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Exploring ELT Students' Awareness of the Differences between the British and American Varieties of Englishⁱ

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İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü Öğrencilerinin İngiliz İngilizcesi ve Amerikan İngilizcesi Arasındaki Farklara İlişkin Farkındalıklarının İncelenmesi

İngilizce tüm dünyada ortak dil olarak kullanılmasına karşın tek bir kullanım biçimi ile sınırlı değildir. Amerikan İngilizcesi, İngiliz İngilizcesi ve Avustralya İngilizcesi gibi başlıca kullanımlarının her biri farklı özellikler barındırmakta ve dilbilgisi, yazım, sözcük seçimi ve telaffuz gibi hususlarda birbirlerinden farklılık göstermektedir. Bu çalışma Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Anabilim Dalı'nda eğitim gören öğrencilerin İngilizce'nin en yaygın iki türü olan Amerikan ve İngiliz İngilizcesi arasındaki sözcüksel farklılıklara ilişkin farkındalıklarını saptamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, İngilizce Öğretmenliği okuyan rasgele seçilmiş 42 lisans öğrencisine iki kısımdan oluşan kısa bir test uygulanmıştır; birinci kısım öğrencilerin sözcükler arasındaki yazım farklılıkları, ikinci kısım ise sesletim farklılıklarıyla ilgili farkındalık seviyelerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Bu testten hemen önce katılımcılara İngilizce kullanımı noktasında Amerikan İngilizcesi'ni mi, İngiliz İngilizcesi'ni mi, ya da ikisinin karışımını mı tercih ettikleri soruldu. Bu ön soruya verilen cevapların sayısal analizi 22 katılımcının ettiklerini göstermektedir. Testin ilk aşamasında öğrencilerden yazılı olarak önlerinde duran apologise-apologize ve elevator-lift gibi 15 sözcük çiftindeki her bir kelimenin İngilizce'nin hangi türüne ait olduğunu yazılı olarak tespit etmeleri istendi. İkinci aşamada ise öğrencilerden advertisement, schedule ve can't gibi 10 sözcüğün sesletimini sözlü olarak bir ses kaydedicisine yapmaları istendi. İlk aşamada yapılan toplam hataların istatistiksel analizi öğrenci başına ortalama 5/15 hata düştüğünü, en fazla hata yapılan kelime çiftinin ise fulfillment-fulfilment (33 öğrenci) olduğunu gösteriyor. İkinci aşamada yapılan sesletimlerin analizi ise öğrencilerin hiçbirinin sadece Amerikan ya da sadece İngiliz İngilizcesi'ni kullanmadıklarını, ikisini de değişen oranlarda kullandıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bulgular açıkça katılımcıların Amerikan ve İngiliz İngilizcesi arasındaki sözcüksel farklılıkların tam anlamıyla farkında olmadıklarını gösteriyor. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın sonuçları bu temel farklılıkların öğrenciler tarafından daha iyi kavranabilmesi için program müfredatında yer alan Sözcük Bilgisi ve Dinleme ve Sesletim gibi derslerde bu hususa daha fazla zaman ayrılması gerektiğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Amerikan İngilizcesi, çeşitlilik, İngiliz İngilizcesi, sözcük, sözcük seçimi, telaffuz, yazım

Introduction

Languages are living things and just like human beings they go through the processes of birth, growth, change, and death. These natural processes occur with the passage of years, decades, and

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centuries. Of a Germanic origin, English has gone through such stages of change over centuries and today it holds an unprecedentedly strong status all around the world. The spread of English gained momentum especially with the rise of USA at economic, technological, and political levels; thus it has gradually become spoken by so many different circles and gained the *lingua franca* status. Within this context Kachru (1985) proposed three concentric circles to describe the fast spread of English: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle covers the speakers of English as their mother tongue. Citizens living in countries like England, America, New Zealand, and Australia are covered in this circle. The Outer Circle encompasses the speakers of English as a second language. Speakers of English in countries like Finland, India, Kenya, South Africa can be counted under this category. The Expanding Circle refers to the speakers of English as a foreign language. People learning English as a foreign language in countries like Turkey, Azerbaijan, China, Japan, and Russia belong to this circle. According to Crystal (2000) it is estimated that English is currently spoken by around 1.5 billion people across the world as a first, second, or foreign language. Concerning its vast coverage all around the world Graddol (2000: 8) lists the major international domains of English as follows:

- Working language of international organizations and conferences
- Scientific publication
- International banking, economic affairs and trade
- Advertising for global brands
- Audio-visual cultural products (e.g. film, TV, popular music)
- International tourism
- Tertiary education
- International safety (e.g. 'airspeak', 'seaspeak')
- International law as a 'relay language' in interpretation and translation
- Technology transfer
- Internet communication

Considering the circles proposed by Kachru (1985) and the list introduced by Graddol (2000), it can be directly said that English is a far-reaching and dominant language whose reign can be easily observed in a number of different realms. Putting a strong emphasis on its use during nonnative interactions as a *lingua franca*, Alptekin (2002) states "Given the *lingua franca* status of English, it is clear that much of the world needs and uses English for instrumental reasons such as professional contacts, academic studies, and commercial pursuits. In this context, much communication in English involves (and will increasingly involve) nonnative speaker–nonnative speaker interactions" (p.61). This spread of English among nonnatives has also had its reflections in Turkey remarkably. This point is mentioned by Dogancay-Aktuna (1998) as follows:

"In Turkey English carries the instrumental function of being the most studied foreign language and the most popular medium of education after Turkish. On an interpersonal level, it is used as a link language for international business and for tourism while also providing a code that symbolizes modernization and elitism to the educated middle classes and those in the upper strata of the socioeconomic ladder" (p.37).

Enjoying the peak it has reached the English language expectedly receives some questions like "Will English maintain its status as the number one language of the world?" or "Will it be able to keep a standard form taking the likely influences of especially the nonnative speakers into account?"

At this point, the *ownership of English* comes onto the agenda. Widdowson (1994) says "It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it" (p.385). Correspondingly, according to the world-famous linguist David Crystal (2000):

"It is a point often forgotten, especially by monolingual speakers of English, that a language that has come to be spoken by so many people has ceased to be the exclusive property of any of its constituent communities. Nobody 'owns' English now – not the British, with whom the language began 1500 years

ago, nor the Americans, who now comprise its largest mother-tongue community. Everyone has a share in the future of English, first-, second-, and foreign-language speakers alike" (p.5).

Crystal (2000) further states "To have learned a language is immediately to have rights in it. You may add to it, modify it, play with it, create in it, ignore bits of it, as you will" (p.5). Briefly languages are open to change and over time they tend to develop different varieties. For such a widespread language like English it is quite normal to have a high number of variations. The most wellknown of these are British English or namely Received Pronunciation (RP) and American English that is generally called General American (GA). RP refers to standard English used by Londoners and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). Of an elitist philosophy in terms of language use, RP is comparable to TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) Turkish or Istanbul Turkish. However, GA holds a more flexible nature and encompasses the use of English by broader circles in the United States of America. Even so, this does not mean that GA represents everyone's talk in America. It is mostly characterized by the English used by newscasters in the USA.

English of course has other popular varieties like Australian English, Irish English, and Scottish English. Moreover, from the lingua franca perspective, we can even mention Turkish English, Chinese English, Japanese English, and so on. Nevertheless, the two most competitive varieties are doubtlessly British and American English. Especially with the political and economic rise of the USA, American English has experienced an unprecedented leap throughout the world. The distinction between these two competing varieties is a popular topic for many English users. The following is a popular quotation attributed to George Bernard Shaw: "England and America are two countries divided by a common language." This paradoxical statement describes the situation perfectly. Likewise, in Oscar Wilde's popular short story *The Canterville Ghost* published in 1887 one of the characters says "Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language." This quotation from Oscar Wilde's short story clearly shows that the issue of British and American English distinction is not a recent one; instead it was still popular over a century ago.

So what are the main differences between the British and American varieties of English? There are many differences between the two at both written and oral levels. Crystal (2002) draws attention to the plurality of differences by saying "The only safe statement is that there are far more of them than are usually recognized" (p.264). One of the most outstanding distinctions shows itself in the spelling of lexical items. Examples cover the use of *-or, -ze, -ll, -er*, etc. (color, analyze, fulfillment, center) in American English and *-our, -se, -l, -re*, etc. (colour, analyse, fulfilment, centre) in British English. Spelling differences are followed by some differences in word choice. While American English covers the use lexical items like *fall, elevator, vacation, subway*, and *sidewalk*, British English prefers words like *autumn, lift, holiday, underground*, and *pavement*. Besides these differences at lexical level, there are differences in terms of grammar. For example, in American English collective nouns are always followed by a singular verb (e.g. The team is playing well) whereas both plural and singular forms of the verb are acceptable in British English (e.g. The team is/are playing well). In addition, there are some prepositional differences (e.g. *on* the weekend in American English and *at* the weekend British English; *on* a team in American English and *in* a team in British English) and also some differences in the use of idioms (e.g. *a drop in the bucket* in American English and *a drop in the ocean* in British English). Other than these visible differences, there are some format-related differences between the two varieties concerning aspects like punctuation, dates, writing letters and e-mails, and so forth.

Although the topic is an interesting one and likely to attract researchers, the relevant literature, especially concerning the learners' awareness of the differences between varieties of English, is not as vast as expected. As one of the relevant rare studies, the research by Alftberg (2009) on Swedish secondary school students reveals that the students preferred to use more American English than British English although they receive English classes based on the British variety. The researcher explains this finding with the students' high exposure to the American-based media. Another study from Swedish context was carried out by Hansson (2010) and aimed to investigate secondary school

students' awareness of grammatical differences between British and American English and which variety they used. The results of the study indicate that the participants were not aware of the grammatical differences between the two varieties and were not aware of which variety they used, either. More recently Di Carlo (2013) conducted a study through social networking sites with the participation of 50 native speakers of British English and 50 native speakers of American English. The study aimed to explore the awareness of the participants as to the lexical differences. The findings of the study reveal that the British sample performed better on the administered test. However, the most outstanding finding yielded by the study is that even native speakers were not totally aware of the lexical differences between the two varieties.

As for the studies carried out within Turkish EFL context, the research by Çekiç (2009) aimed to reveal whether British-based or American-based listening education worked better for Turkish EFL learners at tertiary level. The results of this study with a total of 40 participants suggest that the group that received listening education based on American English performed better in a statistically significant way. The study of Elkılıç and Han (2009) that was carried out with the participation of 42 undergraduate students attending the English Language Department revealed that the participants were able to distinguish American and British English in terms of pronunciation differences but they displayed poor performance concerning spelling, vocabulary, and grammatical differences.

Considering the strong familiarity of the issue to English language learners and teachers and the serious lack of research on the awareness as to the differences between different varieties of English within the context of Turkish EFL learners, this study focuses on an important topic and aims to investigate the extent to which ELT students are aware of the differences between American and British English. The research questions of the study are:

1. To what extent are ELT students aware of the written differences (word choice and spelling) between American and British varieties of English?
2. Which variety appears more frequent in the pronunciation performances of the participants in the 2nd part of the test?
3. Is there agreement between which variety of English the participants report to prefer and the results yielded by their performances in the test?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive one the data of which were collected on a quantitative basis. The participants are composed of 42 students attending the English Language Teaching Programme at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun. Thirty (30) of them are females and only twelve (12) participants are males. As the female participants far outnumber the males, the gender factor is not included as a variable in this study. The subjects participated in the study on a voluntary basis and took a short test that was developed by the researcher and aimed to measure their awareness as to the major differences between American and British varieties of English in terms of written and oral aspects. At the very beginning of the test, the participants were asked whether they preferred British or American English during their writings and speakings in order to see their self-awareness with reference to the test results. In the first part of the test, the participants were asked to identify the British and American versions of the provided 15 written lexical items; and in the second part, they were asked to pronounce the provided 10 words to a voice recorder. 10 of the items in the first part were on spelling differences and the remaining 5 were on differences about lexical choice.

The lexical items covered in both parts of the test were carefully selected by the researcher out of the commonly encountered and used words in English. The written and pronunciation differences among these selected lexical items were checked through Online Cambridge Dictionary of American English (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/american-english/>) and Online Oxford Dictionary of British English (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/browse/english/>). The content of the test was

broached to ELT experts to ensure its *face validity* and it was administered to the participants upon the necessary changes made in line with their comments and recommendations. The data collected from both parts of the test were analyzed numerically through Microsoft Excel.

Findings and Discussion

The 1st research question of the study is related to the 1st part of test in which the participants were given 15 lexical pairs. Five of them asked the students to distinguish between lexical preferences of British and American English referring to the same concept (e.g. autumn-fall). The remaining ten items encompassed spelling differences like apologise-apologize and defence-defense. The error frequency as to the items yielded by the numerical analysis of the test results is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Item-by-item Error Frequency in the 1st Part of the Test

No	Lexical Items	Error Frequency	No	Lexical Items	Error Frequency
1	apologise - apologize	15	9	elevator - lift	28
2	color - colour	5	10	theater - theatre	8
3	autumn- fall	6	11	vacation - holiday	23
4	center - centre	13	12	liter - litre	21
5	defence - defense	17	13	underground - subway	12
6	dialog - dialogue	7	14	program - programme	9
7	fulfillment - fulfilment	33	15	pavement - sidewalk	14
8	judgement - judgment	11			

It is clear in Table 1 that all of the items, without any exception, received errors with varying degrees. As for the items with the highest frequency of errors, the pair *fulfillment-fulfilment* appears as the most striking one with errors by 33 participants, followed by the pair *elevator-lift* with errors by 28 participants. On the other hand, the items with the lowest frequency of errors turn out to be the pairs *color-colour*, *autumn-fall*, *dialog-dialogue* with 5, 6, and 7 errors respectively.

In the 2nd part of test the participants were asked to pronounce 10 lexical items such as *advertisement*, *mobile*, and *can't* to a voice recorder. The performances of the participants were analyzed by the researcher by listening to and then categorizing the pronunciation of the lexical items one by one in order to find an answer for the 2nd research question of the study. The related data are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Item-by-item Pronunciation Frequency in the 2nd Part of the Test

No	Lexical Items	American	British	No	Lexical Items	American	British
1	advertisement	36	6	6	civilization	36	6
2	directly	5	37	7	chair	31	11
3	schedule	27	15	8	better	16	26
4	mobile	1	41	9	can't	9	33
5	chance	38	4	10	imaginary	11	31
Total British: 210				Total American: 210			

Table 2 makes it obvious that, interestingly, the participants uttered equal number of British (250) and American (250) ways of pronunciation in total. This strongly demonstrates that there is a sheer mix of the British and American ways of pronunciation. The item which was pronounced in American English by the most number of participants appears to be *chance* (38 American - 4 British) followed by

advertisement (36 American - 6 British) and *civilization* (36 American - 6 British). On the other hand, the item which was pronounced in British English by the most number of participants appears to be *mobile* (41 British - 1 American) followed by *directly* (37 British - 5 American) and *can't* (33 British - 9 American).

The data included in Table 1 and Table 2 give separate accounts of the results yielded by the two parts covered in the test administered to the participants. They actually produce a holistic image of the situation in view of the covered items. However, in order to have a deeper look at the uses of British and American English by the participants and find a satisfying answer for the 3rd research question of the study, we should scrutinize the results at individual level. Table 3 below shows the student-by-student evaluation of the test:

Table 3. Student-by-student Evaluation of the Test

Students	Stated Preference	Number of Errors (out of 15) in the 1 st Part	2 nd Part (Pronunciation)	
			American English	British English
Student 1	British English	2	6	4
Student 2	British English	4	3	7
Student 3	British English	6	4	6
Student 4	Mix	7	5	5
Student 5	British English	4	6	4
Student 6	Mix	6	5	5
Student 7	British English	5	4	6
Student 8	British English	4	5	5
Student 9	American English	4	6	4
Student 10	British English	1	4	6
Student 11	British English	5	6	4
Student 12	American English	4	5	5
Student 13	British English	6	6	4
Student 14	American English	6	7	3
Student 15	British English	4	6	4
Student 16	American English	3	6	4
Student 17	British English	4	7	3
Student 18	American English	5	7	3
Student 19	British English	6	6	4
Student 20	American English	11	8	2
Student 21	Mix	9	5	5
Student 22	British English	3	5	5
Student 23	Mix	4	4	6

Student 24	Mix	5	4	6
Student 25	Mix	5	6	4
Student 26	British English	7	6	4
Student 27	British English	5	4	6
Student 28	Mix	10	6	4
Student 29	American English	6	5	5
Student 30	American English	4	5	5
Student 31	American English	5	3	7
Student 32	Mix	5	3	7
Student 33	Mix	4	5	5
Student 34	British English	5	4	6
Student 35	British English	3	4	6
Student 36	British English	9	3	7
Student 37	British English	4	5	5
Student 38	British English	5	5	5
Student 39	British English	4	3	7
Student 40	American English	10	4	6
Student 41	British English	6	3	7
Student 42	American English	7	6	4
Total	22 B- 11 A- 9 M	222	210	210

It can be clearly seen in the second column of Table 3 that, out of 42 participants, 22 reported British English, 11 American English, and 9 a mix of these two varieties as their preferences in written and oral English. However, the statistical analysis of the total number of errors in the first part of the test indicates an average of 5/15 errors per student, which refers to a considerable one-third error frequency. As this study is a two-layer one, the participants' awareness concerning both written differences at lexical level and pronunciation differences must be evaluated together. Thus the remarkable 5/15 average error frequency per student and the 210-210 equality in pronunciation performances attest to that the participants are not aware of the differences between British and American varieties of English especially considering that the majority of the participants (22/42) reported British English as their preference. Nine of the participants reported they used a mix of the two varieties and their pronunciation performances confirm this; however, their (poor) performance in the first part of test is not different from that of others, thus it means that their mix use of British and American English is not a conscious one but a random blend.

While discussing the findings it must be noted that the subject group of this study is composed of Turkish EFL learners, even if they are attending ELT programme. Therefore, it is quite normal for them not to have a perfect command of English and its varieties. The study carried out by Di Carlo (2013) reveals that even a high-level American and British subject group do not exactly know the differences between the two varieties of English. Nevertheless, what counts here is the fact that the participants of this current study are prospective English language teachers. They are expected to have more detailed information about the target language itself and its varieties. This enhanced meta-knowledge will surely help them teach English more confidently. Accordingly, it is a plus, if not a must, for ELT students to develop awareness of and knowledge on the differences between British and American English. For instance, students may be confused about which one (color / colour) to write in their sentences, or how to pronounce the word *can't* (kænt / kɑː nt). Such simple scenarios happen so often in EFL classes and the teacher should be equipped enough to provide satisfying answers on such occasions. To this end, Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK) puts emphasis on

the importance of raising awareness concerning different varieties of English and places responsibility on the university instructors with the following course description for *Listening and Pronunciation II* in the curriculum followed in ELT programmes at Turkish universities:

“Sub-skills of listening such as note-taking, predicting, extracting specific and detailed information, guessing meaning from context, and getting the gist; phonetics; aural authentic listening materials such as interviews, movies, songs, lectures, TV shows and news broadcasts of *different accents* of English.” (www.yok.gov.tr)

As a matter of fact, English language learners in Turkey are generally exposed to British English via British-based coursebooks printed by popular publishing houses like Oxford, Longman, and Cambridge. Therefore the equal results yielded by the pronunciation part of the test may seem somewhat surprising. However, the great American effect should not be disregarded at this point. The influence of America and naturally American English reigns everywhere. The learners of English in Turkey are therefore being exposed to factors like American movies, declarations by American institutions and other international organizations, songs by American singers, and so on. In addition, the internet factor should not be omitted. As the dominant language of the Internet realm, English does not appear in standard form in the digital space. People from completely different circles use English on Internet and this also leads to the advent of a sheer mix of different varieties, British and American in particular. As a result, this exposure experienced by the learners brings about a real confusion. A particular usage then can appear as a part of American English even though you consider it as British, or vice versa. Under this framework, the findings of this study that are a one-third error frequency for the first part and a balanced mix in the oral use of the two varieties by the participants indicate a general deficiency in the degree of the participants’ awareness of the two major varieties of English.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the extent to which ELT students at Ondokuz Mayıs University are aware of the spelling, word choice, and pronunciation differences between American and British English, the two most commonly used varieties of English language. To this end, a short two-part test was administered to the participants. The results of the test for each participant were calculated numerically; and the findings clearly demonstrate that the participants are not totally aware of the differences between American and British English at spelling, word choice, and pronunciation levels. As shown in Table 3, some participants performed better in the test than the others; however that does not rule out the fact that all of them displayed a certain degree of deficiency in terms of command over differences between the two varieties. The results yielded by this study conducted with the participation of a limited sampling cannot be generalized for the whole Turkish EFL context. However, it holds certain implications for Turkish EFL learners’ likely lack of awareness as to the differences between British and American English.

As mentioned before it is surely not life-threatening not to know the differences between the varieties of English. Even the highly-educated British and American citizens may not have a good command of such differences (Di Carlo, 2013). Nevertheless, the focus of this study is on the prospective English language teachers at Ondokuz Mayıs University. This means that they are not ordinary English language learners. They are preparing themselves to become competent in teaching English to others. Therefore, their meta-knowledge on English language should reach a certain degree. Even at primary school level, students may address some demanding questions to their English language teachers. In order not to face embarrassing occasions in the presence of students, English language teachers should expand their language knowledge and skills to the greatest extent possible. As Modiano (1996) and Çelik (2008) stress, the existence of such varieties of English constitutes some problems for EFL learners; thus it is part of English language teachers’ responsibility to handle such difficulties encountered by learners. Since education holds a chain effect on everyone involved, the education of

prospective English language teachers in the ELT programmes of education faculties necessitates a meticulous touch. Their poor command over the details of English will inevitably transfer poorer knowledge to the future learners. Accordingly, the tertiary level constitutes the last key phase and opportunity for the candidate English language teachers to eliminate their weak points and consolidate strong sides.

In the light of the findings yielded by this study, it is suggested that more time should be allocated to the consolidation of the major differences between different varieties of English (British and American and, if possible, other varieties) under courses like *Vocabulary* and *Listening and Pronunciation* in the ELT curriculum adopted by Turkish universities. Furthermore, an elective course titled as *Varieties of English Language* can be added to the curriculum, which may add an interesting and entertaining dimension. Also there is an apparent need for further studies on the topic within Turkish EFL context. Prospective studies to explore the issue from different perspectives such as learners' awareness of grammatical, lexical, written, or oral differences between British and American English are expected to contribute to the literature and classroom applications to a notable extent. Last but not least, the teaching staff in ELT programmes should take every opportunity during classes to help their students, as prospective English language teachers, gain awareness concerning the different varieties of English and their distinctions.

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<http://www.yok.gov.tr/> Accessed on May 24, 2014

Exploring ELT Students' Awareness of the Differences between the British and American Varieties of English

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Although English holds a strong position as the lingua franca all over the world, its use is not limited to a single standard form. Its main varieties like American English, British English, and Australian English all possess specific characteristics and differ from one another in terms of points like grammar, spelling, lexical choice, and pronunciation. Especially British English generally known as Received Pronunciation (RP) and American English commonly known as General American (GA) constitute the two most popular varieties of English. The obvious differences between these two varieties and their competition dates back to the late 1800s. Today different varieties of English are emerging with the sharp rise in the number of nonnative speakers of it. However, these two well-established varieties continue their reign throughout the world in different realms.

This study aims to find out the extent to which students attending the English Language Teaching Programme (ELT) at Ondokuz Mayıs University are aware of the major spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation differences between American and British English which constitute the most commonly used varieties of English. To this end, 42 randomly selected undergraduate ELT students were administered a short test consisting of two parts; one on the written differences of lexical items and the other one on the pronunciation differences. Just before the test, each participant was asked whether they preferred British English, American English, or a mix of them. The analysis of the answers given for this pre-question shows that 22 participants reported British English, 11 participants American English, and the remaining 9 participants a mix of the two.

In the first part of the test, the participants were asked to tick and identify the British and American versions of the provided 15 written entries like the couples of *apologise-apologize*, *color-colour* and *elevator-lift*. In the second part, the students were asked to pronounce the provided 10 words like *advertisement*, *schedule*, and *can't* to a voice recorder.

The data collected under this study were analyzed numerically through Microsoft Excel. The statistical analysis of the total number of errors in the first part indicates an average of 5/15 errors per student and the couple of *fulfillment-fulfilment* turns out to be the most frequent error made by 33 students. It is followed by the pair *elevator-lift* with errors by 28 participants. On the other hand, the items with the lowest frequency of errors appear to be the pairs *color-colour*, *autumn-fall*, *dialog-dialogue* with errors by 5, 6, and 7 participants respectively. The analysis of the recorded pronunciations in the second part indicates that none of the participants produces a uniform pattern of pronunciation; meaning that all of the participants yield a mixed pronunciation style employing British English for some of the words and American for the others. Surprisingly, the participants produced equal number of British (250) and American (250) ways of pronunciation in total. This clearly shows that the participants employed a sheer mix of the British and American ways of pronunciation. The item which received the highest American English pronunciation frequency turns out to be *chance* (38 American - 4 British) followed by *advertisement* (36 American - 6 British) and *civilization* (36 American - 6 British). On the other hand, the item which received the highest British English pronunciation frequency appears to be *mobile* (41 British - 1 American) followed by *directly* (37 British - 5 American) and *can't* (33 British - 9 American).

The findings yielded by this current study clearly suggest that the participants are not totally aware of the differences at spelling, word choice, and pronunciation levels between American and British

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English. We strongly suggest that more time and effort be allocated to the consolidation of the major differences between different varieties of English under courses like *Vocabulary* and *Listening and Pronunciation* in the ELT curriculum, thus raising the awareness of learners and prospective English language teachers concerning the presence of different varieties and their distinctive aspects. Lastly ELT researchers in Turkey should carry out further studies investigating the Turkish EFL learners' awareness of the differences between the two varieties from different aspects. The advent of each new scientific finding is expected to shed invaluable light upon the classroom applications and the way British and American varieties of English should be covered in different classes.

Keywords: American English, British English, lexis, pronunciation, spelling, variety, word choice