A Thesis

entitled

Perceptions of World Englishes

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in English

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An Abstract of
Perceptions of World Englishes
by
Jessica Baker
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in English
The University of Toledo
May 2017

This study looks at how native speakers of English respond to different World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers. Also, it looks at whether people who have more experiences with travel or languages have more positive attitudes towards World English speakers and if they were able to know where a speaker is from. Four native and four non-native participants (eight in total) who were Composition I students were interviewed. Four recordings of various World Englishes were used and participants were asked about their attitudes towards the Englishes. This study found native and non-native participants do not have different attitudes towards World Englishes. It also found that experience did not affect attitudes or abilities identifying World English speakers.
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Preface

A great deal of scholarship has been focused on understanding attitudes toward various World Englishes (WE). While research has been driven by similar questions about preferences for varieties of WE, scholars have used very different methods to try to answer them. For example, Tokumoto and Shibata (2011), Bernaisch (2012), and Tan and Tan (2008) mostly surveyed university students and asked them to rate varieties of WE on Likert scales and closed ended questionnaires. Others, including Zhang and Hu (2008), Hundt, Zipp, and Huber (2015), Cavallaro and Chin (2009), and Evans (2010) conducted their research by having participants answer open-ended questions and using recordings instead of relying on participants’ limited knowledge of WE. While these studies have expanded our understanding of attitudes toward various WE, they have relied on WE with the students already familiar, and do not consider how students will respond to WE with which they are not familiar. Researchers therefore have left a gap within literature specifically towards prejudices against different English varieties and the people who have such judgments.

To fill the gap left by previous research, my research will encompass a different form of methodology, participants, and WE. My research will explore whether or not people have particular prejudices against different English varieties. Also, my research will focus on diversifying the people who are studied, as well as the WE. In diversifying the groups of people, I intend to compare the attitudes of native and non-native speakers of English to understand the influence of cultural backgrounds. I also used WE that were not as common and were most likely not experienced by participants to ensure more typical and representative attitudes were displayed. The significance of this research is to
expand the field of World Englishes, which is a part of Sociolinguistics. Much of the research previously done has focused on individuals from a single particular background, whereas my study encompasses varieties of WE and does not focus on one specific group of people. This approach is meant to provide the field a foundation to build on, specifically diversifying the World Englishes used and participants who are normally studied.

In this project, I seek to learn:

1. How do native speakers of English respond to different varieties of World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers?

2. Do people who have more experience with traveling, languages or people of various ethnicities have more positive attitudes towards people who speak a variety of WE? Are they more likely to know from where a WE speaker comes?
Chapter One

Literature Review

Studies with Similar Methods to Mine

Several researchers of WE use methodology similar to mine. As I do, researchers employed the use of recordings from native and non-native WE speakers to allow for participants to give their attitudes towards such WE varieties, even if they have not experienced the varieties before. Both researchers and I use questions about qualities of WE speakers to focus on specific traits the WE speakers have and to make it easier to compare participants’ views on the qualities. Finally, open-ended questions were used by both researchers and myself to give participants the opportunity to share reasoning behind their answers.

In their study, Zhang and Hu (2008), investigated attitudes held towards Inner Circle Englishes, specifically American, British, and Australian Englishes. 30 Chinese Master’s and Doctoral students studying in the U.S. listened to recordings of a native speaker of each variety. After the recordings, participants rated the speakers on three types of qualities (language, individual, and teaching qualities). Participants also had to determine where each speaker was from. Finally, participants were interviewed using open-ended questions regarding their thoughts about the survey and the English varieties. From the study, Zhang and Hu found participants had positive attitudes towards both British and American English in all of the qualities. Participants had negative attitudes towards Australian English and were unable to identify where the speaker was from. The difference between this research and my own is the qualities the speakers were rated on. I had participants rate speakers on their ages, years of English experience, and a possibility
of getting a job based on English abilities. These qualities, I propose, provide a better understanding of the cultural and economic value the participants attach to various WE speakers.

Like my study, Cavallaro and Chin (2009) used recordings to investigate attitudes towards two varieties of Singaporean English (Singapore Standard English and Singapore Colloquial English). Participants listened to two recordings separately and rated the recordings on a seven-point scale. The researchers also chose to use native and non-native speakers of the local WE variety (Singapore Colloquial English) used in the recordings to compare the participants’ attitudes. Participants who spoke the local WE variety rated Singapore Standard English higher than Singapore Colloquial English, whereas participants who did not speak the local WE variety rated both varieties higher than the native participants. Where Cavallaro and Chin used Likert scales, I chose to use open-ended questions and interviews to obtain participants' attitudes. Also, the researchers chose participants based on their experiences with the local variety of WE. Participants were chosen based on their experiences with the local WE to further understand the perceptions of the majority language contrasted with the minority language. My study also used participants based on their experience with specific WE varieties. I used both native and non-native speakers of English, but also used a few speakers in my recordings that participants did not have experience with.

A study that also further expands the field of WE and reflects similarities to my own is Evans (2010). In her study, Evans examined the attitudes of Chinese English learners towards Inner Circle varieties of English. Participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions pertaining to what countries they believed to speak English as an
L1 and their views were on the speakers. The findings showed that participants appreciated British English for its “pleasantness and politeness,” and American English for its “casualness and modernism” (275-276). Evan’s study does not provide recordings to elicit the attitudes of participants, where my own research does so. Evans required participants to name countries where English is an L1, but many participants were unable to give qualities to the varieties they were not familiar with (Australian or New Zealand English). My study has participants listen to recordings, so even if they do not have experience with the variety, they will still be able to give their attitudes based on what they were able to hear.

Hundt, Zipp, and Huber (2015) used open ended questions and recordings as I do, but they also incorporated questionnaires, writing samples, and other data gathering techniques. The purpose of the study was to understand the attitudes of Fijians towards World Englishes, specifically Inner Circle varieties. To ascertain attitudes, questionnaires were distributed to 149 Fijian university students. The questionnaires had four open-ended questions regarding language attitudes and usage. Participants answered, “which country is the best spoken in and which English do you find most pleasant” (694). After completing the questions, participants also had to write a short essay discussing which English they used in their everyday lives. The researchers found British English was considered the higher prestige of English varieties, followed by American, Australian, New Zealand, and South African English. Hundt, Zipp, and Huber relied on paper-based questionnaires to interact with participants. The absence of interaction allows confusion, a lack of questions answered, and a lack of explanations. My study allows for there to be
interaction between each participant and the researcher to ensure there is understanding and clarity throughout the process.

The scope of research regarding WE encompasses diverse forms of methodology, some of which are similar to my own due to the procedures used or the questionnaires. A gap is left in the field of WE due to a focus on the use of surveys.

**Studies That Use Written Surveys**

Many of the studies of WE encompass methodology which use surveys and Likert scales to understand attitudes, whereas my study allows discussion and open-ended questions to give deeper understanding of attitudes towards WE.

For example, Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) investigated attitudes of Japanese, South Koreans, and Malaysians towards their own varieties of English, as well as their attitudes towards American and British English. Participants completed a twelve-item questionnaire regarding “beliefs about the world, feelings about a target language and a group of its native speakers, and approaching or avoiding a certain ethnic group” (395). The questionnaire was scored on a six-point scale that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. After the questionnaire, participants answered a series of questions in writing pertaining to what they believed to be the most important aspect of speaking English and what English variety they used to judge others. The findings showed that Japanese and South Korean participants had negative views of their own English varieties, while the Malaysians had positive views of their variety of English. While Tokumoto and Shibata assess attitudes of participants on Likert scales and paper based questionnaires, I use interviews to allow for more natural discussion and give opportunities for participants to explain their beliefs.
Another study, which examined attitudes towards WE by using surveys, was conducted by Bernaisch (2012). The survey consisted of bipolar pairs of thirteen words, such as “ugly – beautiful, unfriendly – friendly”, which were arranged on a six-point scale (284). The bipolar pairs were meant to refer to the attitudes of Sri Lankans towards British, American, Indian, and Sri Lankan English. The findings indicated that British English was considered a more esteemed form of English, followed by Sri Lankan, American, and Indian English. While Bernaisch’s study did draw conclusions on attitudes towards various World Englishes, its method was not designed to capture any attitude beyond ranked order of preference. My study, alternately, is designed to allow for multiple value judgments, including place of origin, age of speaker, experience with English, and likelihood of employment.

Similar to the other studies represented here, Tan and Tan (2008) used surveys, rating systems, and Likert scales to record participant attitudes. Tan and Tan used recordings of WE speakers, had participants guess the WE speakers’ nationalities, and rated the speakers on individual qualities. The recordings used in the study were of five different English speakers (Standard American, Standard Indonesian, Hong Kong, Singaporean English, and a Singaporean accent). The researchers initially had participants listen to each speaker and indicate the nationality of that speaker. Tan and Tan used Likert scales to rate the speakers on “intelligence, affinity, and friendliness,” and also required participants to rate the speakers as though they were teachers of English and Math (470). It was concluded that although participants viewed Standard English as the established variety and Singlish as the lower variety, participants respect Singlish because it is part of a Singaporean’s identity. In my study, participants were not asked to
rate speakers on scales. Instead, I use open-ended questions that allow them to freely
discuss their thoughts on each speaker rather than constricting them to set terms and
numbers to rate them. In order to avoid prompting participants to draw from previously-
held attitudes, I also did not give any background of the speakers so participants would be
less likely to draw from predisposed attitudes

Although people may have knowledge about World Englishes, this does not mean
that they will have a greater acceptance towards all varieties of WE. Yoshikawa (2005)
centralized his study on the attitudes of Japanese students towards WE and how the
program they were in affected their views. To determine the students’ attitudes,
Yoshikawa gave a questionnaire to new first year students before they entered into the
program and compared those students’ results with the returning second and third year
students. The questionnaire included seven statements, for example, “English has to be
taught by native speakers, and, “English has to be an official language in Japan” with an
extra statement for the World English students which was, “You had better avoid using
idiomatic expressions in conversations in English with non-native speakers of English
(353). Participants rated their answers on a five-point scale, which ranged from disagree
to agree. Yoshikawa found some intriguing results, such as the World English students
had a greater disdain for the New Englishes and preferred standard variations of English.
Yoshikawa’s reliance on a questionnaire to acquire the attitudes of participants and have
participants to draw from their previous experiences with the different Englishes, does
not allow participants to further explain their views, and has allowed time to influence
their previous experiences with the languages. Time can influence participants’
experiences by allowing them to forget what they had originally experienced and/or
allows for there to be outside influences, such as media, additional classes, and further experience with the language, which change their initial thoughts and feelings. My study and data collection method allows for there to be no delay in time and for participants to relay their attitudes; by having open-ended questions, this allowed students to explain their answers.

This literature review shows that surveys were an often-used form of research when studying WE. Where this type of research uses written surveys, I used open-ended questions and discussion to further understand attitudes towards WE. We will further examine research focusing on WE varieties that have already been experienced by participants.

**Studies That Focus Only on WE Participants Had Already Experienced**

Some studies in the field of WE use English varieties that have already been experienced by participants. To allow for clearer understanding of attitudes towards WE, my study does not focus on previously experienced varieties, but has participants respond to varieties they may not have experienced.

**Already Experienced Inner Circle Varieties** Some research in the field of WE focuses on attitudes towards previously experienced varieties of Inner Circle English. An example of this research was conducted by Hiraga (2005) and Zhang and Hu (2008). Hiraga’s study focused on British attitudes towards three varieties of British English (standard, urban, and rural) and three varieties of American English (standard, urban, and rural). Hiraga specifically wanted to understand British views on “‘solidarity’ (the extent to which an individual identifies with an accent) and ‘status’ (the perceived prestige of the accent)” (209). To test the attitudes, Hiraga chose 32 participants from Southern
England who were all studying at Oxford University. Hiraga found that in terms of status, Standard British English was perceived as having higher esteem: for solidarity, Standard American English had higher esteem. The findings also indicated that participants were able to differentiate between each variety of American English. It was concluded that American and British English were only favored for the Standard varieties, whereas the urban and rural varieties are associated with the lower and working classes. A second study, which holds similarities to Hiraga, was conducted by Zhang and Hu (2008). In the study, Zhang and Hu had 30 Master’s and Doctoral Chinese students, who were studying in the United States, rate speakers on language and individual qualities, as well as the speaker’s potential teaching abilities. From the study, the researchers found that participants had positive attitudes towards both British and American English in all of the qualities. Participants had negative attitudes towards Australian English and were unable to identify where the speaker was from.

The participants in both Hiraga’s and Zhang and Hu’s studies had all at some point experienced the WE varieties before participating in the studies. Many people already have predisposed attitudes towards Inner Circle varieties of English because of the prominence of the varieties in everyday life. These studies present a gap because researchers used WE varieties already experienced by participants. Due to their previous experiences, predisposition of attitudes can occur. My own study fills the gap by having participants respond to two Inner Circle varieties they have experienced (British and American English), one Outer Circle variety they have not experienced (Ghanaian English), and one Expanding Circle variety they have not experienced (Russian English). Using WE varieties participants have not experienced allows for authentic and unbiased
responses. Having participants voice their attitudes towards non-Inner Circle varieties allows for there to be a deeper understanding of where attitudes derive. I used WE varieties participants had already experienced to compare their responses to the varieties they had not experienced.

**Already Experienced Outer and Expanding Varieties** In the field of WE there is research, which also encompasses attitudes towards previously experienced varieties of Outer and Expanding varieties of English. Such research was led by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, and Smit (1997), Bernaisch (2012), and Tokumoto and Shibata (2011). Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, and Smit’s study had 132 German students, most of which were intending to become English teachers, listen to five different recordings. The recordings were of three native accents (Received Pronunciation, Near Received Pronunciation, and General American) and two Austrian non-native accents. The results revealed that there were more negative evaluations towards the speaker of Austrian British English, which is the variety used most in Austria. Overall, respondents preferred the RP variety. An additional study, which analyzes attitudes towards previously experienced English varieties, was conducted by Bernaisch (2012). Bernaisch focused on Sri Lankan attitudes towards British, American, Indian, and Sri Lankan English. In order to test attitudes, Bernaisch gave a survey to 169 Sri Lankans. The study found British English was the preferred variety of English with Sri Lankan, American, and Indian English to be the lesser varieties. A final study that examined attitudes of Outer and Expanding varieties of English that were previously experienced was led by Tokumoto and Shibata (2011). Tokumoto and Shibata wanted to assess the attitudes of Japanese, South Koreans, and Malaysians towards their own individual varieties of English and the
attitudes towards American and British English. In total, 128 participants (50 Japanese, 46 South Koreans, and 32 Malaysians) took part in the study. The findings revealed that Japanese and South Korean participants had a negative evaluation of their own English varieties, while the Malaysians commended their variety of English.

Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, and Smit (1997) focused their study on the preferred English type, as well as the most common varieties found within Austria. Bernaisch (2012) also chose varieties that were prominent in Sri Lanka and participants’ attitudes were predisposed due to Sri Lanka being colonized by Britain. Finally, the WE varieties Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) included in their study were used or were experienced every day by participants. These studies present a gap in research because they focused on WE varieties that were previously experienced or used every day by participants. My study uses WE varieties that participants have not encountered before to ensure that their attitudes do not derive from previous experiences or feelings towards the variety. By using WE varieties participants have not experienced, I am able to identify the source of attitudes towards lesser known WE varieties.

This study is meant to assist in developing an understanding of attitudes towards World Englishes and from where such attitudes derive. It is also meant to be a basis for future research in the field of World Englishes. In subsequent chapters, I will explain the methodology I used, who my participants were, how I analyzed the data, and the findings that came from the data analysis.
Chapter Two
Methodology

The Study

The purpose of this study is to look at the possible factors that influence peoples’ attitudes towards speakers from Inner, Outer, and Expanding of World Englishes. The specific languages used are American, British, Ghanaian, and Russian English. In detail, this particular study explores if backgrounds, cultures, and personal beliefs shape attitudes towards various Englishes and the speakers of such English varieties.

Research Context

This study was performed at the University of Toledo using freshmen students who were in English Composition I courses for either native or international students. The English Composition I courses are divided into native and international sections. Initially, participants were contacted by speaking with all composition instructors and asking for their permission to use their students. Two instructors volunteered their classes for their study. From each class, two male and two female students (four students total) were recruited for the study. Students used in this study were all volunteers. The only deciding factor for recruitment was for the international students, which was student volunteers could not be from the same countries. In all, eight students were selected to participate.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do native speakers of English respond to different varieties of World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers?
2. Do people who have more experience with traveling, languages or people of various ethnicities have more positive attitudes towards people who speak a variety of WE? Are they more likely to know from where a WE speaker comes?

Participants

In total, eight participants, four males and four females, consented to be a part of this study. As previously stated, participants were chosen from both native and international English Composition I courses at the University of Toledo. All participants were in their first semester of college and were taking their first university composition course. All of the native English speakers were from the Midwest of the United States, while the non-native English speakers came from South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and India. Pseudonyms have been used when referring to the participants to ensure anonymity. In the section below, I provide relevant details about the participants.

Four of the participants were native speakers of English. Matt was a 19-year-old native speaker of English and was studying Civil Engineering. He grew up in an urban area where the ethnicities within his hometown are Caucasian. Matt had never traveled outside of the United States and he only spoke English. Although he stated that he had never traveled outside of the United States, he stated he knew other English varieties of English, and he felt that if he heard a different variety of English, he could tell where the English speaker was from.

James was an 18-year-old native speaker of English and was studying Communications. He grew up in a rural area where much of the ethnicities within his hometown are Caucasian with some Asian and African Americans. Like Matt, James had never traveled outside of the United States and he only spoke English. James knew about
different varieties of Englishes because he was taught about them in some classes he had taken. He believed he would not be able to tell where the World English speakers were from.

Another native speaker of English was Jenna. Jenna was 18 years old and studying German and Psychology. She grew up in an urban area where much of the ethnicity was Caucasian, with some African Americans and Hispanics. She had traveled to Austria and Germany and she fluently spoke English and German. Jenna knew about other varieties of English due to experience and classes she had taken, and she believed she could tell where a speaker was from based solely on the variety of English he or she spoke.

Kari was the final native English speaker participant. She was also 18 years old and pursuing a business major at the university. Kari grew up in an urban area where much like the rest of the native speakers, the ethnicity was predominantly Caucasian, but her family hosted exchange students so she had experience interacting with Germans, Chinese, Japanese, and South Koreans. She solely spoke English and knew about different varieties of English due to classes she had taken at the university and presumed that she could tell where an English speaker was from based on the variety of English he or she spoke.

The other four participants were non-native English speakers. Jalal was a 22-year-old Saudi Arabian studying Chemical Engineering at the university. He grew up in an urban hometown that consisted of Saudi, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Sudanese, and Ethiopian ethnicities. Jalal started speaking English at 18 years old, and he fluently spoke Arabic and English. Outside of his home country, Jalal had traveled to the United States
and Dubai. He knew of other varieties of English because he had a friend who spoke a variety of Jamaican English and even though he had personal experience with other varieties of English, he presumed he could not tell where an English speaker was from solely from what variety was spoken.

Even though the next two participants were from Outer Circle countries, English proficiency can vary widely within such countries. The participants could have been defined as native speakers, but for purpose of this study they are not. International students who apply to the university must demonstrate proof of language proficiency through multiple means such as TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE scores, English language programs, completion of high school where English is taught, and the university also provides a list of exempt countries. The university did not provide rationale for why certain countries were on the list. The following two participants were from Sri Lanka and India, both of which were not on the list. If students provide proof of language proficiency, they must then take a written placement exam to decide which international composition course to take. Students must take the international student section of Composition I before they can take Composition II with native students. A final reason that these participants were chosen as non-native speakers was because they did not identify as native English speakers. Each participant had stated that they fully began learning English during elementary school. Dilip had stated that he learned Tamil first, even though English was used at times at home. Nita had stated the same with learning Murati. Under these terms, the participants were chosen as non-native speakers.

Dilip was a 19-year-old bilingual speaker of English and was studying Mechanical Engineering. He was from Sri Lanka and he began learning English at five
years old. Dilip grew up in an urban hometown where most of the population was Sri Lankan, but there were some Indian and Chinese ethnicities as well. He had traveled to Singapore, Malaysia, India, and the United States. He fluently spoke English, Tamil, and Sinhalese and knew about other varieties of English due to personal experience and stated he could probably tell where an English speaker was from based on the variety he or she spoke.

Nita was an 18-year-old non-native speaker of English studying English at the university. She was from an urban city in India and she began learning English at five years old due to the fact that English was spoken as a second language within her home. Other than English, she fluently spoke British English, Hindi, Murati, Konkani, and French. Nita had only traveled to the United States, but had experienced many variations of English because she had family members who lived in different countries. Even though Nita knew about other varieties of English, she did not believe she could tell where an English speaker was from based on what English he or she spoke.

Finally, Subin was a 19-year-old non-native speaker of English. She was from South Korea and was studying Nursing. She grew up in an urban area that was predominantly South Korean in ethnicity. She began learning English at 13 years old and she fluently spoke English and Korean. Outside of South Korea, Subin had traveled to France, Japan, and Thailand. Due to her educational experience and personal experience, Subin knew about different English varieties, especially British English because she was taught it in school, and from this experience she believed she could tell where an English speaker was from and what variety he or she speaks. The demographics of the participants are further presented in Table 2.1.
Table 2.1: Participant Demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant*</th>
<th>Matt</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Jenna</th>
<th>Kari</th>
<th>Dilip</th>
<th>Jalal</th>
<th>Subin</th>
<th>Nita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native or Non-native English speaker</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Non-native</td>
<td>Non-native</td>
<td>Non-native</td>
<td>Non-native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban or rural living</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveled outside of home country</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started speaking English</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks more than one language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows other English varieties</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pseudonyms used

Data Collection

Data from the study was gathered by means of interviews utilizing twenty-five questions. The questions were created and expanded upon from a previous study the researcher conducted three years prior during her undergraduate studies. The questions addressed an assortment of topics about the possible influences on attitudes towards other varieties of Englishes and were separated into five distinct categories. The first category contained thirteen questions that pertained to general background information regarding participants’ language, cultural, and educational experiences. The second category
contains three questions that are repeated four different times or for each audio clip. This particular section investigated the participants’ perceptions towards speakers of diverse English speakers. The third category was follow-up questions regarding the audio clips they heard and answered. The follow-up questions were used to get a more in depth understanding of the responses from category two. Category four asked the participants’ experiences with World Englishes. These questions were asked later so they would not influence how participants responded during categories two and three. Finally, the last category was used to further understand participants’ thoughts on World Englishes.

The recordings that were used were from a website called The Speech Accent Archive at accent.gmu.edu, which is a website that contains audio clips of World English speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds. In total, four recordings were used. All speakers from the recordings were male and relatively close in age. The speakers were also chosen based on the pace of speech and the ages the speakers began speaking English. The four speakers were from the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, and Ghana. See Appendix A for the transcript that was read for the audio portions. During the data collection, handwritten notes were taken and after the interviews, typed transcripts of the interviews were made. See Appendix B for a full list of the interview questions used.

Data Analysis

To begin coding, I went through the five categories of questions that I referred to in Appendix A and recorded the themes from each separate category. I read through the typed transcripts and labeled repeated themes that stood out from participants’ answers in the margins. Initially, I began with categories one, four, and five. These categories were
background questions, participant WE experiences, and participant WE thoughts. I focused on the following responses:

1. Countries traveled to
2. Ethnicities within hometown
3. Previous experienced varieties of English
4. Varieties of English heard in media and school
5. Varieties of English used at home, with friends, and in the United States
6. Name other types of English varieties
7. Willingness to learn another English variety

These responses were taken into account due to the affect they could have on participants’ attitudes from previous experiences, which was one of my research questions. The themes that were categorized from these sections were Life Experiences and Familiarity.

Once I was done coding the first group of responses, I then wrote themes from categories two and three, which were the responses to the audio clips and follow-up questions. I coded the themes with a number one or two which directly corresponded to my research questions, which were:

1. How do native speakers of English respond to different varieties of World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers?
2. Do people who have more experience with traveling, languages or people of various ethnicities have more positive attitudes towards people who speak a variety of WE? Are they more likely to know from where a WE speaker comes?
The themes that came from participant responses in these two categories were WE abilities, Understandability/Clarity, and Accent Favoring.

The final theme I created did not come from the verbal responses themselves, but rather the nonverbal responses, which in turn became the name of them theme. It was pertinent to categorize the nonverbal cues because they showed participants’ discomfort or comfort with their responses to questions.

While coding I found it difficult to code participants’ thoughts on WE and nonverbal cues. It was difficult to code the participants’ thoughts on WE because participants did not have consistent answers when naming other types of Englishes. Their willingness to learn a different a variety of English was also challenging when coding because participants’ responses did not specifically fit the research questions, which was also true when coding participants’ nonverbal cues. To resolve the difficulties with coding I initially referred to my literature review to find similar themes and responses to my own. I found Yoshikawa (2005) had also investigated the experiences of students with WE and their thoughts and willingness to learn other types of Englishes. Yoshikawa had noted that previous experiences had influences these responses, so I categorized the responses to Life Experiences. When it came to nonverbal cues, I analyzed the notes I had taken during the interviews. I found that there were certain responses which caused more movements from participants, and these appeared more with Understandability/Clarity.

Coding my data allowed for there to be a clearer correlation between the coded data and my research questions. Each of my research questions were able to be answered more in depth because there were multiple themes that were represented for each
question. I used the coded data when writing my results, which are presented in Chapter 3. To see the themes I created with definitions and examples from participant responses refer to table 2.2.
Table 2.2: Themes, Definitions, and Examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Experiences</td>
<td>Participant interactions with speakers of WE through travel and life growing up</td>
<td>Dilip: I really like traveling. I have been to Singapore, Malaysia, and China. I also got to experiences a lot of different people living in my town like Americans, Indians, and some Chinese too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Through life experiences participants were able to become familiar with some WE and were able to give examples of varieties of WE</td>
<td>Kari: I know about other English varieties because of the different students my parents had stay with us. We had German and Chinese students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE ability</td>
<td>Participant ability to describe where a WE speaker is from, the education received, and length of time speaking English</td>
<td>James: Speaker one was from Spain and his highest education was college. He had been speaking English for only 5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandability/Clarity</td>
<td>Description used for follow-up responses when describing the WE speaker’s voice and syntax</td>
<td>Jalal: Speaker 3 would get a better job because he was very clear when speaking and it was easy for me to understand everything he was saying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent Favoring</td>
<td>Description used for follow-up responses for most and least preferred WE variety heard</td>
<td>Jenna: I liked speaker 2 because his voice was calm and interesting. I did not like speaker 3 because I experiences this English type daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Cues</td>
<td>Movements made by participants throughout research process</td>
<td>Subin: Shifted in seat multiple times and would close eyes when listening World Englishes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this chapter was to present the methodology used for acquiring and evaluating the data that was identified in this study. The next chapter will present the findings, limitations, and further discussion of this study.
Chapter Three

Results and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present my findings to my research question which were: 1.) How do native speakers of English respond to different varieties of World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers? and 2.) Do people who have more experience with traveling, languages or people of various ethnicities have more positive attitudes towards people who speak a variety of WE? Are they more likely to know from where a WE speaker comes? I will also give a more detailed discussion of the data in relation to the study and the themes that arose from participant responses. The final sections of this paper will be a discussion on the limitations of this study and the suggestions for future research.

Findings

Research Question One: How do native speakers of English respond to different varieties of World Englishes compared to non-native English speakers?

Through this research, I found that there was no clear difference in responses from the native speakers and non-native speakers to different varieties of WE. In fact, there were more similarities in responses between the two groups than there were differences. On follow-up question one, which English variety would be more useful if you were to use it in everyday life, three of the four native participants stated American English would be more useful. All four non-native participants also stated a preference towards American English.
For follow-up question two, which English variety do you think would get a better job, there was an even split between the answers given by the native and non-native participants. This was the only question where native and non-native participants responded differently. All native participants except for Kari stated that the British speaker would get a better job. Matt, James, and Jenna said that the British speaker would get a better job due to the voice sounding “more appealing and it can be considered more attractive for bosses and customers. All of the non-native participants, except for Dilip, stated that the American speaker would get a better job. Nita, Subin, and Jalal noted that the American speaker was “clear and understandable.”

The third follow-up question participants were asked was which speaker they liked better. The responses for both native and non-native participants showed a preference for the British speaker. The second most prominent choice was the American speaker. Matt, Kari, Dilip, and Subin all preferred the British speaker. James, Jalal, and Nita all had a liking for the American speaker. Jenna of all the participants said she liked the Russian speaker because he “was different than the rest. He sounded like he had an interesting story and life to tell. I also like different languages and learning different languages so he stands out compared to everybody else.”

The final question participants were asked was which speaker they liked the least. All of the native and non-native participants, except for Jenna, stated that they did not care for the Ghanaian speaker. A commonality that appeared among the reasoning for all of the participants was that the Ghanaian speaker was difficult to understand. Jenna was the only outlier of the group stating that she did not care for the American speaker. Her logic behind this choice was that she heard American English every day. The American
speaker or American English in general for her “is too standard and uninteresting. Compared to the other English speakers, our English is boring sounding. Think about it, people who have to learn English as a new language can add more to the language with their own words or ways to say something.”

I was surprised that both the native and non-native participants responded to different World English varieties in similar ways. Previous research had shown diverse responses from participants regarding WE. Yoshikawa (2005) found that students from the same country (Japan) and studying in the same program all had different perceptions towards WE. This was also true for Tokumoto and Shibata (2011). In their study, they analyzed the responses of Malaysian, Japanese, and Korean students, who were all studying English in different universities, towards WE and found the participants from the diverse countries all had different perceptions. Thusly, I believed I would receive the same results. The participants within my study may have all responded in the same way due to the chosen WE varieties. More recordings or more diverse recordings could result in different responses.

Research Question Two: Do people who have more experience with traveling, languages or people of various ethnicities have more positive attitudes towards people who speak a variety of WE? Are they more likely to know where a WE speaker comes? To understand participant experiences, I analyzed the responses from the background information questions and responses from the participant WE experiences. Of the native participants, Jenna had the most experience considering she had traveled to two other countries (Austria and Germany), spoke two languages (English and German), and experienced more ethnicities within her hometown (Asian, Hispanic,
and African American). Matt was the least experienced native having never traveled outside of the U.S., only spoke English, and his hometown’s ethnicity was mostly Caucasian. Dilip had the most of the non-native participants. He had traveled to four countries (Singapore, Malaysia, India, and the U.S.), spoke three languages (Tamil, Sinhalese, and English), and experienced more ethnicities in his hometown (American, Chinese, and Singporean). Finally, Nita was the least experienced non-native having only traveled to the U.S., spoke British English, Murati, Konkani, and some French, and her hometown had mostly Indian ethnicities with some Chinese and French. Although each participant had varying experiences, they all responded to the WE in similar ways. When listening to the audio recordings, participants had to choose the highest education the speaker had received as well as the length of time the WE speaker spoken English. Each participant had stated that the American speaker had the highest level of education and had been speaking English the longest. All the participants had also stated that the Ghanaian speaker had the lowest level of education and had been speaking English for the shortest amount of time.

In regards to the second half of the question, are they more likely to know where a speaker comes, it did not yield clear results. Of both the native and non-native participants, Jenna, who had the most experience of the native participants, was the only one to properly state where each speaker was from. Dilip, who had more experience than both the native and non-native participants, was the only participant who incorrectly stated where each speaker was from. Of all the speakers, the American English speaker was recognized the most with only Dilip incorrectly stating where the speaker was from.
Again, I was surprised by the outcome of this question. I had expected participants to have fewer issues placing the British and American speakers due to the feedback of participants experienced those Englishes more in media and school. This was not true because only three of the participants were able to place the British speaker. Zhang and Hu’s (2008) participants, who were all Chinese, were all able to accurately identify the American and British English speakers, but were unable to identify the Australian English speaker. The participants from Zhang and Hu’s study were unable to identify the Australian English speaker due to the lack of experiences with said variety. Due to my participants’ inexperience with Russian and Ghanaian English, they had more problems identifying them.

Discussion

From the responses during the interviews with participants, clear themes arose. The specific themes were: understandability/clarity, accent favoring, life experiences, familiarity, WE ability, and nonverbal cues. Each theme will be discussed individually.

Understandability/Clarity From the data it became evident that some of the participant perceptions were built on their abilities to clearly understand the WE speaker, which meant that participants had less negative attitudes towards the varieties they had more experience with. During the follow-up questions, every participant at some point stated that they preferred a certain WE speaker because the speaker was easy to understand. James had described the American English speaker as “a lot clearer and compared to the others, easier to understand.” If the participant did not like the speaker, the participant would again bring up the point of understandability. When describing why the Ghanaian speaker was the least preferred speaker, Matt noted that the speaker was
“scratchy sounding and he would be harder to communicate properly with. I also had a hard time trying to figure out what he was saying.” Kari stated, “I would almost need a translator to tell me what he was saying. Even though he was speaking English, it was almost like he was speaking another language. If I hadn’t heard the other speakers before him, I wouldn’t have known a thing he was saying.” This was surprising to me that participants based their preferences of WE speakers on understandability when I had specifically chosen each WE speaker based on voice clarity.

**Accent Favoring** This study’s data presented a favoring of the American English speaker. All of the participants had stated that this speaker had the most education and had been speaking English the longest. All of the non-native participants favored the American English speaker. Nita presented the point, “I want to speak more like an American because my friends will understand me better. When I first came to the U.S., people couldn’t understand me because I spoke British and Indian English. I had to change my English to be more American so my friends actually would understand me.” I found this point to be interesting because I had not considered that the non-native participants would favor this WE variety because they wanted to be understood and liked by their peers. The native participants were more split in their favoring compared to the non-native participants with Kari and Matt favoring the British speaker, James favoring the American speaker, and Jenna favoring the Russian speaker. The native participants’ choices were based on the speaker sounding interesting. Both Matt and Jenna had stated that they favored certain speakers because they sounded different and more interesting than the English varieties they heard in their daily lives. The only unanimous favoring that was made by all of the participants was favoring the Ghanaian speaker the least. All
of the participants had stated that this speaker had the least amount of education and had not been speaking English as long as the other speakers.

**Life Experiences** The data from this study showed many of the participants had experiences with WE that were used both in the study and not in the study. Participant experiences varied from travel, ethnicities within hometown, friends and family, and classes at university. During the background questions participants could state whether they had experience with a WE. Many participants had claimed they did, but were unable to state a WE variety. Some participants said they had not experienced a WE variety, but based on their backgrounds they did have experiences but may not have known. Of the participants, the non-native participants had more experiences with varieties of WE, especially Inner Circle varieties. All of the non-native participants had more experiences than the native participants, but it was interesting that Jenna, the native participant, was the only participant who was able to identify where each speaker was from, was more accepting of the Outer and Expanding Circle variety of Englishes, and yet was biased towards her own variety of WE.

**Familiarity** From the background questions, a common theme stood out which was familiarity due to life experiences. People can have brief experiences with WE, but they can also have elongated exposure to WE which could allow for them to build on their perceptions. Participants within this study stated they knew where a speaker was from because they were familiar with the WE variety from personal experience. Jalal was able to identify the British English speaker because he was familiar with the variety through his previous education in Saudi Arabia. James stated, “I guess I like the American speaker because it’s what I’m used to. It sounds normal to me and anyone or
anything else just doesn’t sound right.” Had James experienced more WE varieties, it would be likely that he would have had a different perception towards WE.

**WE Ability** Another theme which came from the data was the correlation to the participants’ beliefs on whether they could tell where a WE speaker was from and their actual abilities saying where a WE speaker is from. Participants were asked before listening to the audio if they believed they could tell where a WE speaker was from and if they knew of any WE varieties. All of the participants stated they knew about different varieties of WE and six of the eight participants believed they could tell where a speaker was from. Five participants who said they would be able to tell where a WE speaker was from were able to state the origin of two or more of the WE speakers. The two participants who said they would not be able to tell where a speaker was from were only able to state the origin of one of the speakers. One of the participants, Dilip, was an anomaly of the group. He believed he could tell where a WE speaker was from and was quite confident in his abilities. He was only able to place the Russian English speaker, but he had stated that the speaker was actually from the Ukraine. Dilip’s inability to specify where the WE speakers were from could have been from dishonesty when answering his background questions or not fully becoming familiar with other WE varieties. It is clear that people can recognize their ability or inability in to know from where a WE speaker comes.

**Nonverbal Cues** A final theme displayed from the data was nonverbal cues or movements made by the participants. The nonverbal cues made it much clearer when participants were more comfortable or uncomfortable with a specific WE. These movements also made it easier to understand what participants were feeling even if they
were not saying anything. All of the participants relaxed in their seats when the audio was played for the British or American English speakers. The participants would unfold their arms or give a faint smile as if they already knew where the speaker was from. The participants had different reactions when listening to the Outer and Expanding Circle varieties. When listening to the Ghanaian speaker, Jalal had a clear expression of confusion on his face. He leaned on the table as if he was straining to hear the audio. Subin shifted in her seat multiple times as she listened to the Russian speaker. She even closed her eyes while listening. Although these participants came from different countries and had different life experiences, they all had similar nonverbal reactions while listening to different varieties of WE.

Implications

The results from this research and data show positive attitudes towards Inner Circle varieties of WE or varieties that are more commonly experienced by participants. All of the participants within this study were living and studying in the United States, which makes it clear why the participants had positive attitudes towards American English. If the participants had more exposure to other WE varieties, especially Outer and Expanding Circle varieties, then there would be a greater probability of participants having more positive attitudes towards those varieties. The results of this research assist the study of World Englishes and the field of sociolinguistics in giving a deeper understanding of perceptions due to peoples’ life experiences and the perceptions of native English speakers compared to non-native English speakers towards WE.
Limitations

Within this study there were numerous limitations. The primary limitation within this study was the number of participants that were all in the first year or second year of school with varying backgrounds and degrees that were willing to take the time and participate. If there were more participants used, the data would give a clearer description of true perceptions held towards World Englishes and the speakers of such Englishes. All of the native students who participated in this study were from the Midwest region of the United States. Had more participants been from different regions of the United States, as well as more countries other than those within this study, the data would display a clearer positive and or negative perception held towards World Englishes.

This study was also based on the participants’ truthfulness when relaying responses to the interview questions, which can allow for some possible dishonesty on the participants’ parts whether it was consciously known or not. Had real interactions between the participants and other speakers of World Englishes ensued, there would be a possibility for responses. The final limitation of this study was the audio or World English speakers used to gather participants’ reactions and feedback. The audio used from the website called The Accent Archive was scripted so speakers had to read from the given paragraph rather than have naturalistic speech occurrences and more of a scripted sounded audio clip. Had there been more time, real conversations between different World English speakers would have been used to ensure the perceptions would not be solely based on the accent or perceived origin of a speaker, but also the languages, words, and intonations used by the speakers.
Suggestions for Future Research

Future research can expand on this topic in many ways. I have found that much of the previous research done only focused on native or non-native participants, not on both. My study focused on both native and non-native participants, but it was only a small sample. A larger sample of both native and non-native participants could yield clearer results of attitudes towards WE. To also get a larger sample, it would be beneficial to find participants who are not students or studying at a university, but rather find participants who are working in the real world. By doing this, it could also assist in finding other factors that influence attitudes towards WE. Finally, future research could utilize more WE varieties, specifically from Outer and Expanding Circle countries. The field of WE would benefit from focusing less on peoples’ perceptions on Inner Circle WE varieties and more on varieties that are not commonly experienced.

Conclusion

It is evident from these findings that native and non-native English speakers do not respond to World Englishes differently. In fact, much of their responses are similar. Also, peoples’ experiences with different varieties of WE does affect their attitudes whether it is in a positive or negative way. Having more experience with a WE allows for people to have more positive attitudes, but as people become familiar with a WE, they can also grow bored and uninterested with the variety. This is present in both native and non-native English speakers. Even if a person has experience with a WE variety, this does not mean that he or she will always be able to recognize the variety especially when identifying it from other varieties. Finally, even if people want to not show bias or their true perceptions towards a WE or a speaker of a WE, their true feelings will still be
displayed through nonverbal cues that may not be done intentionally. Ultimately, people have attitudes towards WE whether they have experience or no experience with the varieties.
References


Appendix A

Transcript Recording

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.
Appendix B

Interview Questions

Table B.1: Interview Questions. This is the full list of interview questions used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1 – Background Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How old are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where are you from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is your major?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How long have you lived in the United States?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What countries have you traveled to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did you grow up in an urban or rural area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was the population of your home town or city?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What ethnicities were in your school, home town, or city?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What languages do you fluently speak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why did you learn English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you heard of other varieties of English or did you know there are other varieties of English, such as British English, American English, African English, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2 – Audio Clips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Where do you think this person is from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How much education do you think this person has received?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How long do you think this person has been speaking English?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3 – Follow Up Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• From the audio clips that you heard, which English variety would be more useful if you were to use it in everyday life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From the audio clips that you heard, which English variety do you think would get a better job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From the audio clips that you heard, which English variety did you like better? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From the audio clips that you heard, which English variety did you like the least? Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 4 – Participant World English Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What varieties of English do you or did you hear on the TV, radio, or movies in your home country? Such as American English, British English, Singapore English, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What variety of English were you taught in school? Such as American English, British English, Singapore English, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What variety of English do you use when speaking with your friends and family at home? Such as American English, British English, Singapore English, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What variety of English do you use here while in the United States? Such as American English, British English, Singapore English, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 5 – Participant World English Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Can you name any other types of English than the ones you have heard or talked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
about during this interview?

- Do you want to learn a different variety of English other than the one or ones you know now? Such as American English, British English, Singapore English, etc.