept)	1.0839	0.3676	2.949	$p < 0.001$
Year (2012)	−0.2752	0.1472	−1.870	0.061415
Year (2013)	−0.6540	0.1956	−3.344	**$p < 0.001$**

The notion of 'acquisition' in Second Dialect Acquisition implies change over time. The shift from a state of non-knowledge of a second dialect and its domains of use to the fluent application of its rules and systems is the abstract end-goal of the process, which policies and school-intent explicitly desire these students to achieve. Our results indicate that the students did not seem to have progressed in a measurable way towards SAE fluency during Years 1 and 2. The students used some SAE articles and demonstratives not found in their home variety,

along with some others that may be present in both their home variety and SAE, but the frequency with which they used any of these SAE forms as opposed to their non-SAE counterparts did not increase over the three years of this study.[10]

The evidence thus suggests that dialect acquisition has not taken place and that the students we tracked have simply learnt a few very specific features (such as 'use *th* instead of *d* for *the*, *this* and *that*') and some frames (e.g. '**The** cat *sat* on **the** mat.' becomes '**The** lyrebird *lives* in **the** forest.') to be used when performing literacy activities. The type of teaching that takes place around literacy activities is more targeted to these very specific targeted forms and frames, so is not necessarily generalised into wider contexts. It requires the student to extrapolate the SAE determiner system from their limited exposure to the variety. This supports the claim we made in the introduction that students in Australian Aboriginal communities are schooled in a very different context to the successful dialect learners described in other studies of SDA in the classroom. This context does not afford them enough access to the target variety for them to be able to learn and use it as needed.

This was unexpected because, if anything, we might expect that children would increase their use of SAE as a school language variety while they were at school. A decrease in SAE use by Year 3 could be a sign that as children were developing their social identities over the three years of the study, which may have strengthened their use of their home variety across all contexts, rather than shifting towards the standard variety. Alternatively, from a language acquisition perspective, it is possible that the students were going through normal processes of language learning, which include important stages of experimentation that can result in less English-like surface forms than earlier stages, where they produce mostly correct surface forms based on simplified underlying rules (Selinker 1972). In either case, it is evidence that the exposure to SAE through their teacher and class materials experienced by these children over three years did not influence them to shift their language use towards that variety.

H4: Children Are More Likely to Produce SAE Indefinite Articles Than Other Kinds of Determiners

The results showed that children are significantly less likely to appropriately use a SAE determiner if the expected SAE equivalent in the context of the utterance is not *a* or *an* (i.e. *the*, *this*, *that*, *those*, *these*, *here*, *there*).[11] The initial observation in the data led to the addition of this variable to mitigate falsely skewing of the overall production rate towards SAE over non-SAE and allows us to examine the conditions on the production of this article. This difference in the use of target SAE determiner is visually demonstrated in the mosaic plot below where non-SAE determiners other than *a* and *an* form the largest square (bottom left square) (Fig. 10.3 and Table 10.3).

Our results show that students were far more likely to produce *a/an* in the same syntactic positions with the same pronunciation as fluent SAE speakers would than they were for the other 'target' forms. Research into similar and related varieties tells us that we should expect this kind of

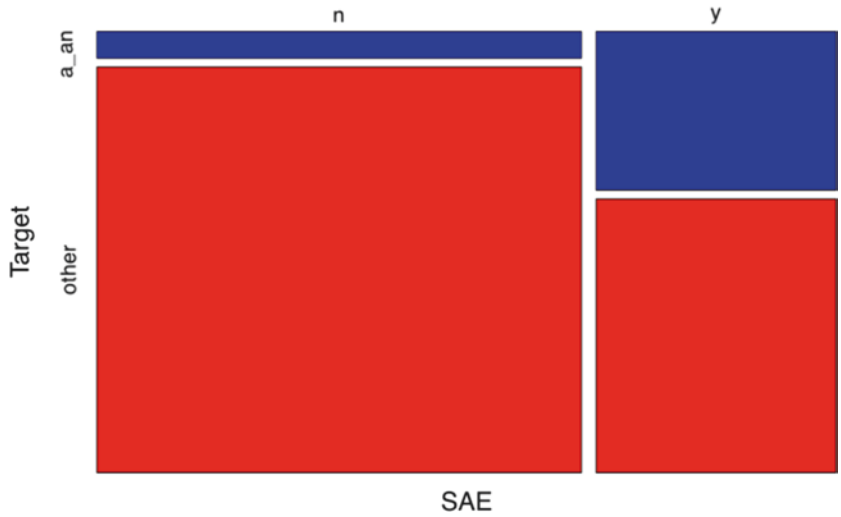

Fig. 10.3 Use of a SAE determiner according to 'a/an vs. other'

Table 10.3 Use of SAE determiner according to a/an vs. other (significant level **bolded**)

	Use of SAE determiner				
	N		Y		Total
a/an	67	25%	198	75%	265
Other	1022	**74%**	342	26%	1364
Total	1089		540		1629

Aboriginal English variety to use either nothing (ø) or *one* to fulfil most of the functions of the English indefinite article, which matches the patterns during the 'most non-English' utterances in this corpus. The simplest explanation for the high rate of success with the form *a* in our study would be if it *is* included in the D1 repertoire of forms, but the different conditioning for its appearance and the absence of the phonologically-conditioned *an* variant account for the 25% non-SAE productions. A fair proportion of the non-SAE uses of the other articles and demonstratives is accounted for by pronunciation difference (e.g. *da* being used where an SAE speaker would use *the*), so it could be the case that the determiner systems of these two varieties 'overlap' syntactically and semantically. This would strengthen the argument that very little acquisition has taken place, as other than in teacher-targeted literacy activities, almost all SAE determiner use is accounted for by the overlap between the two varieties. This kind of discussion awaits a more complete description of the home language variety of these students, in concert with the ongoing work on the school language use corpus.

Discussion and Conclusion

Teachers in Queensland schools currently operate in an evidence-driven environment, so are expected to plan units and classes that cater for the various educational needs of their students based on the best available evidence. This chapter is the first longitudinal, quantitative study of the acquisition of SAE as an additional dialect by Australian Aboriginal students in a classroom context. We have demonstrated that simply applying mainstream, best-practice literacy

teaching that assumes students are already proficient in SAE has not led to any measurable language learning for these students. We argue that without achieving this base level of proficiency in SAE in the early years, it would be much more difficult to introduce more sophisticated uses of SAE required in later years, thus compounding the educational disadvantages facing non-SAE-speaking Australian Indigenous children.

Ultimately, this chapter highlights again the need for young speakers of Aboriginal English varieties to be actively supported throughout their schooling to learn the standard variety used in their classrooms for learning and assessment. We have shown here that daily exposure to SAE through direct interaction with their SAE-speaking teachers and teaching materials over three years of this study was not enough to shift these students' use of articles and demonstratives towards SAE forms and functions beyond what they already used at the beginning of Year 1. However, they seem to have already grasped that literacy work does involve the use of particular SAE forms applied to the written/reading aloud context. Our data provide no evidence that these children were aware of the importance of using SAE as a language variety outside of the literacy context, such as for talking about the curriculum content which is also written in and taught through SAE. As there was very little material recorded in the corpus that showed explicit language awareness teaching, or the significance of differentiating the two varieties for better acquisition of SAE, we have no way of assessing how aware the six children were (either tacitly or explicitly) of SAE as a distinct, rule-governed linguistic system to acquire and use.

Effectively learning SAE during the primary school years prepares students for the language and content demands of the high school curriculum and also gives them a better chance at accessing the jobs, services and public discourse that generally advantages speakers of SAE in mainstream Australian society. SAE is needed to access both learning and assessment across all areas of the curriculum, not just for literacy tasks. Our study only shows these students are *not* learning SAE through the largely undifferentiated mainstream curriculum. Teaching SAE only as the language

of literacy does not offer enough opportunities for use and practice and therefore for students to acquire it proficiently even for that purpose. Students need targeted and explicit language teaching practice that takes into account their own language background, and supports them to learn both SAE and curriculum content over the course of several years of schooling.

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Notes

1. As the research was undertaken in 2010-2013, we quote the policy of the time. The current policy is very similar in substance.
2. Most pre-service teacher training in Queensland currently does not include subjects on teaching English to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners, with the exception of James Cook University, which includes a compulsory subject for Bachelor of Education students titled 'Teaching English as a Second Language to Indigenous Students' [which the first author has worked on as support staff for over the past four years]. Queensland University of Technology is adding a similar course to the core subjects of their Bachelor of Education degree in 2016. There has been in-service training at different levels available through the Language Perspectives team (see: http://indigenous.education.qld.gov.au/school/language-perspectives/Pages/default.aspx) for several years, but only recently has this become a departmental policy priority statewide, and continues to be intermittent and limited in reach. The EAL/D Hub will add to the self-guided in-service training available in this area when it is launched in 2018.
3. The school is not named in accordance with our ethical clearance protocols.

4. In Queensland, Prep is currently the first year of compulsory formal schooling, available to students aged four years and six months and above. This year is also referred to as 'Foundation' across Australia.
5. Although all of these forms likely exist in the home variety of these students, not every use of these forms correlates with its probable syntactic and functional use in the home variety. Similarly, not all of the SAE target forms described above are consistently used in appropriate SAE syntactic frames. Like Dixon (Chap. 11, this volume), we assume that the students are using an interlanguage at times, or otherwise approximating SAE, but it is quite likely that that they are using their repertoires of language very differently outside the school context.
6. Whether we should expect students learning English as an Additional Dialect to have command of these words by the age of seven or eight would depend on the dialect-learning factors mentioned above, including the amount of effective teaching. Even if we should not expect students to have reached this stage after four years of developmental language learning, the current system certainly *does* implicitly and explicitly expect these students to have full command of SAE, including determiners, as they are needed to succeed in NAPLAN, access the National Curriculum, and high English proficiency is described above as both State Schools' policy and the stated goals for this school.
7. We note that there was very little evidence of any active or explicit teaching of SAE articles and demonstratives in the recorded data, or of very much SAE language teaching at all, so the students may not actually have had a clear idea of what the 'Target Dialect' might be.
8. http://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/glm2/glm2.pdf.
9. The documentation work of the D1 variety is incomplete, so we cannot say whether these uses are representative of that variety or an interlanguage used in the classroom.
10. An alternate explanation is that these students *are* acquiring SAE articles and demonstratives, but choosing not to use them for reasons of identity and motivation. This is by far the more complicated explanation of the data, for two reasons: (1) There are contexts (i.e. literacy activities while addressing the teacher) where students *do* seem to be actively targeting SAE forms, or at least be aware that they are expected to perform in a particular way, yet they do not increase their rate of production of these forms over the three years. This would require that

during these activities they have *just enough* non-SAE identity activated during these utterances to choose not to use the forms almost exactly one-third of the time, even while they are increasing their underlying representation of the forms incrementally over the three years. (2) The data used for this chapter is entirely based on the students' productions in the classroom, so we are measuring their acquisition in terms of what they produce, attempting to avoid too heavy a reliance on explaining the state of grammatical systems in the mind, or extrapolating into identity-states. We don't deny that these are significant factors in language use, but when we describe acquisition, it therefore must be in terms of what the student *does* produce, which naturally includes both their ability to accurately form the grammatical structures and pronunciation of the target variety and their social choices about when, where and how to use the new variety.

11. This is very similar to testing phonology (th-initial vs. others) or looking at articles vs. demonstratives. Running models with these variables yield less significant results, although the explanation for why *a/an* is more likely to turn up as SAE must include both phonological and grammatical arguments.

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