


World Englishes: Attitudes of Male and Female University Students

Dünya İngilizceleri: Erkek ve Kadın Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Tutumları

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigated the attitudes of male and female university students in Türkiye toward World Englishes (WE). It aimed to measure participants' overall perceptions of WE and determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of male and female students toward WE. In total, 50 females and 28 males from the Department of Translation and Interpreting participated in the study by filling out a 20-item Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Choi (2007). The questionnaire data were analyzed by SPSS 23 using inferential statistics and the Mann-Whitney-U test to compare the mean scores of male and female participants. The results showed that although there was no statistically significant difference between the general mean scores of two groups, there was a gender-based statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two groups regarding some specific items, which highlighted the fact that participants preferred intelligibility over native-likeness in their speech, and males' showed greater acceptance of native varieties while females tended to embrace local varieties more positively. Also, it was found that the participants showed a more favorable attitude towards Turkish-mother-tongue language teachers as they felt culturally closer to these teachers, and Turkish-mother-tongue teachers were able to use students' mother tongue to foster learning. These findings suggested that the role of the mother tongue should not be underscored and there should be a gender-sensitive approach to integrating the concept of WE in classroom practices.

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Introduction

Although it is a fact that two varieties, American English and British English, received the greatest attention and prestige throughout the history of the English Language (Ladegard & Sachdev, 2006), in recent years, there has been a growing interest in the use and evaluation of Englishes spoken by non-native speakers around the World, as these varieties play an important role in motivation, eventually resulting in acquiring a particular variety (Yook & Lindemann, 2013). Regarding the spread and status of English Language worldwide, Sharifian (2010) states that "English has spread around the world for various reasons and through various routes, either through the front door, the back door or even the window, and different relationships with it have been developed by different speech communities as well as by individual speakers" (p.138). These diverse environments where English was used to convey cultural messages, emotions, and ideas caused diverse social identities to occur in relation to the occurrence of linguistic creativity (Berns, 1995). Among all language

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behaviors in these diverse environments, however, the most studied one is “accent” due to its broad social implications: Individuals who speak with a “standard” and “institutionalized” accent tend to be rated more favorably than the users of other non-native varieties in all domains of life (Cargile et al., 2006, p.444). In this regard, Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) argue that, although pronunciation and accent are highly significant for communicative purposes, it also is indeed significant for one’s first impression. According to Riches and Foddy (1989), accented speech is an “expressive categorical status cue” (p.198). One example of what Riches and Foddy (1989) discussed was given by Williams et al. (1972). In their study conducted with Black American teachers who have a “standard” accent, they found that those teachers tended to see Mexican-accented students as more disadvantageous, hesitant, and short-of-wit (p.198). Ovalle and Chakraborty (2013) similarly argue that individuals using a non-native accent are typically less advantaged regarding housing and job opportunities and while benefitting from healthcare services (p.57). However, accented speech is not always seen as disadvantageous and inferior, especially when considered as a way of expressing social identity and the uniqueness of one culture. In a study by Ahn (2014), Korean students showed favorable attitudes towards using “Korean English”, thinking it is a way of preserving their culture and identity. Similarly, Mugglestone (2003) stated that some local accents in The U.K. have positive associations such as “trustworthiness”; thus, these individuals do not seek to accommodate their language to a standard one.

This never-ending debate over native varieties and World Englishes has tremendously shaped and affected the immediate language teaching practices (Tahmasbi et al., 2019). Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019) argue that in order to have an effective pedagogy, language teaching practices should be modified in a way that they successfully equip international learners living in intercultural contexts with the necessary dynamics of today’s communication. Brown (1995) similarly states that World Englishes cannot be implemented in classrooms successfully unless teachers become aware of the highly-spreading and pluralistic nature of the English Language and the status it provides to its learners. Jindapitak and Teo (2013) state: “We maintain that there should be an opening up for covering other varieties of English aside from the popular Anglo-American English in English classes so that learners will become truly internationally-minded speakers who are conscious of the role of English in the world and the world in English” (p.195). In their study conducted in the Japanese context, Matsuda (2003) argues that students must be exposed to different varieties of English to better communicate in international situations. According to them, one way of enhancing students’ exposure is to invite international guests to the classroom. This way, students not only practice speaking but also increase their ability to communicate with and understand speakers using different varieties. In another study conducted by Matsuda and Matsuda (2010), the researchers argue that World Englishes should not only be considered while speaking but also while writing, and they offer the following suggestions regarding the ways to integrate World Englishes into second language writing:

1. Teach the dominant language forms and functions
2. Teach the nondominant language forms and functions
3. Teach the boundary between what works and what does not
4. Teach the principles and strategies of discourse negotiation
5. Teach the risks involved in using deviational features (pp. 371-373)

Specifically, integrating World Englishes into the classroom is a multifaceted process with various factors to consider, as shown in Matsuda and Matsuda’s (2010) research. However, to understand the pedagogical implications of WE and to what extent World Englishes can be integrated into classroom practices, it is necessary to explore teachers’ and students’ perceptions (Kiyak, 2021). Various studies regarding students’ and teachers’ perceptions worldwide exist. The following section is dedicated to giving examples regarding the perception of WE worldwide and in Türkiye.

Background to the Study

This section will highlight the global and regional perspectives on World Englishes, focusing on how perceptions vary across cultures and contexts. It will also discuss the specific role of gender in shaping attitudes toward WE and identify research gaps within the Türkiye context, providing a foundation for the current study

Perceptions of WE Around the World

Regarding the perceptions towards World Englishes, the situation of Indonesia is quite significant as it is one of the expanding circle countries, according to Kachru (1985), which was not influenced by the colonization of inner-circle countries while also having a very multicultural environment with a relatively huge population compared to other expanding circle countries (Jon et al., 2021). One of the most recent studies was conducted in Indonesia by Suminar and Gunawan (2024). In their study conducted by 32 fourth-semester students taking the “Listening for Academic Purposes” course, they found that participants had highly positive attitudes towards WE. During the study interviews, participants mentioned that knowledge about WE improves their confidence and language skills and allows them to use diverse media tools while at the same time increasing their respect for differences. A similar study was conducted with 20 English teachers (10 native and 10 non-native speakers of English) teaching at five different universities in Jakarta by Silalahi (2022). It was found that although all participants acknowledged the existence of various varieties apart from American English and British English, they were highly skeptical and cautious regarding integrating these models into the classroom curricula and preferred traditional native varieties, seeing them as better representations of the English Language.

Similarly, Almegren (2018) conducted a study that included 25 female and 25 male students from English and translation departments in two universities in Saudi Arabia. Almegren stated that participants tended to accept British and American English as the “standard”. However, they expressed that they avoid using American or English varieties when communicating with an international speaker and prefer sticking to their own variety, thinking they might misuse the patterns of these two native varieties and lose their “face”. Besides, the participants listened to sound recordings in which people of different English language varieties spoke. Although they could not usually differentiate between and identify these different varieties, they could identify three dialects: British, American, and Indian. This study once again confirmed that students preferred native Englishes mostly thinking that Native teachers are more competent in various aspects than Arabic-originated teachers. According to the majority of the participants, native-speaker teachers were much more favorable as they could introduce the course without relying on Arabic, were more understanding and tolerant of students’ errors, and were highly aware of the language’s culture (p.245). These results indicate that participants relied on “stereotypes” and tended to disregard the significance of individual differences and culture. However, a minority of the participants also stated that they prefer non-native English teachers as their speaking pace and pronunciation are more intelligible, and they share a common cultural background with the teacher, thus feeling more motivated to learn.

Another study regarding students’ perceptions towards World Englishes was conducted by Saengboon (2015) in three different universities in Thailand with 198 participants, this time studying in different fields such as law, economics, tourism, etc. 101 of these participants have never been abroad, while only three respondents have spent at least 3 months in an English-speaking country. The results were quite similar to the previously mentioned studies in the sense that %68 of the participants agreed that the English Language has one single standard form and that English and American varieties are “better” varieties compared to the others. However, one unique feature of this study was that participants found grammar very significant for Standard English. According

to them, once the speaker used correct grammar and vocabulary of the target language, they used a “standard” form. However, they also argued that conveying the correct message in communication is much more significant than using correct grammar and vocabulary. This paradoxical result highlighted the fact that students in Thailand were not knowledgeable and familiar with the concept of World Englishes and shared ambivalent attitudes towards it. Kim et al. (2017) conducted a similar study in the Korean context, with 289 participants studying at a women’s university. In this study, one of the striking findings was that participants showed a sense of acceptance of the idea that the ownership of the English Language is not confined to its native speakers but also to the Outer Circle (Kachru, 1985) countries. However, they denied that Expanding circle countries own the language. Also, participants’ experience abroad greatly impacted their perceptions of World Englishes. These participants were more aware of the concept of World Englishes, while also positively recognizing the significance of integrating WE into classroom practices. In summary, Kim et al. addressed the fact that Korean undergraduate students did not develop sufficient awareness regarding WE and still consider the concept from an “old habits die hard” perspective (p. 42).

In the Türkiye context, various studies have been conducted similarly. Tosuncuoğlu and Kirmızı (2019) surveyed 44 English Language Instructors and 104 students from the English Language and Literature department. The findings of the study supported the idea that while most of the instructors had heard the term “World Englishes” before, it was quite a novel concept for the student participants. Regarding whether WE should be integrated into the classroom, half of the participants agreed that standard English is much easier than other non-native varieties; thus, it is the type of language that should be taught in English language classrooms. Also, there is an outstanding difference between males and females in the sense that female participants showed a much more positive attitude towards Native Englishes, thinking that once they use it, they can be better understood by international speakers.

Another study conducted regarding students’ perceptions of World Englishes was conducted by Bayyurt and Altınmakas (2012). The researchers have designed a course specific for teaching the concept of World Englishes. In this carefully designed course, they integrated various activities like debates on what standard English is, note-taking exercises done by listening to BBC All India Radio, and discussions on stereotyping, etc. The researchers suggested that, before the implementation of this 14-week-long course on World Englishes, students had almost no knowledge of the concept. However, towards the end of the term, students recognized the importance of mutual intelligibility rather than favoring standard forms like received pronunciation. Also, the researchers included that students enjoyed going beyond conventions and learning more about how the English Language is used in different parts of the world with different variations (p.175).

The Role of Gender in Language Teaching and Perception

The role of gender in language teaching is always present, although not always apparent (Sunderland, 2000). Although studies addressing the effect of gender on language perception and use emerged during the 1960s (Suárez-Gómez & Seoane, 2020), it was not until the past few decades that World English studies gradually embraced a gendered perspective, welcoming the attitudinal and perceptual differences between males and females regarding language use (Valentine, 2006). This might be due to the fact that the stereotypical gender roles are being broken day by day as a result of the progress and the modernization of the world (Nagasundram et al., 2021). Still, there have been very few studies regarding the differences between the perceptions of males and females regarding World Englishes. One of the studies considering the differences between males’ and females’ perceptions of World Englishes was McKenzie’s (2008) study. The study has revealed that female language users had a more positive attitude towards WE than male speakers. Similarly, in a study conducted by McKenzie et al. (2016) in Thailand, it was found that female speakers were much more embracing towards WE than males, as they perceived other Englishes as a sense of

“warmth”, and preferred warmth over the other social dimensions of language (p. 545). On the other hand, in their study conducted in the Hong Kong context, Chan (2018) reported that female speakers had a higher awareness of different varieties while having a more positive attitude towards the native varieties once the interlocutors were native speakers. Chan (2018), in this regard, argues that in such contexts, using a standard English variety may have an additional symbolic meaning, like signaling a higher level of education and intelligence, as well as a practical value, like keeping communication with the native speaker smooth (p.74). Another interesting finding was made by Stubbe and Holmes (2000), arguing that males with Maori identities in New Zealand preferred sticking to Maori English, which has quite distinctive phonological and syntactic features, rather than embracing the widely-used standard New Zealand variety, as a means of marking and preserving their cultural background and masculine solidarity. Similarly, in Otagadde village in India, women are the primary protectors of the local dialect spoken in the village; however, they also highly support their children in learning standard English to improve their social standing in the community (Ullrich, 1992).

In other words, language attitude significantly impacts language choice and use, with both men and women having unique relationships with how they perceive and use the language (Valentine, 2021). Nevertheless, no single study was conducted in the Türkiye context regarding the differences between the perceptions of men and women of World Englishes. The current study examines the differences between male and female language-major students’ attitudes towards WE.

The Study

Objective

The objective of this quantitative study is to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the overall perceptions of students studying at the department of translation and interpreting regarding World Englishes?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the male and female students’ perceptions regarding World Englishes?

As a quantitative study, the research questions will be addressed using descriptive statistics. The study's findings are expected to provide new suggestions for second language curriculum design, especially for language-major students, and for considering gender differences in integrating World Englishes into the language classroom.

Participants

The participants of this study are 50 female and 28 male students studying at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Kahramanmaraş Istiklal University. The data was collected from all class years, including first, second, third, and fourth-year students, according to their voluntary participation. The sampling method for the data collection was the convenience sampling method, which is a nonrandom sampling method in which the participants are selected according to their easiness of accessibility (Etikan et al.,2016). As the researcher works as a research assistant at Kahramanmaraş Istiklal University, the study participants were selected from there, as the sample group was large enough for statistical analysis and the participants were readily available. The percentage chart regarding the gender of the participants is as follows:

The participants ranged from 18 to 25 years, and their mother tongue was Turkish. Most of them had studied in the preparatory department of the same university before they started their first year, as the medium of instruction of the department is 100% English. The participants are assumed to have at least C1 level of English Language proficiency (CEFR, 2001), as it is the minimum level to successfully complete the preparatory year, and start receiving their departmental courses. Besides, the participants were included in the study with the condition of having no prior formal instruction regarding World Englishes. Conducting this study with students from the Department of Translation and Interpreting was especially significant as, since 2023, graduates of this department can have various and diverse careers, unlike the graduates of other departments with English medium instruction.

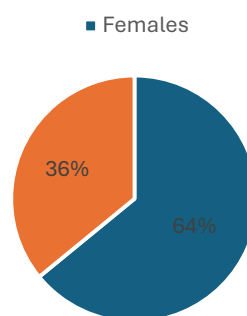


Figure 1 gender percentages

Data Collection

The study data was collected via a 20-itemed and 5-pointed Likert Scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Choi's (2007) research conducted in South Korea (See Appendix I), and the items were translated into Turkish so that participants could easily interpret the content. To ensure reliability issues, another researcher with a doctoral degree in English Language Teaching reviewed the items in the questionnaire. The scale's reliability was double-checked with The Cronbach Alpha test (α : 0.778). The data was collected face-to-face in a paper-based format so that participants do not interfere with each other's answers to the survey. The names of the participants were anonymized, and each participant was asked to sign a consent form to avoid violating ethical issues. Completing the questionnaire for each participant took almost 7 minutes, while the whole data collection process took 1 week for the researcher.

The questionnaire included four parts (Parts A, B, C, and D) including five questions for each part. In the first part, participants' perceptions regarding the ownership of the English Language were tried to be measured. In the second part, participants were required to answer questions regarding their attitudes towards their own variety (Turkish accent) and some other varieties. In the third part, they were asked to score their perception regarding Turkish-originated English Language Teachers and native English Language Teachers, while in the last part, they were asked to score their motivation when they learned the English Language with Turkish-originated teachers. The only demographic information asked in the questionnaire was the participants' gender, as it is the only independent variable within the scope of this research.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis of this study, SPSS 23 was used as it was the only freely available version in Hacettepe University's software repository, and it can perform the necessary statistical analyses. In order to see if there was a significant difference between the results of males and females, the mean scores of the two groups were compared using a Mann-Whitney U test, as the data was not normally distributed. The normality of the data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. All items showed significant deviations from normality ($p < .05$), so the null hypothesis was rejected. The items were analyzed in groups according to the categorization provided by Choi (2007). The results were presented in descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard deviation, and frequency. The missing data in the research were replaced using the series means as the estimation method.

Results

The research questions of this study were: “What are students’ overall perceptions regarding World Englishes?” and “Is there a statistically significant difference between the male and female students’ perceptions regarding World Englishes?” The results for the first question are as follows:

RQ1: What are students’ overall perceptions regarding World Englishes?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Items in Part A

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Question1	78	3.6538	1.21492
Question2	78	2.5921	1.14163
Question3	78	2.4231	1.11098
Question4	78	2.7179	1.40405
Question5	78	2.1447	1.07756

The first questionnaire item adapted by Choi's (2007) research was “Standard English is British English or American English.” The results show that students were between neutral and agreeing, with a mean score of 3.65 (SD: 1.21). However, the findings regarding the first item are meaningful once they are interpreted with the findings of the second item. The second question was: “English belongs to the UK or the USA.” Meanwhile, the mean score for this item was 2.59 (SD: 1.14), suggesting that participants disagreed. Similarly, participants disagreed with the third item: “It is British or American English speakers who have the right to decide how English should be.” With a mean score of 2.42 (SD: 1.11). In the fourth item, “I am ashamed of my Turkish (local) accent and try to get rid of it when I speak English.”, the participants disagreed, this time being closer to indecisive with a mean score of 2.71 (SD: 1.40). Finally, for the last item “If English is used differently from British or American English, it must be wrong.” Participants also disagreed with the 2.14 mean score (SD: 1.07).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Items in Part B

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Question6	78	2.7436	1.33325
Question7	78	2.6923	1.08481
Question8	78	3.2692	1.06507
Question9	78	3.1299	1.19903
Question10	78	2.4474	1.04936

The second part of the questionnaire (Part B) consisted of items regarding the notion of World Englishes and participants’ attitudes towards their own variety and different varieties. Item 6 was “I have heard of World Englishes.” The participants disagreed, scoring a mean of 2.74 (SD: 1.33) for this item. At the same time, they also disagreed with item 7, which stated, “Turkish English (My local variety of English) should be recognized and stand alongside British or American English.” In which participants’ mean was 2.69 (SD: 1.08). For the 8th item: “More lectures should be given on World Englishes and Turkish English” participants were neutral with a mean of 3.26 (SD: 1.06), and they neither agreed nor disagreed with item 9, which stated: “I am proud of my Turkish (local) accent

when I speak English.” with 3.12 mean score (SD: 1.19). Lastly, for the 10th item, “Turkish English (My local variety of English) is used differently from British or American English. It should be learned by foreigners, especially the native speakers of English who want to communicate with Turkish (my local) people in English.” They disagreed. For the descriptive statistics regarding the male and female students’ perceptions regarding the items in Part C, see Table 3 below:

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics for Items in Part C*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Question11	78	2.4359	1.20162
Question12	78	3.0513	1.27816
Question13	78	2.8442	1.30000
Question14	78	3.2564	1.23200
Question15	78	3.3205	1.16768

Part D consisted of items measuring participants’ attitudes solely regarding Turkish-originated language teachers, such as the 16th item, “I learn more with Turkish teachers of English since they explain grammar better than native speaker teachers.” For this item, students neither agreed nor disagreed, scoring a mean of 3.47 (SD: .86). For the 17th item, stating that “I learn more with Turkish teachers of English since they can sometimes explain in Turkish (my) language and that helps me understand English better.”, participants scored 4.00 suggesting that they highly agreed. For the 18th item, “Turkish teachers help me better with difficulties in learning English since they have experienced similar difficulties.”, students neither agreed nor disagreed with a mean score of 3.84 (SD: .94). For the 19th item stating “Turkish teachers of English set a good example of successful English learners. That motivates me to study hard.” participants have scored a mean score of 3.79 (SD: .92) stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed similar to the item 20, stating “I want to have a Turkish teacher as my English teacher since his/her English is more realistic for me to achieve as a learning target.” With a mean score of 3.33 (SD: 1.15).

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the male and female students’ perceptions regarding World Englishes?

In order to answer the second research question, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted among the mean scores of the two groups. First, it was tested whether there was a significant difference between these two groups in their general mean scores; the results are as follows:

Table 5: *Mann-Whitney U Test for General Mean Scores*

	<i>MeanScore</i>
Mann-Whitney U	608.000
Wilcoxon W	1014.000
Z	-.959
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.337

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

From Table 5, it can be inferred that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups regarding their general attitudes toward the 20 items in the survey. However, the Mann-Whitney U test was also conducted for each group of items individually; the results are as follows for items in Part A:

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Part A

	Question1	Question2	Question3	Question4	Question5
Mann-Whitney U	503.000	684.500	607.500	653.000	607.500
Wilcoxon W	1778.000	1959.500	1882.500	1059.000	1882.500
Z	-2.148	-.166	-1.007	-.503	-1.003
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.868	.314	.615	.316

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference for the first question in the survey ($U = 503.000$, $Z = -2.148$, $p = .032$). However, there were no statistically significant differences between the perceptions of male and female students in the remaining results: for Question 2 ($U = 684.500$, $Z = -0.166$, $p = .868$), Question 3 ($U = 607.500$, $Z = -1.007$, $p = .314$), Question 4 ($U = 653.000$, $Z = -0.503$, $p = .615$), and Question 5 ($U = 607.500$, $Z = -1.003$, $p = .316$). These results suggest that, except for Question 1, males and females scored similar means in their responses to the first five questions of the survey.

Table 7: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Part B

	Question6	Question7	Question8	Question9	Question 10
Mann-Whitney U	589.500	663.500	631.500	571.000	503.000
Wilcoxon W	1864.500	1938.500	1037.500	977.000	909.000
Z	-1.179	-.398	-.758	-1.383	-2.149
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.238	.691	.449	.167	.032

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between the results of the two groups in Question 10 ($U = 503.000$, $Z = -2.149$, $p = .032$). However, there was no statistical difference for the rest of the questions with the following scores: Question 6 ($U = 589.500$, $Z = -1.179$, $p = .238$), Question 7 ($U = 663.500$, $Z = -0.398$, $p = .691$), Question 8 ($U = 631.500$, $Z = -0.758$, $p = .449$), and Question 9 ($U = 571.000$, $Z = -1.383$, $p = .167$). In other words, while males and females differed in their perceptions of the item, "Turkish English (My local variety of English) is used differently from British or American English. It should be learned by foreigners, especially the native speakers of English who want to communicate with Turkish (my local) people in English."

Table 8: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Part C

	Question 11	Question 12	Question 13	Question 14	Question 15
Mann-Whitney U	678.500	626.000	640.000	645.000	604.500
Wilcoxon W	1084.500	1032.000	1046.000	1051.000	1010.500
Z	-.233	-.797	-.639	-.598	-1.030
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.816	.425	.523	.550	.303

While the participants' responses to questions 6, 7, 8, and 9 exhibited similar patterns, the Mann-Whitney U test results for Questions 11 through 15 (Part C) showed no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female students with the following scores: Question 11 ($U = 678.500$, $Z = -0.233$, $p = .816$), Question 12 ($U = 626.000$, $Z = -0.797$, $p = .425$), Question 13 ($U = 640.000$, $Z = -0.639$, $p = .523$), Question 14 ($U = 645.000$, $Z = -0.598$, $p = .550$), and Question 15 ($U = 604.500$, $Z = -1.030$, $p = .303$). In order to see if there are significant differences between the mean scores of two groups for Part D, see the following table:

Table 9: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Part D

	Question 16	Question 17	Question 18	Question 19	Question 20
Mann-Whitney U	559.500	569.500	689.500	676.000	676.500
Wilcoxon W	965.500	975.500	1964.500	1082.000	1082.500
Z	-1.562	-1.534	-.122	-.270	-.255
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.118	.125	.903	.788	.799

The Mann-Whitney U test results for Part D showed no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female students with the following test statistics: Question 16 ($U = 559.500$, $Z = -1.562$, $p = .118$), Question 17 ($U = 569.500$, $Z = -1.534$, $p = .125$), Question 18 ($U = 689.500$, $Z = -0.122$, $p = .903$), Question 19 ($U = 676.000$, $Z = -0.270$, $p = .788$), and Question 20 ($U = 676.500$, $Z = -0.255$, $p = .799$). Namely, in this study, the items that showed statistically significant differences between males and females were Question 1 and Question 10. To see the mean ranks of the two groups regarding these items, see the following chart:

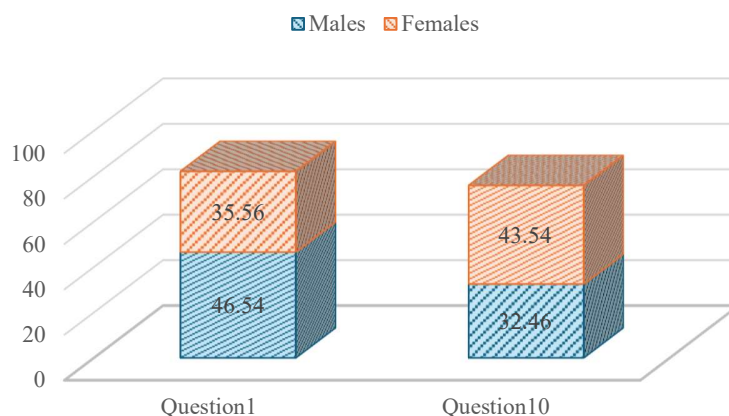


Figure 2: Mean Ranks of Males and Females for Item 1 and 10

From the bar chart above, it can be argued that for Question 1, stating that “Standard English is British English or American English.”, males scored higher with a mean rank of 46.54, while the mean rank for females was 35.56. In Question 10, however, females scored higher with a mean rank of 43.54, while the mean rank was 32.46 for males.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research questions of this study were: first, what are students' overall perceptions towards World Englishes, and second if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students. There were two significant findings of this study. First, it can be argued that participants were not inclined to accept the idea that English solely belongs to native-speaker countries, as their mean scores for Part A of the survey were below 3 out of 5, suggesting that they disagreed. This result implies that participants might have embraced a global ownership of the English language. Moreover, the participants disagreed with the idea that they were ashamed of having a Turkish accent when speaking English, which suggests that they are not obsessed with having a native-like pronunciation. Surprisingly, students were highly positive towards their own variety even though they did not receive any formal instruction regarding World Englishes, and they disagreed with the 6th item, stating that they had heard the term World Englishes before. Besides, the students disagreed with items 11 and 13: "I don't want a Turkish Teacher to teach me English" and "Native speaker teachers provide more reliable linguistic knowledge." This result suggests that this study's participants can acknowledge that a native-speaker teacher does not always indicate a "good" or proficient teacher. Similarly, they agreed to the 17th item regarding learning much more with Turkish-L1-speaking English Language teachers as they sometimes make explanations in students' mother tongue (Turkish). This indicates that although the language proficiency level of the participants is relatively high (C1), and they are language-medium students studying at a 100% English medium instruction department, the value and helpfulness of their first language are still acknowledged, and its use is preferred in scaffolding. This approach serves as a counterargument to monolingual classroom policies, which often argue that the target language should be the sole medium of communication, as banning the mother tongue would maximize the effectiveness of the language teaching and learning process (Afzal, 2013). In this regard, Littlewood and Yu (2011) argue that although some methods, such as the Direct Method or the Structural-Situational Approach, found various more straightforward techniques of using only the target language in ELT classrooms, even with modern techniques today, like task-based teaching, role-plays, and information exchange tasks, task comprehension might still be difficult if the instruction is not explicit enough (p. 74). In such cases, the value of the mother tongue cannot be underestimated. However, further research is needed to investigate whether participants give different answers to these survey items in the presence of a native and non-Turkish-originated English Language Teacher.

Another valuable finding of this study was that participants showed statistically significant differences in their scores for the first and tenth items. For the first item, including "Standard English is British English or American English.", males scored higher than females. This can be due to several reasons, one of which is cultural and social norms. In Holmes and Stubbe's (2004) study, it was seen that Maori men living in New Zealand preferred sticking to a particular variety to preserve their "manhood." Similarly, males in this study might have tended to score higher in sticking to native varieties with a such reason behind. This idea aligns with what has been discussed by Valentine (2019) who states that women are the initiators of the language change in multilingual societies, whereas men prefer sticking to the norms to protect their power and social image (p. 582). On the other hand, for the 10th item, "Turkish English (My local variety of English) is used differently from British or American English. It should be learned by foreigners, especially the native speakers of English who want to communicate with Turkish (my local) people in English." Females had a higher mean compared to males. Once again, this is in similar vein with Valentine's argument of women's being the "caretaker" of the local varieties and Chan's (2018) argument of females' having a greater awareness of the local varieties.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for English language teaching (ELT), especially in places where World Englishes (WE) is gaining recognition. Since students in this study valued intelligibility over sounding like native speakers; teachers, and curriculum designers should consider making ELT more inclusive by incorporating different English varieties into the classroom.

First, curriculum design should expose students to multiple English varieties. Traditional ELT programs focus heavily on British or American English, but this does not reflect how English is used worldwide (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010). Lessons should include different accents, cultural contexts, and discussions on language diversity. Listening exercises using speakers from various backgrounds and critical thinking activities about language attitudes can help students become more open to different forms of English (Bayyurt & Altınmakas, 2012). Second, teacher training programs should help instructors understand and teach English as a global language. Many students in this study had positive attitudes toward Turkish-origin teachers, which suggests that non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) play a crucial role in ELT (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Teacher education should encourage the use of diverse teaching materials and prepare instructors to discuss linguistic diversity in class (Jenkins, 2009). This can help students appreciate different English varieties without seeing them as inferior. Third, gender differences in language perception should be addressed. This study showed that female students were more open to local English varieties, while male students preferred native-speaker models. Research suggests that men are often more resistant to language change, while women are more open to linguistic variation (McKenzie et al., 2016; Valentine, 2019). To bridge this gap, instructors can introduce classroom debates and group activities that encourage students to question their biases about different English varieties. Fourth, using students' first language (L1) as support can be beneficial. Participants in this study valued Turkish-speaking English teachers because they could explain difficult concepts in Turkish. Studies show that allowing some use of L1 in ELT classrooms, especially at lower levels, can improve comprehension and confidence (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). While English should remain the primary medium of instruction, occasional use of L1 for explanations and scaffolding can help students grasp complex ideas more easily (Afzal, 2013). Finally, assessment and feedback practices should reflect the realities of World Englishes. Traditional exams often prioritize native-like pronunciation and grammar, but research suggests that intelligibility and communication skills should be the main focus (Jenkins, 2006). Teachers can use assessment rubrics that reward clarity, coherence, and adaptability in communication rather than penalizing students for using non-standard but understandable forms of English (Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019).

In conclusion, this study highlights the need for a more flexible approach to ELT that acknowledges English as a global language. By updating curricula, training teachers on the WE concept, addressing gender-based differences, using L1 strategically, and redefining assessment practices, language educators can create a more inclusive learning environment. These steps will better prepare students to use English in diverse international settings.

Limitations

The most important shortcoming of this study is that it is only quantitative and the number of participants is low. Also, the study was conducted in a setting where students from a single cultural background existed. Conducting the same research with participants from various backgrounds would yield more fruitful results. In addition, the study was conducted within a limited period of time. Thus, further longitudinal studies addressing different factors like exposure to English Language, time spent abroad, and educational backgrounds are needed.

Ethics Committee Approval

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Section A

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) Standard English is British English or American English.					
2) English belongs to the UK or the USA.					
3) It is British or American English speakers who have the right to decide how English should be.					
4) I am ashamed of my Korean (local) accent and try to get rid of it when I speak English.					
5) If English is used differently from British or American English, it must be wrong.					

Section B

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6) I have heard of World Englishes.					
7) Korea English (my local variety of English) should be recognized and stand alongside British or American English.					
8) More lectures should be given on World Englishes and Korea English.					
9) I am proud of my Korean (local) accent when I speak English.					
10) Korea English (my local variety of English) is used differently from British or American English. It should be learned by foreigners, especially native speakers of English who want to communicate with Korean (my local) people in English.					

Section C

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11) I do not want a Korean (Malaysian, Chinese,					

etc.) teacher to teach me English.					
12) I want a native English speaker teacher to teach me English since his/her English is Standard English.					
13) Native speaker teachers provide more reliable linguistic knowledge.					
14) Native speaker teachers correct me better when I make mistakes.					
15) Eventually, I will speak native-like English if I study with a native speaker teacher.					

Section D

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16) I learn more with Korean (Malaysian, Chinese, etc.) teachers of English since they explain grammar better than native speaker teachers.					
17) I learn more with Korean (Malaysian, Chinese, etc.) teachers of English since they can sometimes explain in the Korean (my) language, and that helps me understand English better.					
18) Korean (Malaysian, Chinese, etc.) teachers help me better with difficulties in learning English since they have experienced similar difficulties.					
19) Korean (Malaysian, Chinese, etc.) teachers of English set a good example of successful English learners. That motivates me to study hard.					
20) I want to have a Korean (Malaysian, Chinese, etc.) teacher as my English teacher since his/her English is more realistic for me to achieve as a learning target.					