

English Language Teaching (ELT) Students' Attitudes towards World Englishes (WE): Insights from Turkey

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Abstract

With the impact of globalization, English has spread all over the world by becoming the lingua franca for the people who do not share a common language. While spreading, English has been interpreted by different nations in line with their own norms and conditions, which paved the way for the concept of "World Englishes" (WE). With these newly emergent Englishes throughout the world, the place of Standard English (i.e., the variety of the people whose mother tongue is English) has become questionable. Therefore, how people perceive Standard English and World Englishes has been a point of interest for researchers. In this regard, this study aims to inquire English Language Teaching (ELT) students' attitudes towards both World Englishes and Standard English. Based on a mixed-method study design through a modification of the matched guise technique adapted from Alford and Strother (1995) and semi-structured interviews, 30 ELT students' attitudes towards 10. Different varieties of English were analyzed. The results have revealed that participants' attitudes towards native and non-native varieties of English are different from each other.

Keywords: Attitudes, standard English, World Englishes

Received Date: January 1st, 2022. Acceptance Date: August 12nd, 2022.

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1. Introduction

The spread of English as the global lingua franca has led to the formation of the concept of World Englishes (WE), which are basically the "localized forms of English found throughout the world" (Bolton, 2005:69). Because the number of the users of these varieties of English has outnumbered the native speakers of English (Widdowson, 2003, the concept of WE has turned out to be a highly-investigated research area. In this regard, Kachru (1982,1985) suggested three concentric circles to describe the situation of English in today's globalized context (Nelson,1996; Bhatt, 2001; Bolton, 2004). Namely, the model explains "the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (Widdowson, 2003: 34). The three circles in this model have been named as "Inner, "Outer, and "Expanding" Circles. The Inner Circle countries are the ones where English is acquired as mother tongue and functions dominantly such as the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. In the Outer Circle countries, the spread of English is associated with "colonization" and it is used for institutional and official purposes including countries like Nigeria, India and South Africa. Lastly, the Expanding Circle countries are the ones where English is perceived as a foreign language with no history of colonization and increasingly used in various aspects of life. Japan, Korea, and China can be given as examples of the Expanding Circle countries. The base of this Kachruvian approach relies on the "importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to linguistics of new varieties of English" (Bolton, 2004, p. 367). In this sense, it can be stated that the place of native English speakers is questionable and the fact that they are given a privileged status has started to be denied within the framework of the theory of WE as English has started to be used as the medium of

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communication among its L2 users rather than between natives and L2 users (Pishghadam and Sabouri, 2011). Widdowson claimed that English does not belong to a particular culture or community by asserting that "the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it" (2003:43). Therefore, promoting the idea of "Standard English" is showing only one variety as prestigious while excluding all the others (Milroy & Milroy, 1999). However, World Englishes have started to be utilized more and more in the global context especially with the increasing appreciation of pluriculturalism and plurilingualism. Even though the number of studies examining attitudes towards WE are high, the common method used in those studies are questionnaires. In this regard, the current study aims to investigate Turkish ELT students' attitudes towards different varieties of English through matched guise technique by using a specific semantic differential scale. By this way, how the Turkish ELT students perceive the personal traits of speakers having different varieties of English will be analyzed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Attitudes towards World Englishes in Global Context

The changing status of English as the lingua franca of the world has been a point of interest for many scholars globally (Caine 2008; Canagarajah 2006; Kachru and Smith 2008; Kirkpatrick 2007; Seidlhofer 2004; Xiao 2009; Yano 2001). Namely, 'attitudes' towards the concepts of English as an international language (EIL) and World Englishes (WE) were focused on a number of studies conducted in several settings. Madrid and Cañado (2004) examined attitudes towards native and non-native English teachers from both teachers' and students' point of view. They concluded that native teachers were preferred more not only by students especially with an increased English proficiency level, but also by teachers, too. Likewise, another attitude study where 'native versus non-native speaker legitimacy' was investigated was conducted by Jenkins (2006). In that study, it was found out that native speakers were regarded as the primary reference group or norm-providers in the field of English language learning.

When closely examining the attitudes towards WE, it can be stated that there are some issues regarding the acceptance and maintenance of those varieties. For instance, Groves (2009) stated that Hong-Kong English (HKE) was still in the process of public recognition though it has been used extensively in a number of aspects of daily life in Hong Kong. Concerning HKE, Zhang (2010) studied on Hong Kong EFL learners' attitudes towards native and local varieties of English and found out that HKE was not favored in society in general although the educated HKE variety was slightly supported. AS for Iranian context, Pishghadam and Sabouri (2011) conducted a study focusing on Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards different English varieties. They concluded that Iranian EFL learners think that British and American varieties of English are the best ones compared to Arabic and Persian varieties of English. Similarly, Rezaei, Khosravizadeh and Mottaghi (2018) examined the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards WE and found out that the participants held positive attitudes towards Inner Circle varieties of English whereas their attitudes were more negative towards African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Persian English which highlights that Standard Englishes are valued by the participants. Si (2018) investigate attitudes towards WE versus English as a native language (ENL) informed English Language teaching (ELT) materials concluded that ENL-informed materials are regarded as fundamental whereas WE-informed ones are perceived necessary only by advanced learners. Ahn (2015) focused on Korean EFL teachers' attitudes towards four different Asian Englishes spoken in Singapore, China, India and Japan and it was found out that teachers showed a strong denial towards the legitimacy of those Asian English varieties as they were observed to lack information about those Englishes. Lim reported that Cambodian English teachers had negative perceptions about non-inner circle varieties of English, and they thought that using such varieties were derived from 'deficit' (2019:8). Monfared (2020) examined attitudes of English teachers working in non-inner circle countries towards WE and concluded that there was a huge theory-practice gap since teachers seemed to support the concept of WE in theory, when it comes to apply it to language assessment, they did not prefer because of standards of language testing. Therefore, it can be stated that even though attitudes changed from negative to positive, the process of implementation is yet to be improved.

2.2. The Turkish Context

In Turkey, English is primarily function as a foreign language and used for international trade and tourism. It also seen as an indicator of being educated and having an upper status in society (Dogancay-Aktuna 1998: 37). As opposed to most Expanding Circle countries, Selvi (2011) claimed that the spread of English increased in

Turkey mainly because of state-supported education policies just like it could be observed in the Outer Circle countries. Parallely, the prevalence of English language in Turkey grabbed researchers' attention.

As for the studies conducted in the Turkish context, EFL teachers' attitudes towards the theory of WE have been the primary focus of interest among researchers (Soruç, 2015; İnceçay & Akyel, 2014; Coşkun, 2011; Bayyurt, 2008; Soruç, 2015; Soruç & Griffiths, 2021; Zabitgil Gülseren & Sarıca, 2020). Coşkun (2011) investigated pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards WE in terms of teaching pronunciation and found out that participants mostly followed native-speaker norms as for the best teaching practice. In Inceçay and Akyel's study (2014), EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the role of ELF in ELT education were examined. It was observed that the integration of ELF into curriculum was regarded as a deviation from standard English which might create challenges for learners. In the study conducted by Soruç 2015, the use of the grammatical items, regarded as 'deviant' from norms of native English speakers but safe from an ELF point of view suggested by Seidlhofer (2004), by five English language teachers from the expanding countries including Italy, Germany, Turkey, China, and Egypt was studied. It was concluded that native-speaker norms were highly appreciated by the participant EFL teachers. In a subsequent study conducted on EFL teachers again done by Soruç in 2020, it was shown that EFL teachers in Turkey gave priority to Standard English especially when it comes to accuracy and appropriacy and they also strove to teach Standard English to their students, too. In response to these tendencies, awareness-raising studies regarding an ELF-aware pedagogy were also conducted and the general result was that it was possible to increase pre-service ELF teachers' awareness towards WE as they showed more tolerance and open-mindedness and gave more importance to intelligibility rather than consistency with native-speaker norms at the end of the provided training sessions (Soruç & Griffiths, 2021; Bayyurt, 2008).

Although the number of WE studies focusing on EFL students is not that high, their situation has also been investigated in the Turkish context. Griffiths and Soruç (2019) compared the perceptions of EFL learners in Turkey and New Zealand and found out that Turkish EFL learners preferred native norms more than the other group. Furthermore, in Zabitgil Gülseren and Sarıca's study (2020), it was revealed that whereas EFL students did not show a specific tendency to have native English teachers, EFL teachers favored the presence of a native English teacher especially while teaching speaking skill in ELT settings.

2.3. Research Questions

Although there are divergent ideas regarding the situation of WE in both global and local context of Turkey, the existence of negative attitudes cannot be denied. Because there are not many studies investigating students' attitudes towards WE in Turkey through a specific semantic differential scale, this study has been shaped in the light of four research questions:

- 1- What are Turkish ELT students' attitudes towards local varieties of English?
- 2-What are Turkish ELT students' attitudes towards standard varieties of English?
- 3-Is there a significant difference between Turkish ELT students' attitudes towards different varieties of English?
- 4-What do the Turkish ELT students' think about the issue of World Englishes?

3. Method

3.1. Settings and Participants

The participants of this study are 30 ELT students studying at the English preparatory program of the ELT department of a state university located in the Marmara Region in Turkey. Therefore, participant students of this study have a certain level of English when compared to the ones studying at the general English preparatory program of the institution. Participants' level of English proficiency is between B1 and B2 for now and they are expected to complete the preparatory program with the level B2. The participants English proficiency level has been determined by referring to their scores that they got from different skill courses, especially from listening skill, throughout the year.

3.2. Data Collection

For the first step of the data collection, participants were informed about the aim and the scope of the study and signed the consent forms. Then they were listened the same text read by speakers from 10 different varieties of English (i.e., Nigeria, Philippines, Japan, Australia, New York, Mexico, London, Turkey, Italy, India). The reason why a broad range of varieties of English were chosen was that at least one type of accent from a continent can be

more representative in order to draw more reliable conclusions. The text and the speakers were reached through International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA) and the chosen text was “Comma Gets a Cure” which was a culturally and ethnically neutral and non-offensive topic for each speaker. Other variables like gender, age and voice quality were tried to be kept under control. For instance, all the speakers were males aging from late twenties to thirties. The text was a culturally/ethnically neutral one and same for all speakers. Then, the participants were asked to fill the semantic differential scale which will be told in detail in the next session. As for the last part of data collection, all students were invited to be involved in the semi-structured interview session which lasted approximately 5-10 minutes.

3.3. Instrument

As for the data collection instruments, two different methods were utilized. Firstly, participants were requested to fill in the attitude survey which was a semantic differential scale used in the matched guise technique. Developed in 1960 by Lambert, Hodgeson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum, this technique is used to measure participants reactions to the personal traits of speakers whose speeches were audio-recorded and listened to the participants. The speakers are either bilingual or bidialectal which means that they speak at least one variety from World Englishes (WEs) (Anisfeld, Bogo, & Lambert, 1962; and Webster & Kramer, 1968, cited in Alford & Strother, 1990). In the current study, the version proposed by Alford and Strother (1995) was adopted and slightly modified. While listening to each speaker, the participants were asked to give scores for the personalities of the speakers by using a binary semantic differential scale. Namely, participants were requested to rate the speakers on some bi-polar personality traits consisting of 11 different characteristics by putting an ‘X’ along 7-point semantic differential scale (see Appendix 1). While the X in the first blank meant the most negative, the one in the last blank meant the most positive or vice versa depending on the place of the personality trait as negative and positive personality traits were randomly placed in the right-hand side or left-hand side of the paper in order to prevent participants from giving same answer over and over again.

The reliability of the scale used in the matched guise technique was calculated by Alford and Strother (1990) using a two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlation for reliability ($r = .455$) and the degree of consistency in the way participants evaluated each speaker’s personal traits in the current study was also calculated through Cronbach’s Alpha ($r = 0.928$) which states that the scale has internal consistency.

Secondly, semi structured interview questions (see Appendix 2) were prepared by the researcher and the participants were interviewed for approximately 5-10 minutes in order to gain a better and deeper understanding regarding their attitudes towards different varieties of English.

3.4. Data Analysis

A quantitative data analysis method was adopted within the scope of this study. To this end, various statistical calculations were conducted through SPSS 26. Firstly, a One-way ANOVA was conducted to find out whether the participants’ attitudes towards different varieties of English show statistically significant differences. In order to determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests need to be used within the scope of the current study, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test were calculated to find whether the data are normally distributed or not. In order to continue with parametric tests, the ratio of significance for each group should be higher than 0.05 for the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Figure 1. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test for each group

Tests of Normality			
Accents	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nigeria	.980	30	.831
Philippines	.966	30	.446
Japan	.987	30	.970
Australia	.966	30	.426
Newyork	.971	30	.575
Mexico	.957	30	.260
Britain	.949	30	.159
Turkey	.962	30	.353
Italy	.971	30	.580
India	.946	30	.132

As the ratio of significance was found to be higher than 0.05 for each group, the parametric test, One-Way ANOVA, was preferred for the rest of the analysis.

Once One-Way ANOVA was conducted, it was found out that there were significant differences between the groups (i.e., different accents) since the significance ratio of participants' overall reactions to different group of speakers was lower than 0.05 ($r = <.001$).

Figure 2. The results of the One-way ANOVA for the overall rating of the ten varieties

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28411.400	9	3156.822	28.807	<.001
Within Groups	31780.267	290	109.587		
Total	60191.667	299			

Besides, the results of the test of homogeneity (i.e., Levene Statistic) ($r = .140$) showed that equal variances could be assumed as the obtained ratio was higher than 0.05.

Figure 3. The results of the Levene test for the overall rating of the ten varieties

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.521	9	290	.140

When equal variances could be assumed, Scheffe test was preferred as for the post-hoc test to detect the locations of differences. Scheffe test is preferable when there are many groups in a study, which is 10 in the current one, as it keeps the margin of error under control in such a case.

Lastly, descriptive statistics for participants' overall rating for each speaker was also presented in order to visualize their attitudes better which is analyzed in detail in the next section.

4. Findings

4.1. Participants' overall attitudes towards standard versus local varieties of English

For the first two research questions, descriptive statistics show that participants favored standard varieties of English in general. The overall rating for standard varieties of English – Australia (Sydney), the USA (New York), Britain (London)- are 5.54, 5.90, 5.79 respectively as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for participants' overall rating for 10 different varieties of English

Varieties	Nig.	Phil	Jp.	Aus.	US A.	Mex.	UK.	Tr.	Ita.	Ind.
Personal traits										
Intelligent/Not very intelligent	3.50	4.18	5.05	5.46	6.01	4.24	5.68	4.71	5.13	3.14
Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	3.80	4.60	5.19	5.36	5.73	4.69	5.57	4.94	5.12	3.35
Well educated/Poorly educated	3.27	4.37	5.76	5.75	6.15	4.72	6.02	4.74	5.45	3.06
Ambitious/Lazy	3.85	4.57	5.34	5.33	5.66	3.90	5.70	4.66	4.36	2.63
Self-confident/Not self-confident	3.27	5.06	5.59	5.77	6.52	4.24	6.60	5.24	5.46	3.07
Professional/Not professional	2.50	4.27	5.33	5.39	6.26	3.97	5.92	3.75	5.16	2.91
Good socio-economic background/Bad socio-economic background	2.66	4.25	5.40	6.04	6.12	4.37	6.10	4.74	5.10	2.76
Sincere/Insincere	4.18	4.34	4.86	5.26	5.48	4.96	5.55	5.50	4.29	3.39
Friendly/Unfriendly	4.49	4.52	5.10	5.55	5.72	5.20	5.71	5.50	4.09	3.40
Rude/Not rude	5.00	4.81	5.56	5.78	5.65	5.19	5.43	5.16	4.91	4.23
A good language teacher/Not a good language teacher	2.14	3.50	4.16	5.26	5.63	3.80	5.46	4.10	4.56	1.96
Overall	3.51	4.40	5.21	5.54	5.90	4.48	5.79	4.82	4.87	3.08

Therefore, it can be stated that participants have a general tendency to regard standard varieties of English higher than others when all of these personality traits are taken into account.

When it comes to the local varieties of English, it can be stated that Japanese English, as an Asian variety, was favored more than other local varieties in general but it did not get the highest score from each personal trait. For example, participants gave a higher score to the Italian variety for the personality trait “A good language teacher/A bad language teacher” when compared to the Japanese variety. Likewise, the Turkish variety was found to be more friendly than the Japanese one or the Mexican variety was score slightly more sincere than the Japanese variety of English. However, still, the Japanese variety of English was found to be the most positively regarded variety when referring to participants' overall ratings.

In brief, the final ranking of all varieties of English for participants overall ratings is as follows:

“America > Britain > Australia > Japan > Italy > Turkey > Mexico > The Philippines > Nigeria > India”

It can be observed that the American accent (i.e., New York) was the most positively regarded variety of all. On the other hand, the Indian variety was found to be the least scored variety of English.

4.2. The results of the Scheffe post-hoc test for exact locations of differences

4.2.1. Intelligent/Not very intelligent

For intelligence, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all other countries except for Mexico and Turkey. The results of Japanese English, Turkish English and Italian English are not significantly different from each other. Significant differences were observed between Austria and other countries apart from Britain and Italy. The results for American English (i.e., New York), Australian English and British English do not differ significantly. Ratings for Britain do not show significant differences when compared to America, Australia, and Italy but not the others. Turkey, the Philippines, Mexico, and Italy do not differ significantly in terms of participants' overall ratings for intelligence. The results for Italy are not significantly different from Japan, Australia, Britain, and Turkey, but not the others. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.2. Trustworthy/Untrustworthy

For trustworthiness, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from Nigeria, New York and Britain. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from only Nigerian English. Significant differences were observed among Austria, Nigeria and India. The results for American English (i.e., New York), Australian English, British English and Japanese English do not differ significantly. Ratings for Britain show significant differences when compared to the results for Nigeria, the Philippines and Mexico. Turkey, Nigeria, America, and India differ significantly in terms of participants' overall ratings for trustworthiness. The results for Italy are the same as the results for Turkey. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.3. Well educated/Poorly educated

For education, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India just like the previous two varieties. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all varieties except for Mexico and Turkey. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from Indian, Turkish, the Philippines and Nigerian Englishes. Significant differences were observed among Austria, Nigeria, the Philippines, Turkey and Mexico and India. The results for American English (i.e., New York), Australian English, British English and Japanese English do not differ significantly. Ratings for Britain show significant differences when compared to the results for Nigeria, the Philippines and Mexico, Turkey and India. Turkey, the Philippines and Mexico do not differ significantly in terms of participants' overall ratings for education. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared to all countries except for Australia, Britain and Japan. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.4. Ambitious/Lazy

For ambitious/lazy, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India and Mexico. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all varieties except for Mexico, Japan, Turkey and Italy. The results of Japanese English are not significantly different from Turkish, the Philippines and Italian and Australian Englishes. Significant differences were observed among Austria and the other countries except for Japan, America, Britain, Turkey and Italy. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences except for Australia in terms of being ambitious and lazy. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of other countries apart from Australia and America. Turkish variety of English shows significant differences for the rating of ambitious/lazy when compared to Nigerian, American, Mexican, British and Indian Englishes. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared to all countries except for Nigeria, Mexico, and Turkey. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.5. *Self-confident/Not self-confident*

For self-confidence, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from Nigerian, Australian, Mexican, American, British and Indian Englishes. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from all varieties except for the Philippines, Australian and Turkish. Significant differences were observed among Austria and the other countries except for Japan, Turkey, and Italy. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences except for Britain in terms of being self-confident. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of other countries apart from America. Turkish variety of English shows significant differences for the rating of self-confidence when compared to Nigerian, American, Mexican, British and Indian Englishes. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared Nigerian, American, Mexican, British and Indian Englishes, too. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.6. *Professional/Not professional*

For professionalism, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all varieties except for Mexican and Turkish. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from all varieties except for the British and Italian. Significant differences were observed among Austria, Japan, Britain and Italy. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences except for Britain in terms of being professional. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of other countries apart from Japan, America and Australia. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of other countries except for the Philippines and Mexico. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared to all countries apart from Japan and Australia. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.7. *Good socio-economic background/Bad socio-economic background*

For economic background, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all varieties except for Mexican and Turkish. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from all varieties except for Italian. Significant differences were not observed among Austria, Britain and Italy but not among the others. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences except for Australia and Britain in terms of having a good socioeconomic background. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of other countries apart from Italy, America, and Australia. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of other countries except for the Philippines and Mexico. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared Japanese and British Englishes. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.8. *Sincere/Insincere*

For being sincere, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for the Philippines, Japan, Italy and India. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from Australian, American, British and Turkish varieties. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from American, British, Turkish and Indian Englishes. Significant differences were observed among Austria, Nigeria, the Philippines Italy and India. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences when compared to Nigeria, the Philippines, Japan, Italy and India in terms of being sincere. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of Nigeria, the Philippines, Japan and India. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of Nigeria, the Philippines, Japan, Italy and India. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared all countries apart from Nigeria, the Philippines and Japan. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.2.9. *Friendly/Unfriendly*

For being friendly, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for the Philippines. For the Philippines, the results are significantly different from all Australian, British, Turkish and Indian Englishes. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from American, Italian and Indian

Englishes. Significant differences were observed among Austria, the Philippines, Italy and India. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences when compared to Nigerian, the Philippines, Japanese, Italian and Indian varieties of English. Ratings for Britain and Turkey significantly differ from the results of Nigerian, the Philippines, Italian and Indian varieties of English. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of other countries except for the Philippines and Mexico. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared Nigerian, all countries apart from Nigeria, the Philippines and India. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Italian English.

4.2.10. *Rude/Not rude*

For being rude, the overall ratings for Nigerian and the Philippines Englishes are significantly different from Australian and American Englishes. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from Indian English. Significant differences were observed among Austria, Nigeria, the Philippines, Turkey, Italy and India. The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences when compared to Nigeria, the Philippines, Italy, and India in terms of being rude. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of India. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of Australia and India. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared to Australia and America. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian, the Philippines, and Italian Englishes.

4.2.11. *A good language teacher/Not a good language teacher*

For professionalism, the overall rating for Nigerian English is significantly different from all other countries except for India. The overall rating for the Philippines shows significant differences when compared to all other countries in terms of being a good language teacher. The results of Japanese English are significantly different from all varieties except for the Mexican, Turkish, and Italian. Significant differences were observed among Austria and the other countries except for standard varieties of English (i.e., Australian, American and British). The results for American English (i.e., New York), show significant differences except for Britain and Australia. Ratings for Britain significantly differ from the results of other countries apart from America and Australia. Turkish variety of English significantly differ from the results of other countries except for Japan, Mexico and Italy. The results for Italy show significant differences when compared to all countries except for Japan, Australia and Turkey. Lastly, overall rating for Indian English is significantly different from all varieties except for Nigerian English.

4.3. *The results of the semi-structured interviews*

Regarding the last research question, a qualitative content analysis was done based on the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews. Six semi-structured interview questions, were analyzed under four main titles and common themes were reached through a qualitative content analysis of these four different main titles which are as follows:

4.3.1. *Comments on having a specific accent while learning English*

Regarding having a specific accent while learning English, more than half of the participants stated that they are not trying to acquire a certain accent. Instead, intelligibility has been given priority compared to speaking in accordance with the tenets of a certain variety. Two of the participants had the idea that "having an accent" is innate and cannot be acquired later on. Another remarkable comment is:

Excerpt 1. A comment about accents

"I think that trying to acquire a specific accent restricts us especially when speaking. We cannot be fluent when we try to stick to a certain accent. I think it is bad".

It is apparent that this participant thinks trying to acquire an accent impedes speaking fluently. On the other hand, 12 of the participants believed that having an accent was necessary while learning English. Nine of them stated that they were trying to have American variety since it sounds more professional and intelligible. Three of them were

thinking that both American and British varieties are worth acquiring. However, none of them touched upon any other varieties other than British and American.

4.3.2. *Comments on non-native Englishes*

14 of the participants stated that non-native varieties of English are hard to understand, which means that almost half of them find those varieties unintelligible. However, there were also positive comments. For instance, some of them stated that as long as a variety is intelligible, there is no problem. Likewise, there were participants who were thinking that differences make a language richer and more colorful. The following excerpt can be an example of other positive comments.

Excerpt 2. A comment about non-native Englishes

“I feel more confident and comfortable while communicating with non-native speakers of English as our language learning journeys are kind of similar, which makes it easy to establish empathy”

Three of the participants emphasized this very same comment by stating that they feel closer to non-native speakers of English as they share the same language learning background.

4.3.2. *Comments on whether there should be a standard English*

As for the issue whether there should be a standard English or not, half of the participants stated that there should be one single standard variety, which is mostly British, whereas the other half of them pointed out that a standard variety is not a must.

4.3.3. *Comments on whether non-native varieties of English should be taught*

Regarding participants' opinions if non-native varieties of English should be taught to language learners. A vast majority of them (n=22) stated that they should not be taught as this may have a negative impact on the quality of language education. Furthermore, some of them asserted that learning local varieties of English would be useless because there is no area to use those varieties in Turkey.

On the other hand, eight of the participants stated that those varieties are also precious and useful. Therefore, a language learner needs to be aware of them, too.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate Turkish ELT students' attitudes towards different varieties of English. As a general finding, it was found out that the participants mostly favored standard varieties of English which is also in line with the results of the study conducted by Mottaghi (2018) in which she investigated the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards WE and found out that the participants held positive attitudes towards Inner Circle varieties of English and negative attitudes especially towards African (i.e., African American Vernacular English) and Persian varieties of English. In a similar manner, Nigerian English was found to be the second least scored out of 11 different personal traits in the scope of the current study. Specifically, among them native varieties of English, American English is the most positively approached one. This finding is line with the results of the study conducted by Pishghadam and Sabouri (2011) as American variety was the most favored by the participants of that study too. Even though the participants gather under two roofs regarding the issue of having a standard variety of English or not, a vast majority of them stated that non-native varieties of English should not be taught to English learners as they regard this as deviating from the norm (Inceciy and Akyel, 2014). This supports the findings of Jenkins's (2006) study in which she found out that native speakers were perceived as the reference group or norm-makers in the field of ELT. Soruç (2020) discovered that EFL teachers in Turkey favored standard English more especially for accuracy and appropriacy. Likewise, a majority of participants in the current study pointed out that they will not teach varieties other than British or American to their prospective students in order not to 'distort' the language. These results are also in line with the findings of the study conducted by Griffiths and Soruç (2019) in which they found out that Turkish EFL learners prefer native varieties of English more.

Regarding EFL learners' preference over native versus non-native teachers of English, it was found out that the participants of the current study regarded speakers having a native variety of English as good language teachers when compared to the ones speaking in a local variety of English. A parallel finding was also observed in the study done by Madrid and Cañado (2004) as it was concluded that EFL learners prefer native teachers more than the ones having a non-native variety of English.

In the scope of the current study, the participants showed a clear tendency to regard native speakers of English as a good language teacher. However, in Zabitgil Gülseren and Sarıca's study (2020), the students did not opt for native speakers of English as the best language teachers, which is a different result from that of the current study.

Referring to the general results of descriptive calculations and semi-structured interviews, it is apparent that most of the participants of this study still find the standard varieties of English more prestigious and professional than non-standard varieties. However, especially while referring to the prevalent themes in the participants' answers to the interview questions, it has been observed that some of the participants also have the idea that intelligibility comes first, and differences should be welcomed not avoided. This finding supports the results of the other studies (e.g., Soruç & Griffiths, 2021; Bayyurt, 2008) in which ELF-aware pedagogy and awareness-raising activities have a place in the field of foreign language teacher education.

Consequently, 30 ELT students who participated in this study associated positive personal traits more with native speakers of English (i.e., American, British, and Australian respectively). These varieties were followed by Japan, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, The Philippines, Nigeria and India. Significant differences were found between different groups based on several personal traits. The qualitative part of the study provided detailed insights concerning the participants' attitudes and opinions about native and non-native varieties of English. Especially in the semi-structured interviews, it was observed that some of the participants held positive attitudes towards non-native speakers of English. They stated that sharing a similar language learning background increases makes them comfortable while communicating with non-native speakers. Likewise, there were also participants who valued intelligibility more than having a native accent and saw differences as enrichments, which is promising in terms of the future of an ELF-aware foreign language teacher education.

5.1. Pedagogical Implications

The issue of teaching World Englishes in EFL settings has been the point of debate for years (Savignon & Berns, 1984); Smith and Kachru, 2008). With regard to this issue, the results of this study have shown that ELT students have some sort of bias towards the inclusion of World Englishes into ELT curricula. However, it has also been found out that most of their bias comes from their lack of knowledge regarding non-inner circle Englishes (NICE). To put it another way, the participants of this study are not familiar with different varieties of English other than British and American ones.

At this point, implementation of an ELF-aware pedagogy can into ELT curricula can be suggested as a pedagogical implication deduced from the current study. Within the scope of this, WE or ELF-based courses can be designed and included in ELT curricula. However, the sustainability of such courses is of importance in terms of efficacy. Learners' exposure to different varieties of English should be maximized and sustained so that their awareness regarding NICE can be enhanced.

Besides, telecollaboration projects conducted with students from different linguistic backgrounds can be organized. When learners are given the chance to interact with the speakers of other English varieties, they may break down their prejudices as the more they are exposed to these varieties, the more their level of comprehension increase. In brief, practitioners may want to foster their students' intercultural awareness if they wish to include the concept of WE into ELT curricula.

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Appendix 1: Attitude scale / Semantic differential scale**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. You are required to evaluate the **personality characteristics of the speakers** by marking the part of the scale, which best represents your opinion.
2. There are no right or wrong answers. All answers are equally important.

Very intelligent	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Not very intelligent
Trustworthy	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Untrustworthy
Poorly educated	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Well educated
Lazy	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Ambitious
Self-confident	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Not self-confident
Professional	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Nonprofessional
Poor socio-economic background	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	
Sincere	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Insincere
Unfriendly	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Friendly
Rude	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Gentle
All in all:		
A potentially good language teacher	___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___	Not a potentially good language teacher

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1-Size göre en iyi İngilizce aksanı var mı? Varsa nedir?*Is there a best English Accent for you? If so, what is that?*
- 2- İngilizce öğrenirken belli bir aksanı edinmeye çalışıyor musunuz? Eğer öyle ise sebebi nedir?
Do you try to acquire a specific variety of English while learning it? If so, why?
- 3-Anadili İngilizce olmayan kişilerin İngilizcelerini (Non-native Englishes) duyduğunuzda ne hissediyorsunuz? (Örnek: Indian English) Nasıl bir yaklaşım içinde oluyorsunuz?
When you hear speeches from non-native English speakers, what do you feel? How do you approach them?
- 3.a- Bu gibi kullanımların avantajları ve dezavantajları nelerdir?
What are the advantages/disadvantages of such usages?
- 4- “Standart İngilizce” olmalı mıdır? Eğer varsa, Standard İngilizce size göre nedir?
Should “Standard English” exist? If so, what is “Standard English” for you?
- 5- Non-native İngilizceler sizce var olmalı mıdır? Standard İngilizcenin yanında bu İngilizceler de öğretilmeli midir? Siz öğrenmek ister miydiniz?
Should non-native Englishes exist? Should these varieties be taught in addition to standard English? Would you want to learn them?