
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teacher Attitudes Towards World Englishes at Tertiary Level

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| ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions and attitudes of English teachers at the tertiary level about World Englishes, utilizing a qualitative-methods approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers. The findings reveal that the majority of teachers view English as a crucial tool for global communication and professional development. Many teachers emphasize the significance of English in their professional lives, highlighting its role in teaching and connecting with the academic community. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of effective teaching skills over nativeness and flexibility in language use. Most teachers feel more comfortable speaking English with non-native speakers, citing familiarity and a non-judgmental environment. The preference for native teachers in teaching pronunciation and speaking skills is also noted. Overall, the study highlights the dynamic and inclusive nature of English as a global language and its multifaceted role in various aspects of life. These insights contribute to the understanding of English language teaching and the evolving perceptions of English in a globalized world.

| KEYWORDS

World Englishes, Global Communication, Native Speakers, Non-native Speakers.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

According to Quirk (1985), English has broadened its influence significantly and is now a globally powerful language that is used around every minute of the day. The unbelievable power of English stems from some elements like colonialism and globalization and historical events, including the British conquest of America, the colonization of various places such as the Caribbean islands, India, New Zealand, Australia, some African countries, and South Asia (Merlchers & Shaw, 2011). Thanks to these kinds of events, English was disseminated nearly everywhere, and it was utilized in different languages. Thus, the blending of English with local languages occurred, resulting in English being affected by the environments and the people living in it. Over time, various forms of the English language began to arise. (Crystal, 2003).

According to Cennetkuşu (2022), following the decline of colonization, particularly after World War II, English arose as an international language primarily because of The United States of America's dominance in politics, culture (via Hollywood), and technology. In the same vein, Kachru stated that (1991) the English language has had a significant impact on several individuals, cultures, and continents over history. It has had diverse functional aims and has been highly regarded, making it unique in its influence since the 1930s (Kachru, 1991).

World Englishes refers to the examination and acquisition of the different versions of English that are emerging globally. It refers to acknowledging the legitimacy and diversity of English utilized by people who are not native speakers in various cultural settings. This concept reflects the global proliferation of the English language, which is now employed in several countries. These countries

display distinct variations in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and usage patterns, which are affected by their unique historical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Many academics have put out different viewpoints regarding the phenomenon of World Englishes. In 1987, McArthur proposed a framework that categorizes different forms of English, with a specific focus on what he calls "World Standard English," especially British English and American English (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). This paradigm is constructed around a conceptualized depiction of two distinct types inside the initial category, succeeded by a category covering regional or emerging norms and, ultimately, a layer that displays localized variants. Manfred Görlach also proposed a model called International English in 1988. Like McArthur's model, it didn't include English varieties in Europe and English as a Lingua Franca (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). Both of these models of World Englishes demonstrate the geographical and chronological ties among many variants, but they do not provide a comprehensive examination of the sociolinguistic contexts of these varieties.

Braj Kachru proposed his viewpoint of "Englishes" a new, enlarged view (1992). The proposed idea had three circles that were not biased or one-sided: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle (Kachru, 1985). These circles were described by their historical sociolinguistic and literary contexts. The Inner Circle encompasses countries where English is the indigenous language, such as the USA and UK. The Outer Circle consists of nations where English holds historical significance and is employed as a second language of the country, such as India and Nigeria. The Expanding Circle encompasses nations where English is acquired as a non-native language, such as China and Japan (Kachru, 1985).

Various ideas have been stated regarding the usage and handling of the English language. According to Nigerian novelist Achebe (1964), a global language must be willing to accept many forms of usage at the cost of its own autonomy. African writers should try to employ English in a manner that effectively conveys their message without unnecessarily modifying the language to the point that its usefulness as a means of global communication is compromised (Achebe, 1964).

In the same vein, Rao (1967) stated that the limitations of the English language for Indian people in expressing their ideas related to Indian culture, such as storytelling. The emotional significance becomes unclear throughout the process of translating, and the structure of the English language does not properly accommodate the fast-paced nature of Indian expression (Rao, 1967).

According to these expressions, it can be stated that many nations have had English integrated into their cultures for generations, and it does not imply that they desire to remove English from their identity now that it has become a key element of it. Most nations have ideas and places for English in their cultures, but what about the place of World Englishes in language education? The objective of this study is to examine the perspectives and ideas of English as a Foreign Language instructor at the tertiary level about World Englishes. Its goal is to address the following research question: What perceptions and attitudes do EFL teachers at the tertiary level possess towards World Englishes?

2. Literature Review

There are lots of studies on the attitudes of teachers towards World Englishes. Bayyurt (2006) conducted a study to examine the perspectives of a small group of Turkish English language teachers on the incorporation of cultural norms in language teaching. The study utilized a semi structured interview format. The teachers highlighted the need to promote involvement with both the culture of native English speakers and the local culture of students in the classroom as a means of developing international culture.

He and Zhang conducted a study in 2010. The ideas of 984 Chinese students and their instructors from four different institutions across China on the linguistic standards of native English speakers were analyzed. According to the findings, the criteria established by native English speakers were considered appropriate forms for English language teaching in China. Still, the participants agreed that certain aspects of Chinese English could potentially be beneficial for those classes.

Lim (2019) interviewed 6 English instructors from Cambodia to evaluate their understanding of World Englishes and its influence on their English teaching methods. The questioned teachers had different teaching experiences varying from six months to 20 years. The findings suggest that a significant number of teachers had unfavorable opinions towards non-inner circle English variations, like Indian English, Singaporean English, and African English. Instructors have a preference for both American English and British English as they believe that these language variations facilitate effective communication. Both British and American English are considered educational goals.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative method approach to explore the attitudes and perceptions of tertiary-level teachers about World Englishes. Data processing in qualitative research is a constant and repetitive process. Typical methods encompass coding,

thematic analysis, and narrative analysis. The objective is to uncover patterns and topics that offer valuable understanding regarding the study question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research question guiding this study is: (1) What perceptions and attitudes do EFL teachers at the tertiary level possess towards World Englishes?

3.2 Participants

The study involved 14 EFL teachers from a private university in Turkey. 12 students were from Turkey, and two of them were from Iran. Participants were selected through convenience sampling to collect data from accessible population members who were willing to answer the questions.

3.3 Method

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were adapted from Patrick Rousseau's study. The interview questions were aimed at gathering in-depth insights into participants' perceptions. Data collection took place over two weeks. Interviews were conducted individually with teachers via MS Teams, each lasting approximately 14 minutes. The data gathered from teachers were analyzed using the thematic analysis method to understand key themes and patterns.

4. Results and Discussion

The author utilized adapted interview questions from Patrick Rousseau's study (Appendix A) to conduct semi-structured interviews. The findings were as follows :

This part shows the findings from the qualitative data. The study question for this section is: 1- What perceptions and attitudes do EFL teachers at the tertiary level possess towards World Englishes? The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. There were eight questions about World Englishes and Native and Non-Native speakers. The thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data. The findings will be shown under nine headings: *a) Significance of English for International Communication and as a Communication Implement, b) The role of English in Professional settings and as a career, c) The academic and educational importance of English d) The cultural and Daily life significance of English e) Primarily communication with non-native speakers f) more at ease with non-native speakers g) Preferential treatment for instructors who are native speakers in speaking and pronunciation, h) emphasizing the importance of teaching and effectiveness rather than nativeness, i) Language acquisition and adaptability.*

4.1 Significance of English for Global Communication and as a Communication Tool

10 educators find English crucial for international communication and as a means of establishing connections with people across the world. This concept is underscored by educators who see English as indispensable for professional and academic activities.

Teacher 1: "English is very important for me because I am an English teacher... it is a tool to create communication between people from different countries."

Teacher 4: "English is quite important because... a way of communication."

Teacher 6: "English is very important... communicate with people all around the world."

Teacher 13: "English is important... key for communication these days."

4.2 The role of English in Professional settings and as a career

Nine educators emphasize the importance of English in their professional activities, encompassing teaching and establishing connections within the academic world. Additionally, they indicate knowing English enables them to generate income.

Teacher 2: "It's so important for me because... connecting me to academia."

Teacher 5: "English is important for me... it has a significant role for all people."

Teacher 10: "English is very important... how I make money by teaching English."

Teacher 14: "English is very important... speaking English a lot every day."

4.3 The academic and educational importance of English

Seven educators highlight the significance of English for academic objectives, such as reading and engaging with scholars from around the world.

Teacher 2: "It's so important for me because... connecting me to academia."

Teacher 5: *"English is important for me... it has a significant role for all people."*

Teacher 8: *"English is crucial for effective communication and understanding literature."*

4.4 The cultural and daily life significance of English

Six educators say the cultural dimension of English stresses its importance in daily life activities like watching movies and listening to music.

Teacher 9: *"English is quite important... movies, songs, culture."*

Teacher 12: *"English is really important... communicate in English by receiving media."*

Teacher 13: *"English is important... key for communication these days."*

Teacher 14: *"English is very important... speaking English a lot every day."*

4.5 Primarily communication with non-native speakers

According to 12 educators, their main mode of communication with non-native speakers is English, mostly because their students are also non-native English speakers.

Teacher 1: *"I speak English with non-native speakers... sometimes with native speakers."*

Teacher 5: *"I usually communicate with non-native speakers."*

Teacher 10: *"Non-native speakers. I think always."*

Teacher 12: *"Non-native speakers, it's been quite some time since I last spoke to a native speaker."*

4.6 More at ease with non-native speakers

10 educators expressed a greater sense of ease while communicating in English with non-native speakers. They linked this comfort to their information with the language and the absence of judgement in the context.

Teacher 2: *"More comfortable with non-natives."*

Teacher 3: *"Feel more comfortable with non-natives."*

Teacher 7: *"Feel more comfortable with non-native speakers."*

Teacher 10: *"More comfortable with non-native speakers."*

4.7 Preferential treatment for instructors who are native speakers of speaking and pronunciation

According to the ideas of eight educators, native English teachers can be better at teaching pronunciation and speaking abilities, whereas non-native teachers tend to be more proficient in teaching grammar and other language structures.

Teacher 1: *"Teaching English is different than speaking English... Native teachers might be more beneficial in speaking lessons."*

Teacher 5: *"I would prefer native teachers... important to have educational background."*

Teacher 9: *"Native teachers are preferred for correct pronunciation."*

Teacher 12: *"Native speakers are more professional in some topics."*

4.8 Emphasizing the importance of teaching and effectiveness rather than nativeness

According to 11 educators, the proficiency in teaching and effectiveness of the instructors are of greater significance than their native or non-native status.

Teacher 3: *"Teaching talent is more important... no matter native or non-native."*

Teacher 6: *"The most important thing is effective teaching."*

Teacher 10: *"No preference... teaching skills matter."*

Teacher 13: *"Learning from non-native teachers is fine if they teach correctly."*

4.9 Language acquisition and adaptability

Nine educators believe that utilizing English in a manner distinct from that of native speakers is not wrong, provided that successful communication is achieved. They stress the significance of being understood and upholding adaptability in language utilization.

Teacher 1: "Define differently... if grammatically correct and culturally approved, it's OK."

Teacher 4: "No, languages can be used differently as long as they convey the correct message."

Teacher 7: "English is not a commonwealth language anymore... everyone is adding something."

Teacher 10: "No, as long as the words are understandable."

5. Conclusion

Educator replies indicate that English is perceived as important for international communication and as a means for successful interaction in many settings; educators underscored its significance for career progression, scholarly objectives, and comprehensive intellectual growth. Even though teachers acknowledged they had regular interactions with those who were not native speakers, they conveyed a greater sense of ease and familiarity when engaging with non-native speakers. This is attributed to the shared experiences and the more relaxed atmosphere that exists between them. Although there was a bias towards employing native English teachers to teach pronunciation and speaking skills, most people think that teaching abilities and the capacity to effectively engage students outweigh nativeness. Educators also highlighted the significance of adaptability in linguistic expression, concurring that deviations in English usage are permissible as long as the conveyance of information is successful. Overall, the comments highlight the practical application of English, the importance of proficient instruction, and the worth of cultural comprehension in language education.

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APPENDIX A

1. How important is English for you?
2. Who do you mostly speak English with, native speakers or non-native speakers?
3. How do you feel about speaking English with a non-native speaker accent?
4. How important is it to incorporate World Englishes perspectives into English lessons, materials, or your general practices?
5. How do you feel about English being taught by native teachers versus non-native speakers?
6. If English is used differently than native speakers, is it wrong?
7. How do you feel about being taught English by native speakers? And what about having English taught by non-native speakers?
8. Do you feel more comfortable speaking English with native speakers or non-native speakers?