



Attitudes toward World Englishes and World Englishes-informed pedagogies among prospective ELT teachers in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

The interactions between English and local languages used in various domains in today's globalized world have resulted in the emergence of several varieties of English and a shift in the ownership of English from native English-speaking to non-native English-speaking countries. English language teaching (ELT) teachers have a crucial role in presenting English varieties in education and recognizing English from a pluralistic perspective. However, in Türkiye, ELT teachers are often unfamiliar with the World Englishes (WE) framework and WE-informed pedagogies. Conducted at the ELT Department of an English medium public university in Türkiye, this study investigated 20 prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward WE and their willingness to integrate WE-informed pedagogies in future classes. The study adopted a mixed-method research approach. Participants were prospective teachers enrolled in a World Englishes and Culture course. The data were gathered during the Spring 2024 semester through a questionnaire used as pre- and post-tests, a verbal-guise task, a focus group discussion, and written artifacts. Considering Kachru's model of WE as the theoretical framework, qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive approach through MAXQDA and content analysis, while quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26). The study found that participants' awareness and appreciation of sociolinguistic diversity increased during the course and participants expressed their willingness to integrate WE-informed pedagogies in their future ELT classes. The study suggests WE-informed ELT practices for learners, teachers, and teacher trainers, thus contributing to inclusive ELT classroom dynamics.

Keywords

ELT,
Teacher education,
WE-informed pedagogy,
World Englishes.

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Introduction

Multilingualism has become the norm in the globalized world where communities, including Türkiye, interact in various domains through a shared global lingua franca such as English (Blommaert, 2010; Galloway, 2017). The cultural and linguistic influence of English as a global language also makes the emergence of different English varieties inevitable (Çeçen & Serdar

Tülüce, 2019). Kachru (1992) legitimizes the varieties of English with the theory of World Englishes (WE) which analyzes the spread of English around the world in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle that includes countries that use English as a native language (e.g., United States, United Kingdom), the Outer Circle that includes ex-colonies of the inner-circle countries and uses English as a second language (e.g., Pakistan, India, Nigeria), and the Expanding Circle that includes countries where English has no colonial history and where it is mainly used as a foreign language (e.g., Türkiye, Morocco). According to Kachru's three-concentric model, English in Türkiye is categorized within "the expanding circle, where the language does not have the status of an official language, does not function as a lingua franca, and is not a relic of colonization" (McKenzie, 2006, p. 2).

Referring to the sociolinguistic implications of English, the theory of WE encompasses all varieties of English used in the global world (Rose & Galloway, 2019). The encompassing feature of WE brings multilingualism and translanguaging in English language teaching (ELT) classrooms to help learners identify English's complexity, dynamicity, and inclusivity as a global language (Bukhari, 2019). Thus, monolingual and monocultural features of English have been transformed into multilingual and multicultural features, which requires an inclusive WE-informed and WE-aware pedagogy in ELT classrooms (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

In Türkiye, there is an increasing demand to learn English to access various economic, cultural, social, and linguistic resources available in the global world (Bourdieu, 1991). The Ministry of Education in the country prioritizes ELT education through education policies that make ELT education compulsory at the K-12 level (Ministry of National Education, 2006). In addition, national and international projects (e.g., English Together) are conducted by the Ministry to train ELT teachers better equipped with the recent ELT pedagogy to be able to educate learners capable of using English in the global context (Sabancı Vakfı, n.d.) The Higher Education Board (YÖK) in the country also aims to educate ELT teachers who can teach English as a lingua franca (ELF) in diverse linguistic and cultural settings (Kırkgöz, 2007). Therefore, universities in Türkiye provide higher education students studying at ELT departments with English courses from both ELF and WE perspectives.

This study focuses on student teachers who take the *World Englishes and Culture* course at the ELT Department of a public university in Türkiye. The study explores prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English used in the global world and their intentions to integrate WE-informed pedagogies in their future classes. The study asks the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does the *World Englishes and Culture* course influence the prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English?
- 2) What knowledge do prospective ELT teachers use to develop a World Englishes-informed activity to integrate into their future classes?

An overview of the conceptualization of World Englishes

There are various definitions of WE, a broad term encompassing numerous methods for describing and analyzing English varieties globally and representing a comprehensive approach to studying English (Bolton, 2006). With diverse English varieties differing in pronunciation,

vocabulary, and grammar, some emerging varieties of English have become established, such as Indian English. In contrast, other varieties (i.e., varieties of English spoken in expanding circle countries) are not yet accepted by a global audience of ELT teachers, language professionals, educators, linguists, applied linguists, curriculum designers, and policymakers (Kachru et al., 2006).

Research in ELF and WE has emerged in response to the entrenched belief that American and British English are the only ‘proper and acceptable’ forms of teaching and learning (Pakir, 2009; Öztürk, 2021). WE research has also provided substantial insights into English's spread, function, and status as a global language (Berns, 2005). The pluricentric nature of English has prompted essential discussions about ownership and adaptation of English to different contexts and is no longer confined to native-speaking countries but serves as a broader communicative tool for organizations and individuals worldwide (Galloway, 2017; Jindapitak & Teo, 2014).

Pedagogizing World Englishes in ELT and Türkiye

Various definitions of English varieties are used in different communities: native varieties, nativized varieties, and ELF (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Standard British, American, and Australian English are defined as native varieties spoken by native speakers of English. While nativized varieties of English refer to the forms of English that have emerged in regions where English was not spoken initially, ELF refers to a common language used by individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate with one another (Pakir, 2009).

The debate on which version of English to introduce and teach in education has captured wide attention (Choe & Lee, 2023; Öztürk, 2021). Some researchers argue that only well-established varieties of English with no grammar deviations and demonstrate complete adherence to appropriate grammar and vocabulary usage are the ones to be taught (i.e., inner circle varieties of English) (Quirk, 1990). On the other hand, some researchers assert that multiple localized varieties (i.e., outer circle varieties of English) should be taught as these varieties demonstrate and reflect the language users' authentic linguistic and cultural identities (Kachru, 1991). Using non-standard varieties of English in education has been claimed to contaminate English (Quirk, 1990). However, Kachru (1991) argues that non-standard varieties are not deficit languages and that over-reliance on solely standardized varieties of English eventually dissociates the language from the learners' socio-cultural specificities.

Aligning with Kachru (1991), Kirkpatrick (2012) also supports implementing a lingua franca approach to teaching and learning English. Kirkpatrick (2012) argues that a lingua franca approach to teaching English equips learners with the skills required to communicate successfully in multicultural contexts, which may not be fully attained if learners are exposed solely to the standardized varieties of English. Similarly, Matsuda (2018) asserts that an in-depth understanding of inner-circle language and culture is valuable; however, it might not be sufficient to prepare learners for the multicultural environment in today's English-speaking world. Bayyurt et al. (2019) also argue that to adapt to the growing diverse learner population, ELT pedagogy should respond to the sociolinguistic and sociocultural needs of multicultural and multilingual contexts. Chien (2018) notes that recent sociolinguistic research has prioritized

attitudes toward different English varieties by addressing the “non-native varieties that arose as English became the lingua franca across the globe” (Chien, 2018, p. 2).

In addition, human attitudes are learned and shaped by external influences. Choe and Lee (2023) highlight that teachers significantly impact students’ attitudes toward varieties of English, which also influences students’ language learning. Romaine (2000) suggests that negative teacher attitudes toward non-standard varieties of English can lower the self-esteem of students speaking these varieties by also diminishing students’ interest in learning the language (Reaser & Adger, 2008). Thus, understanding teachers’ attitudes toward varieties of English is crucial for developing effective and inclusive pedagogy in ELT and fostering students’ acceptance of English varieties used globally (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

English learners are often tested on varieties of English that they neither use nor will ever use, such as inner-circle English varieties, rather than outer or expanding-circle English varieties (Tomlinson, 2020). The standard English varieties from inner-circle countries have historically been the teaching models (Matsuda, 2012). This traditional approach persists in places like expanding circle countries, where English speakers, educators, and policymakers often emphasize inner-circle varieties of English as norms (Bruthiaux, 2003). However, ELT goals, strategies, curricula, and materials should not solely focus on ELT principles that view inner circle varieties of English as the ELT standard (Boonsuk et al., 2021). Instead, English has evolved into new forms in various contexts and should not be associated only with native-speaking countries but with a global community of English users (Galloway, 2011). The increasing exposure to diverse English varieties helps prospective ELT teachers move beyond the idea that only inner-circle English varieties are proper and clean, fostering the acceptance of different English varieties (Eslami et al., 2019; Kaçar, 2021). For instance, pre-service ELT teachers are found to recognize the need to incorporate varieties of English into their teaching practices when they are aware of ELF and WE (Öztürk, 2021).

Incorporating WE-informed instructional practices has become a common practice among ELT teachers worldwide. Research studies often call for implementing a WE paradigm as WE bring sociocultural and sociolinguistic benefits to ELT learners (Eslami et al., 2019; Öztürk, 2021). Boonsuk et al. (2021) argue that the changing sociolinguistic reality of English used today makes it “imperative to raise the awareness of such sociolinguistic transformations among teachers and students” (p. 2). For example, in a study on Turkish student teachers’ reflections on the incorporation of WE-informed practices, Solmaz (2020) asserts that applying WE-integrated instruction has significantly raised prospective ELT teachers’ awareness about WE-related issues, allowed the students to develop positive attitudes toward different varieties of English, and triggered students’ willingness to opt for and use WE-oriented practices in their future classes. Thus, multiple varieties of English need to be viewed as legitimate to teach and learn as an international language (Matsuda, 2003).

Similarly, the demands of postmodern globalization require students to develop proficiency in various English varieties as they navigate multilingual environments (Canagarajah, 2006). Since students are often exposed to multilingual and multicultural contexts where English is used, measuring proficiency by a single English standard is impractical (Canagarajah, 2006). Thus, there should be a paradigm shift in how learners are taught and assessed in ELT classrooms because the evolving demographics of English

necessitate a change in the objective of ELT (Galloway, 2017). Moreover, a paradigmatic shift in ELT is required to reflect the real-world use of English within the WE framework (Galloway, 2017). However, although multilingualism is expected, the field of ELT often perpetuates monolingualism, maintaining 'native' English as the so-called 'standard,' creating a challenge for educators who aim to prepare students to use English as a global lingua franca.

To adopt the most effective, up-to-date, and inclusive ELT pedagogy, understanding teachers' and students' attitudes toward WE and integrating intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic diversity into ELT teacher education are important (Kaçar, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019). However, to apply a solid pedagogical approach in pre-service teacher education, more scholarly research exploring attitudes toward English varieties in education, especially in Türkiye, is required (Choe & Lee, 2023; Uygun, 2013). Thus, this study contributes to the literature by focusing on the context of Türkiye and exploring prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward WE and their willingness to integrate WE-informed pedagogy in their future ELT classes.

Methodology

A mixed-method research design was adopted in the study. While a focus group discussion and written artifacts were employed to elicit qualitative data, a questionnaire applied as a pre-and post-test was used to collect quantitative data. Moreover, a verbal guise task along with a reflection journal was used in the study to explore the participants' attitudes and beliefs toward English varieties in terms of personality traits (e.g., status traits and solidarity traits).

Research site and participants

The study was conducted at a public university in Türkiye, which adopts English as a medium of instruction and has an international academic population of 11%, while the international student population is 6%. Thus, varieties of English are spoken on campus. A purposive sampling was adopted to recruit 20 prospective teachers studying in the ELT undergraduate program at the Faculty of Education of the university. The participants, who have at least a B2 level of proficiency in English, were in different years of their undergraduate education and were all enrolled in the *World Englishes and Culture* course for the first time (see Table 1). The IRB board of the university where the research was conducted approved the study. The researchers informed all the participants about the study and obtained their consent before it occurred.

Course design

The World Englishes and Culture course was designed by the researchers and taught by one of them, the course instructor. The course aimed to raise prospective ELT teachers' awareness of WE and teach them how to design WE-informed classroom activities with an inclusive and critical perspective. The course content included globalization, linguistic globalization, Kachru's theory of WE, intelligibility, plurilingualism, translanguaging, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Research articles and textbooks, including *Global Englishes: A Resource Book for Students* by Jenkins (2015), *Language Teacher Education for Global Englishes: A*

Practical Resource Book by Selvi and Yazan (2021), and Teaching English as an International Language by Selvi et al. (2024) were used in the course. A 14-week course for 3 hours per week was delivered face-to-face during the Spring semester of 2024.

Table 1. *Participants' details*

| Personal Details | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 8 | 40.0 |
| Female | 12 | 60.0 |
| Age | | |
| 20 | 7 | 35.0 |
| 21 | 5 | 25.0 |
| 22 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 23 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 24 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 25 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Self-Perceived Proficiency in English | | |
| Higher Intermediate | 6 | 30.0 |
| Advanced | 14 | 70.0 |
| Years of Learning English | | |
| 5-10 Years | 5 | 25.0 |
| More than 10 Years | 15 | 75.0 |
| Living-Abroad Experience | | |
| Yes | 3 | 15.0 |
| No | 17 | 85.0 |
| Having been taught by a native English-speaking teacher | | |
| Yes | 6 | 30.0 |
| No | 14 | 70.0 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

Data Collection

Data was collected during the Spring 2024 semester. For quantitative data, a questionnaire consisting of three sections was administered through Google Forms as a pre-test in Week 1 and a post-test in Week 14 through a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly agree to 4 strongly disagree. Section I of the questionnaire included questions to gather demographic information of the participants. Section II had 24 items to collect data on the participants' levels of awareness regarding English from monolithic and plurilithic perspectives. Section III of the questionnaire was used to understand the participants' attitudes toward varieties of English used in different circles identified by Kachru (1991). The questionnaire items were adopted from Chien (2018) and *Changing Englishes: An Online Course for Teachers* by Hall and Wicaksono (2021).

For qualitative data, in Week 4, a verbal-guise task was conducted to explore the participants' attitudes toward status traits (competence) (i.e., the traits intelligent, confident, clear, and fluent) and solidarity traits (social attractiveness) (i.e., the traits pleasant, gentle and friendly) of English speakers from inner (American and British Englishes), outer (Indian and

Filipino Englishes), and expanding circle countries (Japanese and Thai Englishes). Status (i.e., “the perceived prestige of the accent” (Hiraga, 2005, p. 289) and solidarity (“the extent to which an individual identifies with an accent” (Hiraga, 2005, p. 289) are two well-established dimensions in language attitudes research (Chien, 2018; McKenzie, 2010; Zhang, 2010). To apply the task, participants listened to 6 audio recordings and evaluated each English speaker. All the recordings were downloaded from the Speech Accent Archive (<https://accent.gmu.edu/>) (Weinberger, 2015). Participants also wrote reflection journals to elaborate on their answers related to each variety of English they listened to.

In Week 6, the participants designed explicit and implicit ELF-integrated classroom activities for the K-12 level and reflected on features of WE for an inclusive ELT classroom. In Week 10, a focus group discussion including fourteen semi-structured questions related to the ELF, WE, and WE-informed pedagogy was conducted with 18 volunteer participants. All in all, one questionnaire utilized as a pre-and post-test, a verbal-guise task with a reflection journal, one focus group discussion, and ten WE-aware classroom activities prepared by the participants were used to collect data for the study.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using the paired-sample t-test through SPSS (version 26) and the manual coding of the orientation to the English scale (Hall & Wicaksono, 2024). For qualitative data analysis, content analysis was applied through MAXQDA software and pen and paper (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2014).

Driven by the research questions, the researchers conducted an inductive analysis of the textual data by repeatedly reading the written materials to become thoroughly acquainted with them. Initially, open coding was employed to create the initial codes. Code saturation was determined when recurring codes appeared, and no new concepts emerged. Subsequently, using focused coding, the researchers examined the codes and interview data to identify patterns and categorize them. Themes were then determined by linking categories and aligning them with the study's research questions. The primary themes were finalized and reviewed to ensure their relevance to the data. Considering the research questions, the final themes were presented as findings. To ensure the validity and interrater reliability of the qualitative data analysis, the researchers used a constant-comparative approach and member checking to validate the emerging data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

Prospective ELT Teachers' Awareness of English Language Variation

The pre-test results from manual coding of the orientation to English scale (Hall & Wicaksono, 2024) reveal that 1) none of the participants orient toward either a strong plurilithic view of English or a robust monolithic view of English as they scored higher than 42 and less than 79 in the pre-test, and 2) they orient toward a plurilithic, though the moderate, view of English as the majority of the participants' pretest scores range between 43-60. The results also show that a negligible number of the participants (P4, P5, P15, and P17) orient toward a monolithic, though moderate, view of English.

On the other hand, the post-test results indicate that one of the participants' orientations has shifted from a moderate plurilithic view of English to a strong plurilithic view of English (see P2 in Table 2). The post-test results also show that the participants' orientations have shifted toward a plurilithic, though moderate, view of English. Moreover, there are participants whose monolithic view toward English has switched to a plurilithic view (see P4 & P5). None of the participants had a strong monolithic view of English. Manual pre-and post-test coding revealed that most participants had a moderate plurilithic orientation toward English before the intervention. However, the participants' awareness of English language variation changed after the intervention.

Table 2. Prospective ELT teachers' orientations toward English before and after the intervention

| Participant | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | |
|-------------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| | Score | Orientation to English | Score | Orientation to English |
| 1 | 54 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 58 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 2 | 50 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 41 | Strong plurilithic view of English |
| 3 | 59 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 59 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 4 | 62 | Moderate monolithic view of English | 45 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 5 | 62 | Moderate monolithic view of English | 57 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 6 | 53 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 48 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 7 | 58 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 45 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 8 | 53 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 52 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 9 | 51 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 55 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 10 | 57 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 44 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 11 | 51 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 58 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 12 | 52 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 50 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 13 | 55 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 51 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 14 | 58 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 58 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 15 | 65 | Moderate monolithic view of English | 61 | Moderate monolithic view of English |
| 16 | 56 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 47 | Moderate monolithic view of English |
| 17 | 72 | Moderate monolithic view of English | 62 | Moderate monolithic view of English |
| 18 | 44 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 40 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 19 | 55 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 49 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |
| 20 | 55 | Moderate plurilithic view of English | 49 | Moderate plurilithic view of English |

Note. Scores between 24-42: A strong plurilithic view of English; Scores between 43-60: A moderate plurilithic view of English; Scores between 61-78: A moderate monolithic view of English; Scores between 79-96: A strong monolithic view of English

The statistical analysis of the pre-and post-test also reveals that the *World Englishes and Culture* course has significantly changed the participants' awareness toward English language variation $p=.029$.

Table 3. The significance of the association between the course provided and the participants' awareness shift toward English language variation

| Paired Samples Test | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-------|-------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Paired Differences | | | | t | df | Sig.(2tailed) | |
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 | Pre-Post-test scores | 4.650 | 8.792 | 1.966 | .535 | 8.765 | 2.365 | 19 | .029 |

The results indicate that before the intervention, the participants had a mean score of $M=56.10$, $SD=6.060$; after the intervention, $M= 51.45$, $SD= 6.716$. A paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference between the two times, $t(2.365) = 19.029$. (See Table 4)

Table 4. Participants' mean differences before and after the intervention of the course.

| Paired Samples Statistics | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1 | Pre-test Scores | 56.10 | 20 | 6.060 | 1.355 |
| | Post-test Scores | 51.45 | 20 | 6.716 | 1.502 |

The results (see Table 5) also indicate that the coefficient of determination, analysis power, and effect size of the course on participants' awareness shift is $p=.815$, which equates to 81.5% variability in participants' awareness shift. Thus, a statistically significant positive relationship exists between the course provided and participants' awareness change.

Table 5. The strength of association between the course provided and the participants' awareness of WE

| Paired Samples Correlations | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----|-------------|-------------|
| | | N | Correlation | Sig. |
| Pair 1 | Pre-test Scores & Post-test Scores | 20 | .056 | .815 |

Prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward WE

The results from the analysis of the verbal-guise task conducted on Week 4 align with the statistical results and reveal that participants are aware of varieties of English and have different attitudes toward English speakers from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries in terms of status traits (competence) (i.e., the traits intelligent, confident, clear, and fluent) and solidarity traits (social attractiveness) (i.e., the traits pleasant, gentle and friendly) (see Figure 1).

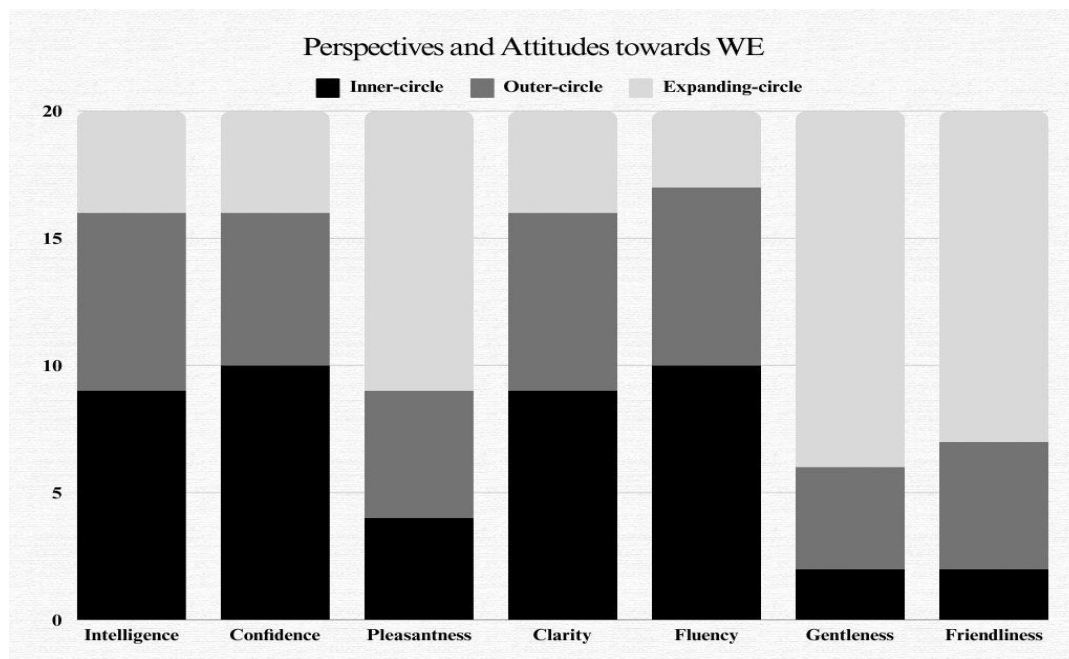


Figure 1. Verbal-guise task results

The results show that participants view native English varieties best regarding status traits. However, they mainly refer to solidarity traits concerning non-native English varieties. For example, participants do not necessarily associate intelligibility with friendliness, as P1 states:

The accent of Speaker 1 is very recognizable due to its popularity among the media. The speaker's use of sounds, such as /ɪ/ and /d/, made me think she has a U.S. accent. Regarding intelligence, this speaker's clear articulation made me feel more positive about this attribute. Regardless of the media's depiction of a stereotypical American person's intelligence is primarily different, I am well aware that a person's accent -or race- should never be an indicator of intelligence -or lack thereof-. (P1)

Participants scored speakers from inner-circle countries with higher scores in terms of intelligibility. However, they scored speakers from inner-circle countries less friendly than those from expanding-circle countries. On the other hand, while participants view a variety of English used in an expanding circle country as less intelligible, many of them find these varieties of English more friendly than the ones used in inner circle countries. Thus, the results show that there may not be a linear correlation between status and solidarity traits when the same English variety is spoken, as P4 states:

I can't say Speaker 6 has little intelligence, but I still understand that she efficiently uses the language to convey her thoughts and needs and can communicate in English. Moreover, I think that is all that matters. I find her friendly. I realized I find non-native speakers friendlier than native speakers of English. I didn't notice this before. Maybe I feel closer to them because they use English as a second language, just like I do. Moreover, they tend to make mistakes, just like me. It just feels like if I were to speak to them and make a mistake or two while talking, they wouldn't try to correct me or criticize me. So it feels safe and friendly. (P4)

Participants viewed English used in inner circle countries as more intelligent and speakers in this circle as more confident. On the other hand, participants stated that they mostly needed to find varieties of English used in expanding-circle countries that are intelligent and fluent. However, they identified English speakers from expanding-circle countries as more friendly

than those from inner-circle countries. In addition, participants scored speakers from outer circle countries higher in terms of clarity. However, they found English speakers in outer-circle countries as intelligent as the ones in inner-circle countries. Participants claimed that the intelligence and clarity that English speakers from outer-circle countries have may be the result of increasing work and technology-related interactions between inner- and outer-circle countries. In this regard, one of the participants stated:

I thought Speaker 3's accent was Indian. It was not as clear or fluent as a native speaker but incomprehensible. So, this speaker might belong to the Outer Circle in Kachru circles also, how the speaker was rolling the /r/ sound in some words and pronouncing the /θ/ as /t/ made me think it belonged to an Indian speaker. When it comes to intelligence, this accent is often associated with intelligence for cultural reasons, such as the dominance of Indian professionals in fields like engineering or technology. Moreover, this speaker conveys confidence through her clear articulation and non-stuttering speech. Given that this speaker is Indian, Indian speakers of English are mostly fluent thanks to the widespread use of English as a second language and exposure to international media, education, and technology. This can also result in a high level of clarity in their speech. (P5)

Prospective ELT teachers' attitudes toward WE

The results of the quantitative data gathered from Section III of the questionnaire show that before the intervention had taken place, all the participants preferred only inner circle varieties of English and considered them as the most preferred ones, the most familiar ones, the most appropriate ones for daily use, and the most appropriate ones for learning and teaching purposes. The results also show that American English has been ranked the highest in all aspects among the two inner-circle varieties of English. (see Table 6)

Table 6. Prospective ELT teachers' explicit attitudes toward varieties of English from inner, outer, and expanding circles before and after the intervention

| | | Inner Circle Englishes | | | | Outer Circle Englishes | | | | Expanding Circle Englishes | | | |
|---|-----|------------------------|-------|--------|-------|------------------------|-------|--------|-------|----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | AmE | | BrE | | InE | | FiE | | JpE | | ThE | |
| | | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After | Before | After |
| The most preferred English variety | No | 13 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | [%] | 65.0 | 60.0 | 35.0 | 40.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The most familiar English variety | No | 19 | 12 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | [%] | 95.0 | 60.0 | 5.0 | 30.0 | 0.0 | 10 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The most appropriate English variety for daily usage | No | 18 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | [%] | 90.0 | 70.0 | 10.0 | 30.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The most appropriate English variety for teaching and learning purposes | No | 15 | 16 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | [%] | 75.0 | 80.0 | 25.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Prospective ELT teachers' knowledge of WE to develop a WE-informed classroom activity

The data analysis gathered from the WE-aware classroom activities designed in Week 6 and transcripts of focus group discussions conducted in Week 10 reveals that all participants fight against 'perfect English,' which P2 defines as "an illusory concept because of the English's ever-changing" feature. The participants believe that using English without an accent can make intelligibility easier. However, one of the participants states that it is not necessarily required to be a good communicator and language user:

Speaking English without an accent could enhance my ability to communicate effectively and be understood by a wider range of people. Speaking without an accent might make it easier for listeners to understand me, as accents can sometimes affect pronunciation and make certain words or phrases harder to comprehend. However, success in communication isn't solely dependent on having no accent. Factors like clarity, vocabulary, grammar, tone, cultural sensitivity, and embracing linguistic diversity also play significant roles. (P10)

Moreover, all participants think that being a 'good ELT teacher' is not about being a native or a non-native English speaker, and they are all aware that the ELT profession requires other job-related skills:

While native speakers of English may have certain advantages regarding language fluency and pronunciation, being a good English teacher requires a range of skills beyond being a native speaker. A native-like accent is one factor that makes a good ELT teacher. Teaching English requires a range of skills, including the ability to explain grammar and vocabulary clearly, create engaging lesson plans, provide constructive feedback, and adapt to the needs of individual learners. Non-native English speakers studying the language extensively and having experience in teaching it may possess these skills well or even better than native English speakers. (P4)

Participants also believe that being a non-native English-speaking ELT teacher sounds more understanding, welcoming, and inclusive:

Non-native English speakers may have insights into learners' challenges when learning English as a second language. They may have firsthand experience learning English, giving them empathy and understanding for their students' struggles. They may also be able to anticipate common errors and misconceptions that learners encounter and provide targeted support and guidance. Having a non-native accent can sometimes be an advantage. It can make teachers more relatable to their students and help create a more inclusive learning environment. Students may feel more comfortable making mistakes and asking questions if they see that their teacher is also a language learner. (P9)

The analysis of WE-aware classroom activities designed by the participants also shows that participants have knowledge of WE and promote implicit or explicit WE integration in ELT classrooms (see Figure 2).

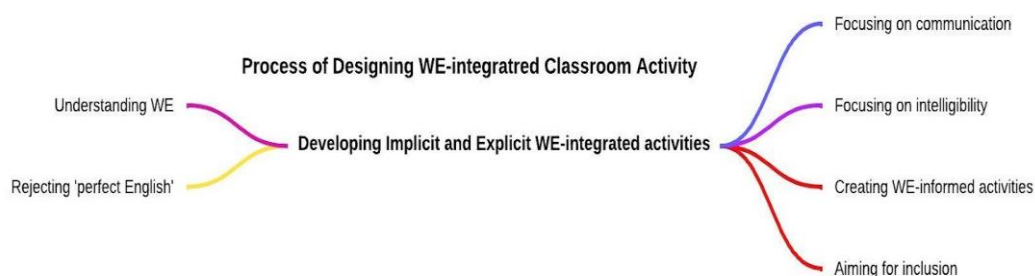


Figure 2. Process of designing WE-integrated classroom activities.

P13 and P20 designed an implicit WE-integrated activity for B1-level high school students. The participants chose ‘culture’ as the course topic and used videos showing and introducing various cultural festivals celebrated in *inner*, *outer*, and *expanding* circle countries. The participants did not explicitly explain the varieties of English used in such cultural contexts but aimed to expose learners to various English speech through an audio-visual mode (YouTube video) to foster intercultural communication and appreciation of local heritage in the global context.

In addition, P19 and P11 designed an explicit WE-integrated classroom activity for B2-level high school students. In their design, the participants first explained varieties of English other than the ones used in inner circle countries. By playing audio recordings, the participants aimed to ask students to identify differences among varieties of English used in outer and expanding circle countries. In their activity, the participants emphasized that “none of the varieties of English is superior to another” (Classroom activity artifact no:4). The participants gamified the activity as “Variety Experts” by playing various English speeches and asking the learners to guess about the variety of English. Finally, through a whole group discussion, the participants included questions about the learners’ perspectives on WE played in the class. The participants integrated WE implicitly or explicitly into their activities, showing their awareness of WE and willingness to use WE-integrated materials in their future ELT classes.

Discussion

The study identified a positive correlation between the course provided and changes in the participants' attitudes toward WE. The results show that participants preferred inner-circle English varieties before the intervention. However, after the intervention, except for two participants who preferred Indian English, they still mainly preferred inner circle English varieties, viewing them as the most familiar and suitable for daily use, learning, and teaching. Among these, American English was ranked highest, likely due to Turkish people's frequent exposure to American culture through ELT classes, TV shows, movies, and podcasts (Kirkgöz & Agcam, 2011). Consequently, *the World Englishes and Culture* course significantly influenced the attitudes of prospective ELT teachers toward English language variation (Eslami et al., 2019). Additionally, the study revealed that exposing prospective ELT teachers to different English varieties enhances their awareness and acceptance of these varieties, leading them to reject the notion of “perfect English.” Thus, the findings of the study are consistent with previous academic research (Bayyurt et al., 2019; Choe & Lee, 2023; Kaçar, 2021; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Mu et al., 2023; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Solmaz, 2020).

The study also found that participants had mixed feelings about different English varieties at the beginning of the course. However, through various activities designed to raise sociolinguistic awareness, they began to appreciate the diversity within the English language and developed more tolerant attitudes toward English and its speakers (Eslami et al., 2019). Participants also started to believe in the equal treatment of native and non-native English-speaking teachers, advocating against discriminatory practices in the ELT community. Thus, participants' awareness of WE has challenged the traditional distinction between native and non-native speakers and teachers by rejecting the “native speaker fallacy” and promoting equal participation of all English speakers (Matsuda, 2018; Phillipson, 1992).

The study's findings emphasize the importance of integrating diverse English varieties in ELT classrooms, suggesting that ELT should focus on more than just standard English (Bruthiaux, 2003; Matsuda, 2012). Prospective ELT teachers believe that using non-standard English internationally fosters connections, inclusivity, and communication and enhances cultural exchange by promoting cultural awareness and linguistic diversity (Canagarajah, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2012). This finding aligns with the fact that native speakers view standard varieties positively regarding status, associating them with traits like ambition and intelligence. In contrast, non-standard varieties are valued for solidarity, with speakers rated highly on honesty and friendliness, especially by non-standard variety speakers (McKenzie, 2008). The study also found that prospective ELT teachers advocate for a flexible and inclusive approach to teaching English as a foreign language in Türkiye, incorporating different English varieties into ELT courses. The participants also prioritized intelligibility instead of achieving 'perfect' English, suggesting tasks that do not require native-like proficiency from ELT teachers (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Galloway, 2011, 2017).

The study also shows prospective ELT teachers favor exposing learners to various English varieties to reflect the sociolinguistic reality of language, the cultural specificities of learners, and the richness of English. For assessment, they see value in using standard English to ensure clear understanding, although they recognize that exposure to inner-circle English may negatively affect practical communication skills. The findings highlight the need for a balanced approach, integrating WE without prioritizing one variety over another, respecting different cultures, and fostering effective communication.

In conclusion, this study reflects a nuanced understanding of WE and its benefits and challenges in teacher education in ELT. Prospective ELT teachers aim to incorporate WE-informed activities into future classes, emphasizing inclusivity and practical communication skills over strict language accuracy. There is a common belief in the importance of ELF for standardization, particularly in assessment, to provide a common framework for learners and stakeholders in the evolving ELT field.

Conclusion

The study showed prospective ELT teachers' evolving perspectives and attitudes toward WE and WE-integrated pedagogies. The findings revealed acceptance of WE to enhance inclusivity, cultural awareness, recognition, and importance of standard English in ELT education, especially in assessment. In addition, the study revealed how prospective ELT teachers advocate for ELF in ELT, highlighting their commitment to a standardized framework for intelligibility across contexts where different varieties of English are used. Thus, the study's results offer various implications for ELT teachers, curriculum developers, policymakers, and language learners. Considering WE from an inclusive perspective, ELT teachers and curriculum developers should use a diverse linguistic landscape of English and incorporate classroom activities that can raise awareness of WE-informed pedagogical practices. Policymakers should also consider integrating guidelines that embrace WE and ELF in foreign language education policies and assessment regulations. Language learners should be encouraged to be involved in and familiar with diverse linguistic and cultural contexts where English is used in standard or non-standard ways. To achieve ELT learners' navigation with WE, ELT teachers should have

the knowledge and skills to effectively teach English by including WE and ELF in their teaching and assessment practices. Recognizing standard English and WE is required in ELT to foster communication, cultural understanding, and inclusive ELT in today's globalized world.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The small sample size of the study can be a limitation. Future studies can increase the sample size to enhance generalizability. A more diverse sample and the inclusion of multiple research sites can be used to validate the findings. Finally, future studies should explore how changes in attitudes toward WE influence actual teaching practices to offer practical insights for educators.

Disclosure Statement

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Because of the page and word limit, data excerpts that represent the findings best were included in the paper.

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