

South African English at Iboux Academy: the Richness of a Global Language []

Oltre a padroneggiare una serie di regole grammaticali e di vocaboli, l'apprendimento di una lingua implica anche la conoscenza delle particolarità culturali e dei diversi accenti linguistici. La Iboux Academy promuove la ricchezza delle numerose varianti dell'inglese.



In the educational [realm](#), the South African English accent often encounters initial resistance. Students, particularly those exposed to a range of English accents, may be prejudiced against South African English. However, Iboux Academy [takes pride in](#) its diverse team of educators, including a significant number of South African teachers that have witnessed a shift in perspective among students.

A RICH HISTORY

English, as one of South Africa's official languages, has a complex history. Intricately [woven into](#) the [tapestry](#) of the nation, the journey of the English language in South Africa has been marked by colonial and historical encounters that have [shaped](#) its prominence. Initially, [Dutch](#) dominated in the country until 1806 when British control increased the prominence of English. 19th-century colonial expansion led to English-speaking communities, and conflicts like the Anglo-Boer Wars intensified linguistic tensions. In 1910, the Union of South Africa recognised English and Afrikaans (a West Germanic language that evolved from [Dutch](#)) as official languages. The Apartheid Era, from 1948 to the early 1990s, solidified English as the language of government and business. When Apartheid officially ended, South Africa [embraced](#) a more inclusive language policy, recognising eleven official languages, with English retaining its primary status.

OVERCOMING PREJUDICES

The history of English in South Africa reflects the complex nature of language in a multicultural society, where diversity itself has become a unifying force. Iboux students [thoroughly](#) enjoy the cultural exchange. Through [engaging](#) lessons and interactions with the Academy team of South African teachers, students not only [overcome](#) their initial [biases](#) and learn about the [nuances](#) of the English language, but also come to embrace the South African English accent as an integral part of their language learning journey. To learn more about South African English and to celebrate its richness, Speak Up spoke with Jenize Hechter, recruiting and group class team leader at Iboux. She began by explaining how Iboux Academy [overcomes](#) prejudice against some forms of English as an authentic part of the educational experience. **Jenize Hechter (South African accent):** At Iboux Academy, we address initial resistance to the South African English accent by [fostering](#) an inclusive learning environment. During our classes we encourage open discussions, share personal experiences, and highlight the value of different English accents as a [testament to](#) the multicultural nature of our society.

AN EXPERIENCE OF EXCHANGE

Cultural exchange is an enjoyable aspect of language learning at Iboux. Hechter provided examples of how it is integrated into the lessons and interactions with the Academy's South African teachers. **Jenize Hechter:** Cultural exchange is [seamlessly](#) integrated into our lessons at Iboux Academy. We organise activities that encourage students and teachers to share aspects of their cultures, creating a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. South African teachers play [a pivotal role](#) in facilitating these exchanges, providing first-hand [insights](#) into the

traditions, customs, and linguistic [nuances](#) that make the South African English accent so distinctive.

A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Iboux Academy [takes pride in](#) its diverse team of educators. We asked Hechter how this contributes to flexible learning, and how teachers can help students understand different forms of English. **Jenize Hechter:** Our diverse team of educators enriches the educational experience at Iboux Academy, as each teacher brings unique [insights](#) into language [nuances](#) and cultural elements, [fostering](#) a more comprehensive understanding of the various English accents. This diversity creates a vibrant learning environment that reflects the multicultural nature of the global community.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Within the UK and the US, English accents can differ greatly depending on the speaker and the region. Is the same true for South Africa? **Jenize Hechter:** Yes, similarly to what you mention in the US, the South African English accent differs depending on the region of the country. So for example, in Johannesburg, as well as the broader Gauteng province, you may encounter a more neutral and cosmopolitan English accent, [whereas](#) in Cape Town and the Western Cape region the accent is often characterised by a unique [blend](#) of influences. Due to the cosmopolitan nature of Cape Town, you may hear a mix of British and Afrikaans. The English accent in Durban and the KwaZulu-Natal region may exhibit influences from the Zulu language and other indigenous languages found in that area. This can result in a distinctive rhythm and pronunciation, with some [vowel](#) sounds influenced by the local linguistic context.

THE EASTERN CAPE

We then asked Hechter to tell us about her own South African English dialect. **Jenize Hechter:** Sure. I am from the Eastern Cape, a region which is known for its diverse linguistic landscape with various ethnic groups and languages spoken throughout the province. It's important to note that, within the Eastern Cape itself, you may find variations of accents and pronunciation, as these factors are influenced by local communities as well as urban vs. rural settings. This interestingly enough affects intonation and [stress patterns](#) in words and sentences. In general, the South African dialect reflects distinctive [vowel](#) pronunciation, especially with the 'a' as it is pronounced with more of an open mouth, and the consonant pronunciation, specifically the 'r', is pronounced more prominently than other English accents.

A LINGUISTIC ENCOUNTER

Finally, we asked Hechter [to point out](#) some of the differences between South African English and American English. **Jenize Hechter:** Certainly! I recently had an American friend visit and it was fascinating to be able [to witness](#) the differences between our cultures first-hand, especially when it came to language. So the first distinctive language difference that [springs to mind](#) is 'braai', as this term is deeply rooted in South African culture. You can find pretty much everyone having a braai over the weekend, and it simply means 'a barbecue'. A traffic light is commonly referred to as a 'robot'. 'Lekker' is a versatile term used to describe something that is good, delicious or enjoyable. For example, "I am having a lekker day". So "I'm having a good day". 'Eina' is a similar way of saying '[ouch!](#)' and 'yebo' is an isiZulu word meaning 'yes'. It has been adopted into South African English, and you might hear South Africans use 'yebo' instead of the more typical 'yes' in casual conversations.

Glossary

- **patterns** = modelli, tipi
- **woven into** = intrecciare
- **insights** = visioni
- **Dutch** = olandese
- **overcome** = superare
- **nuances** = sfumature
- **fostering** = promuovere
- **seamlessly** = in modo fluido e continuo
- **vowel** = vocale
- **realm** = campo
- **tapestry** = complessità
- **springs to mind** = venire in mente
- **engaging** = coinvolgenti
- **testament to** = essere una testimonianza di
- **blend** = mescolanza
- **to witness** = testimoniare
- **ouch!** = ahia!
- **takes pride in** = essere orgogliosi di
- **shaped** = modellare
- **biases** = pregiudizi
- **a pivotal role** = un ruolo fondamentale
- **whereas** = mentre, invece
- **stress** = enfasi, accento
- **to point out** = segnalare
- **embraced** = abbracciare, adottare
- **thoroughly** = davvero molto