

**Beliefs about English as an International Language: A Comparative
Study of English-Major and Non-English-Major Undergraduates
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

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Abstract

The study of English as an international language acts as rich area of investigation. This research studied Pakistani English-major and non-English-major undergraduates' sensitivity towards English as an International Language (EIL). A 13 items questionnaire was used as a research instrument which was distributed among the English major and non-English major students of different universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Data was collected from 1080 students. The data were examined through SPSS using a quantitative approach. The findings indicated that there is a significant divergence in EIL perceptions between English major and non-English majors, suggesting that the academic major plays a pivotal role in shaping students' views of EIL. English-major students demonstrate a more inclusive and global perspective of EIL due to their extensive exposure to and engagement with the English language. Thus, the findings reveal that English-major students in Pakistan hold more positive awareness of EIL compared with their non-English-major counterparts.

Keywords: Perceptions, EIL, awareness, English-major undergraduates.

Introduction

In order to effectively navigate the worldwide landscape of English as an International Language (EIL), students must cultivate a diverse set of abilities to accommodate its extensive usage as a means of global communication. Prodigious adeptness in English is necessary for a wide range of work prospects. In order to foster intercultural understanding among students, it is essential that they succeed in their respective disciplines and possess a complete comprehension of many cultures (Richards, 2010). The extant literature has thoroughly examined the professional identity of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), with language instruction playing a vital part in its formation.

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Pennington (2014) states that there is a growing interest in evaluating the professional profiles of English students to determine their compliance with general standards and professional abilities. In order to appropriately assess these skills, it is crucial to conduct tests that may successfully distinguish persons who exhibit remarkable competence in English from those who do not. Nevertheless, there are pupils that possess adverse viewpoints about English examinations. Choi (2008) and Kim (2010) discovered that a significant proportion of people oppose EFL assessments owing to their detrimental impact on learning. In addition, Tsai and Tsou (2009) found that there is a significant emphasis on high school pupils taking English as a Foreign Language (EFL) examinations, namely, TOEFL and IELTS, whereas college application exams are given excessive priority.

For the last forty years, scholars in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT) have been committed to questioning and opposing the conventional practices, examinations, textbooks, and instructional methodologies. By prioritizing EIL, they have been able to investigate and present the continuously changing sociocultural and sociolinguistic elements of language acquisition (Kachru 1976; Matsuda 2017). Considerable attention has been given to analyzing individuals' perspectives on various types of English and strategies for communicating in multicultural and multilingual contexts in a wide range of environments.

According to Bernaisch and Koch (2016), participants in some regions, including India and Sri Lanka, consider standardized varieties of English, such as British English and American English, to be more authoritative and prestigious compared to local or other regional varieties of English. Conversely, people in other areas, such as Korea, exhibited favorable endorsement for their own local digital ecosystem (Ahn 2014). Regarding SMC, a significant number of students prefer an applied methodology for teaching EIL in the traditional language classroom (Ke & Cahyani 2014).

In order to fill these knowledge gaps, the current study will use a mixed-research approach to examine the attitudes and influencing elements related to EIL among English major and non-English major students. The findings of this study can enhance the generalizability of the phenomenon under investigation, specifically the perceptions of EIL among English and non-English majors across Pakistan. Furthermore, the qualitative results may aid in the interpretation of the quantitative data, so enhancing our comprehension of the elements that may have impacted their views of EIL.

Literature Review

Crystal (1997) found that most English discussions have a combination of native and non-native English speakers, whereas a few exclusively engage native English speakers. In today's linked and globalized society, it has grown more and more common, evident in both digital and non-digital settings. As per Aslam's (2018) findings, a substantial proportion of Facebook users are non-Americans. Users from non-core nations, like India, Indonesia, and Brazil, have now exceeded the influence of core users from Anglophonic center on the social networking platform. These nations have now become the most populated on the site, surpassing the U.S. (Malkin, 2007; Yung-Hui, 2012). Consequently, English has exceeded all other languages and now holds the position of being the most widely spoken language globally.

According to the Union of International Associations (2016), South Korea has overtaken the U.S. as the leading choice for international meetings, having successfully hosted an impressive total of 206 events in 2006. Due to the constantly changing digital environment, individuals from non-native English-speaking nations have been able to interact with many linguacultural heritages. The organization's growth has been bolstered by this (Kirkpatrick, 2010). The growing occurrence of this problem has resulted in a heightened focus on the worldwide expansion of the English language and the need of enhancing intercultural communication skills in many fields. Experts in applied linguistics and TESOL have continually highlighted the substantial changes taking place in the English language within its sociolinguistic and sociocultural framework (Kachru, 1985).

A number of scholars have expressed skepticism over traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) approaches, such as the dependence on native speakers as role models, the misinterpretation of native speakers, and the use of ELT resources in the classroom. These methods are supposedly insufficient in adequately depicting the existing condition of the English language and its users. The EIL approach is highly recommended for use in ELT classrooms as well as in teacher training programs (Ali, 2024; Ali & Wasi, 2024; Matsuda, 2002, 2012, 2017). An international language is defined by its multilingual and global nature, where people use the variant of English, they find most comfortable and utilize various communication tactics (Matsuda, 2017). Multiple approaches exist for studying EIL. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that some terminology, such as "English as an international lingua franca," "global Englishes," and "world Englishes," have varying meanings (Matsuda, 2017; Selvi, 2017). Matsuda's comprehension of EIL is very suitable for this enquiry, which primarily focuses on English language learners, in terms of instructional approaches.

Multiple studies have investigated the attitudes and views of students towards EIL in various situations and settings. The perspectives of Korean students on English as EIL were investigated by Lee, J. S., and Lee, K. (2019) without taking into consideration their academic focus in English. Similarly, it explored the elements behind their shaping of EIL. As such, the analysis included two main dimensions: varieties of English and strategies of multilingual communication (SMC). The research found that different informal digital English learning (IDLE) surroundings influence the perception of students regarding EIL. The results suggest that students' perception of EIL might enhance dramatically with their exposition to a well-organized language classroom setting.

Sharifian (2009) examines the influence of English in the global milieu. The research report indicates that EIL is widely adopted as a common medium of communication in cross-cultural settings. However, these practices are prone to disapproval in traditional ELT classrooms as they fail to meet the standards established by native speakers. The analysis highlights the preference of native speakers in European ELT as opposed to the counterparts. The results indicate the international status of English with a focus on establishing comprehensibility between the interlocutors rather than native like proficiency and speaking.

Furthermore, Adnan and Tehseem (2022) investigated the perception of Pakistani students in regard to EIL. According to them, integration of intercultural competence into ELT in Pakistan is the need of the hour. The study adopted B. B. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles model (1985) theoretical model as a lens to analyze Pakistani English. The research study indicates that native languages and cultural backgrounds have a profound impact on the students' perception of EIL. A similar proposal was presented by Ali, Iqbal and Badshah (2023). Another study suggested that intercultural competence and EIL are correlated: the primary concern of EIL is the cultivation of intercultural competence (Ali, 2024). Hence, significant alterations and diversities have become integral elements of Pakistani English.

Fareed, M. (2016) carried out research to investigate the perception of teachers with regard to EIL. The study also tried to find out the influence of global variation on English in the context of Pakistan. The research study indicated that English has undergone substantial changes during a few decades. The primary objective of learning and communication in English has reciprocal intelligibility rather than nativeness. Similarly, the research also indicates that regional variations of language are gaining more recognition in Pakistan.

Dadabhoy and Habib (2021) research study centered around the course descriptions of English language classes in the context of Pakistani educational institutions. Their goal was to determine whether or not any

strategies that are centered on the development of abilities are incorporated into the curriculum in order to provide assistance to students during the process of learning and teaching English (Dadabhoy & Habib, 2021). This research is important because it sheds light on the pedagogical aspects of EFL education for first-year college students. This is a major subject in the field, and this study focuses on it.

Keeping in view the above literature, there was a need for investigating the English major and non-English major undergraduates' perception(s) of EIL in the context of Pakistan and especially KP.

Research Questions

- i. What is the EIL perception of Pakistani BS English major and non-English-major students?
- ii. To what extent do the two groups differ in their perception of EIL?
- iii. What factors may have influenced the both groups' perception of EIL?

Methods

Research methodology refers to the systematic plan and approach employed to conduct a study, emphasizing the procedures and techniques used to gather and analyze data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The methodology section typically includes the research design, participants, data collection methods, sampling techniques and data analysis procedures. A transparent and well-defined research methodology enhances the credibility and reliability of study findings (Neuman, 2014).

Research Setting

Research setting in academic writing refers to the specific physical, social, or cultural context in which a study is conducted, providing the framework for data collection and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A number of universities offer BS English 4-years program Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Conducting a study on the perception of EIL at all the institutions in the area was almost impracticable for the researcher. Therefore, out of 34 public sector universities, the study was restricted to the following 10 institutes: Islamia College Peshawar, University of Peshawar, Bacha Khan University (Charsadda), Shahid Benizir Bhutto Women University (Peshawar), NUML (Peshawar), Hazara University (Mansehra), University of Swabi, Kohat University of Science and Technology, FATA University (Dara Adam Khel), University of Chitral.

Participants

Population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or phenomena under study, typically characterized by specific attributes, and is a fundamental concept in sampling and generalizability (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Whereas, a research sample is a subset of a population chosen for study, serving as a representative group that allows researchers to draw conclusions and make inferences about the larger population (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2018). Sampling techniques involve selecting participants or cases that represent the broader population under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Though all the students of Pakistan especially of KP acted as population of the study, the sample of the study consisted of the English major enrolled at the Department of English and non-English major undergraduates currently enrolled at the departments other than Department of English of the abovementioned universities. The sampling technique of the study cohered with purposive sampling as well as random sampling. As it was a comparative study, so certain type of students (i.e. English-major and non-English-major) were selected. This aligns the sample of the study with purposive sampling (Johnson & Christenson, 2020). On the other hand, the sample is a randomly selected in the second layer: after selecting the groups, the researchers employed an online source to select random numbers from the students' lists, which coheres with random sampling. The number of the respondents reached 1080. The sample represented both male and female students of the population understudy. Table 1 displays the breakdown of the number of participants from each institution.

Table 1: Institutional Distribution of Participants

Name of Institute	EMU		NEMU		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Islamia College Peshawar	34	33	29	30	126
University of Peshawar	31	29	30	31	121
Bacha Khan University	23	22	26	25	96
Shahid Benizir Bhutto Women University	0	44	0	56	100
NUML (Peshawar)	24	34	26	24	108
Hazara University	30	28	37	26	121
University of Chitral	30	23	25	26	104

Beliefs about English as an International Language	Waqar, Iqbal, Ubaid				
University of Swabi	37	26	40	23	126
Kohat University of Science and Technology	30	23	35	25	113
FATA University	29	0	34	3	66
Total	268	262	282	269	1081

Instrument

Research instruments are the tools for data collection in research studies. Many suggest questionnaire for collecting data to measure various types of characteristics including people's attitudes and perceptions (Brown, 2008; Johnson & Christenson, 2020). The researchers employed questionnaire in soft form as research tool for the collection of data. The instrument comprised 13 statements further divided into three sections: (a) proficiency of English, (b) varieties and dialects of English, (c) cultural and sociolinguistic factors. The first part consisted five statements and second and third section comprise four assertions each. The findings of the data are grouped into two sections: English Major undergraduates (EMUs), and non-English Major undergraduates (nEMUs).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the construct validity of the instrument, clear statements were provided to the participants. Following the suggestion extended by Morin (2023) a pilot survey was conducted on 10 learners of same attributes as of the population to ensure readability and comprehension of the statements which also added to the validity and reliability of the tool. Furthermore, content-related validity, as suggested by Roy, Sukumar, Philip, and Gopalakrishna (2023), was evaluated by 3 experts of the field to assess if the statements cohere with the research question(s). The high Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.827$) indicates that the instrument is reliable and internally consistent.

Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis is the process of organizing, structuring and making sense of the of data collected (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). This section contains the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data. In descriptive statistics frequency counts, percentages, standard deviation and means were calculated using SPSS. Then, the results were interpreted and presented in the form of different tables, charts, and histograms. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and integrated in the discussion.

Statistical Presentation of the Findings

Table 2 highlights the description of the partakers on the basis of gender. In total, 1080 students responded to the questionnaire. Out of the total respondents, 268 (24.8%) male English major learners while 282 (26.1%) male non-English major learners participated in questionnaire from the ten universities of KP. Similarly, 262 (24.3%) female English major students and 269 (24.9%) female English non-major responded to the questionnaire.

Table 2: Gender-wise Distribution of Participants

Group	Male		Female		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
English Major	268	24.81	261	24.26	529	50.97
non-English Major	282	26.11	269	24.91	551	49.03
Total Respondents	550	51	531	49	1080	100

Table 3 highlights the description of the participants of the research study semester-wise. As such, 99 students from 1st semester, 132 from 2nd semester, 121 from 3rd semester and 154 from 4th semester responded to the research questionnaire. Similarly, 121 students from 5th semester, 138 students from 6th semester, 155 students from 7th semester and 160 learners from 8th semester responded to the questionnaire respectively.

Table 3: Semester-wise Distribution of Participants

Semester	<i>n</i>	%
1st Semester	99	9.17
2nd Semester	132	12.22
3rd Semester	121	11.2
4th Semester	154	14.26
5th Semester	121	11.2
6th Semester	138	12.78
7th Semester	155	14.35
8th Semester	160	14.81
Total	1080	100

The Likert scale is classified as an interval scale. The mean score is extremely vital. From 1 to 1.8, it indicates severe disagreement, while 1.81 to 2.60 indicates disagreement. Between 2.61 and 3.40, it is neutral. From 3.41 to 4.20, it indicates agreement, while 4.21 to 5 indicates significant agreement (Pimentel, 2010). The questionnaire items are assessed individually as follows:

Perception of English-Major Students

Table 4 gives an overview of the competence and use of English among English major students. The respondents believed that they have attained sound proficiency in English ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.125$), and statement 2 reveals that the respondents affirmed a frequent use of English in their conversation ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.987$). As well as, a majority of these English major learners expressed their disagreement with the view of a single prescribed form of English ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.773$), implying their devotion to the linguistic norm of multiplicity of Anglophonic varieties within their academic area.

However, the English majors expressed their inconvenience and unease during communicating with speakers of different English dialects ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.382$), which implies that they, despite their positive predisposition towards EIL, lacked in intercultural competence. In addition to that, the table suggests the promotion of EIL by English as Major, as the respondents held the opinion about the competent nature of English proficiency ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.076$). Overall, their consistent responses to different statements indicate their positive perception of EIL. Furthermore, such research brings to light the connection between academic study of English on one hand and proficiency, usage, and thoughts on the language on the other, which are useful to educators and researchers.

Table 4. Proficiency in English (English Major, n = 529)

No.	Items	SD*	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
1	I have attained sound proficiency in English.	56	137	10	156	170	3.47	1.13
2	I often use English in my conversation.	65	92	12	201	159	3.56	0.99
3	I believe English has only one standard and correct form.	157	174	25	118	55	2.51	0.77
4	I feel at ease when communicating to	212	156	22	78	61	2.28	1.38

	speakers of different English dialects.							
5	My major in English has positively influenced my perception of EIL.	57	117	7	144	204	3.61	1.08
*SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N = Neutral, A= Agree, SA = Strongly Agree								

Table 5 presents a comprehensive overview of English majors' viewpoints on English varieties and dialects. The data also show a high level of agreement on the part of the respondents when it comes to existence of English dialects, with most of them ($n=529$, Mean=3.53, SD=0.635) believing in diversity of English, representations of which are American, British, Australian varieties. In addition, the results highlight the perceived need of the knowledge of these dialects in the process of communication with a large number of respondents ($n=529$, Mean=3.42, SD=0.863) supporting the idea.

Similarly, a huge majority of the partakers voiced their view about equality of the perceptions of native as well as non-native speakers of English ($n = 529$; Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.871) thereby suggesting that opinions of participants are consistent. Furthermore, they hinted about the cognizance of the concept of ownership of English. In addition, majority of the learners disagreed to the idea of learning a single English dialect ($n = 529$, Mean=2.39, SD=1.236). On the whole, these results reveal the complex attitudes of English majors to the varieties and dialects of English, where consensus and divergence coexist in the academic community.

Table 5 Varieties of English (English Major, n = 529)

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
6	I believe English has different varieties: American, British, Australian etc.	81	93	16	144	195	3.53	0.64
7	I believe effective communication needs understanding different dialects of English.	84	113	8	147	177	3.42	0.86
8	I believe the perceptions of non-native English speakers regarding EIL are as	70	99	20	141	199	3.57	0.87

important as native English speakers

9	I prefer learning only one specific English dialect.	172	189	33	59	76	2.39	1.24
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The following table illustrates the impact of the cultural as well as the sociolinguistic characterization of the opinions of English majors. The figures suggest that the majority of our respondents ($n = 529$, Mean = 4.23, SD = 1.310) were of the opinion that English holds great importance in the global context. Also, the research results imply that majoring in English significantly influences individuals' notions of EIL ($n = 529$, Mean = 3.69, SD = 1.171). It is also noteworthy that cultural factors are considered significant in shaping perceptions about EIL this is why many people ($n = 529$, Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.965) claimed that this view was influenced by their culture. In the same manner, majority of the respondents consider English language skills really important which is indicated by the mean score ($n = 529$, Mean = 4.64, SD = 0.548). On the whole, these findings illustrate the complex relationships between culture, education, and language in the making of opinions on English as a global language among English majors.

Table 6 Sociocultural Factors (English Majors, n = 529)

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
10	I think English is important as a global lingua franca.	21	33	8	210	257	4.23	1.31
11	I believe that EIL is a tool for group success, rather than individual achievement.	78	66	8	167	210	3.69	1.17
12	I think politeness is an important feature of interaction in EIL	78	66	20	164	201	3.65	0.97
13	I believe sound proficiency in English is the need of the time in wake of globalization	76	45	33	135	240	4.64	0.55

Perceptions of non-English Major Students

Table 7 presents an extensive examination of the levels of English

proficiency among BS Non-English majors. The data demonstrate a striking difference compared to English degree majors, where participants generally reported lower numbers on the scales for self-perceived proficiency and frequency of the usage of English. In particular, the English language fluency is indicated by quite a few respondents as an insufficient level ($n = 551$, Mean = 2.43, SD = 1.226). Also, the consistent usage of English in communication was not reported by most respondents ($n = 551$, Mean = 2.64, SD = 0.956). However, regarding an identical standard form of English among universities ($n=551$, Mean=3.49, SD=0.865) shows some linguistic awareness among the respondents.

Nevertheless, majority of the learners pointed out that they fear while communicating with the speakers of different English dialects ($n = 551$, M= 2.53, SD = 0.912), a sharp contrast in opinion can be seen for EIL in the majoring in the Department of English. In fact, the majority of the respondents ($n = 551$, Mean = 3.83, SD = 0.683) pointed out that their learning of English as a non-major has an impact of the way they perceive English as a world language which suggests that there is a subtle interplay between educational background and attitudes towards English as an international language. These results might show that different factors such as educational level and language policies have intricate effect(s) on English proficiency and usage among non-native English speakers, which is of great importance for educational interventions and language policies design so that language skills can be enhanced and communication issues among cultures can be solved.

Table 7. Proficiency in English (Non-English majors, n = 551)

No	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
1	I have attained sound proficiency in English.	222	153	9	102	65	2.43	1.23
2	I often use English in my conversation.	195	144	15	117	80	2.64	0.96
3	I believe English has only one standard and correct form.	121	84	25	123	198	3.49	0.87
4	I feel at ease when communicating to speakers of different English dialects.	191	163	44	75	78	2.53	0.91
5	My major in English has positively influenced my perception of EIL.	69	87	12	162	221	3.84	0.68

Table 7 throws lights on the thoughts and views of non-English major undergraduates on varieties and dialects of English. Although a noteworthy proportion of participants seem to be aware of the existence of different English dialects ($n = 551$, Mean = 2.53, SD = 1.253), indicating the initial recognition of linguistic disparity, not all respondents agreed to the need for understanding these dialects for successful communication ($n = 551$, Mean = 2.47, SD = 0.743). In fact, the mean value indicates an overall disagreement. There is an evident emphasis on native English speakers' perceptions towards the EIL ($n = 551$, Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.790) thereby acknowledging the multi-dimensional nature of English as the global lingua franca.

Moreover, though a sizable number of respondents have just chosen their own individual English dialect ($n = 551$, Mean = 3.55, SD = 1.098), there is a remarkable attitudinal variety on the problem of linguistic adaptation and flexibility. In general, the results of these studies illustrate the fact that language attitudes, cultural representations and language choice preferences of non-English students are very complex and require some specialized approach of educators and policymakers who are so involved in the issues of modern linguistic diversity and communication.

Table 8. Varieties of English (Non-English Majors, n = 551)

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
6	I believe English has different varieties: American, British, Australian etc.	204	162	6	105	74	2.53	1.25
7	I believe effective communication needs understanding different dialects of English.	203	174	21	71	82	2.47	0.74
8	I believe the perceptions of non-native English speakers regarding EIL are as important as native English speakers	99	113	9	141	189	3.52	0.79
9	I prefer learning only one specific English dialect.	88	132	16	103	213	3.55	1.1

Table 9 informs about the cultural and the social sociolinguistic factors impacting the judgments of non-English major learners. The data gives us a coherent notion concerning the role of English as a global lingua franca, where a vast majority of respondents are in favor of its importance ($n = 551$, Mean = 3.83, SD = 0.895). Not only significant recognition of the influence that majored in English has on individuals' evaluation of EIL but also the majority believe that their major really has some effect on it ($n = 551$, Mean = 2.47, SD = 0.742). At the same time, one may perceive the difference in the influence of cultural factors on EIL perceptions. The students' responses ranged across the whole scale with the mean score of 3.40 and the standard deviation of 1.297 ($n = 551$).

Moreover, a huge majority of the respondents pointed out the compelling need for a good mastery of English, with a large number of them especially highlighting its current significance ($n = 551$, Mean = 4.03, SD = 0.624). Ultimately, this evidence suggests the complexity of interdependence of linguistic, education, and culture factors in emotionally putting into English of students who are not majors in English and provide a valuable guidance for the language educators and policymakers seeking to influence the promotion of communication and language diversity in the world.

Table 9. Cultural and Sociolinguistic Factors (Non-English Majors, $n = 551$)

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
10	I think English is important as a global lingua franca.	84	56	6	212	193	3.83	0.9
11	I believe that EIL is a tool for group success, rather than individual achievement.	203	174	21	71	82	2.47	0.74
12	I think politeness is an important feature of interaction in EIL	115	113	7	141	175	3.4	1.3
13	I believe sound proficiency in English is the need of the time in wake of globalization	39	89	16	168	239	4.03	0.62

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the means of the two groups, it is revealed that there was no significant difference ($t(24) = .846, p = .406$) in the mean scores for English-Majors ($M =$

3.332412, $SD = 0.573903$) and non-English Majors ($M = 3.133779$, $SD = 0.622592$). The volume of the difference (mean difference = 0.198633, 95% CI : -0.286065 to 0.683332) was very little.

Discussion

This research examined the perceptions of Pakistani students on EIL by taking into consideration the students of the numerous departments of 10 universities (see methodology for details) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to Pimentel's (2010) ranking of means for Likert scale, a considerable diversity has been identified among the responses of the two groups. For instance, two groups shared diverse views on the first subscale: proficiency in English. Both groups rendered different responses on the statement regarding attaining proficiency in English. EMUs, on the whole, agreed to the statement, whereas NEMUs disagreed. Likewise, the former groups' response on interacting in English was numerically higher than that of the latter group. Similarly, the response rate on the rest of the statement in this subscale indicated that the EMUs had better perceptions of EIL than those of the NEMUs.

That said, the EMUs exhibited strong cognizance of the diverse nature of English and its varieties. On the other hand, NEMUs had little awareness of the diversity existing in English. They perceived English to be one particular standard language. However, both groups agreed about the equality of perceptions of both native speakers and non-native speakers. The finding is consistent with conclusions of different studies (Aslam, 2018; Malkin, 2007; Yung-Hui, 2012) that highlight proliferation in non-native users of English on digital world thereby enhancing the importance of non-native speakers' views on matters concerning English. Compared with NEMUs' preference for one standard form of English, EMUs favored exposure to different varieties of English.

The importance of sociocultural factors in EIL has been highlighted by Kachru (1985). The findings of the last subscale, sociocultural factors, indicate an amalgamation of convergence and divergence between the two groups. For instance, both groups equally recognized the importance of the EIL and acquiring proficiency in English in current wave of internationalism and globalization. It resonates with a group of studies (Malkin, 2007; Sharifian, 2009; Yung-Hui, 2012). Furthermore, the respondents' cognizance of gaining proficiency in EIL in current times resonates with conclusions of different studies (Ali, 2024; Matsuda, 2017). While EMUs found EIL an instrument for collective achievement as compared to individual success, the NEMUs mostly expressed their discord with the statement. Likewise, more EMUs than NEMUs recognized politeness as an important characteristic of effective

communication in EIL. The disparity between the two groups on these two statements reveals that EMUs were quite consistent in their responses, but the NEMUs showed inconsistency on the last subscale. However, the NEMUs' responses are consistent with their responses on the earlier two subscales. By and large, the findings reveal that the EMUs' perception of EIL was better than NEMUs'.

That said, the evaluation findings of two groups exhibited a conspicuous disparity, indicating that students' perspectives on EIL are influenced by their academic major. Pursuing a degree in English resulted in a deeper comprehension and broader familiarity with EIL as a result of consistent language use. They acknowledged the existence of several dialects of English and the impact that non-native speakers, among others, have had on the language. Nevertheless, there were additional pupils who failed to comprehend the concept; they never considered the possibility of its connection to nations where English is the official language. This is a reflection of a traditional conception of the language (Jenkins, 2019; Matsuda, 2017).

It's possible that the students' perceptions of EIL were impacted by a number of different circumstances. In Pakistan, the cultural factors, such as the linkage of status and advancement with the English language, seem to have a significant influence on the situation. Additional relevant factors were the students' familiarity with a variety of English dialects as well as their level of proficiency in the country's language. Previous research (Abbas, Rana, Bashir, & Bhatti, 2021; Seidlhofer, 2011) found that students' acceptance of different English dialects increased as their language skills improved. The findings of this study corroborated the findings of those earlier studies. Based on these results, it seems that enhancing one's language abilities might potentially result in a more positive perspective of the cultural variety that exists.

Because of the small sample size and the fact that it relied on self-reported data, the study should be considered faulty. As a consequence of this, it is recommended that caution be used whenever anybody attempts to draw any inferences from it. Nevertheless, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on EIL from the perspective of international students studying in non-English speaking countries. Thus, it emphasizes the importance of imparting English education in a manner that is inclusive and respectful towards the diverse linguistic variations spoken globally. The focus of future research should be on the view of EIL and methods to enhance students' comprehension and usage of the language.

The study's findings reveal that various factors influence the complex perspectives of Pakistani students regarding EIL. Non-native English speakers would benefit from a more comprehensive approach to

language lessons that takes into account the dynamic and diverse nature of the English language in today's world. If we truly desire our students to succeed in today's globalized society, it is imperative that we place a strong emphasis on equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate the obstacles associated with English language proficiency. The use of the English language is expanding at a rapid pace, extending beyond the borders of countries where it is the official language (Seidlhofer, 2011; Matsuda, 2017).

This world is undergoing a transformation as a result of rapid technological advancement and globalization. Conventional techniques to teaching English as a foreign language have been required to undergo fast alterations as a result of the drastic transformation. Researchers and teachers interested in EIL must strive to comprehend and, more significantly, enhance students' comprehension of EIL (Matsuda 2017). This is because interactions between English users from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are extremely common, and they can take place both in person and online. The findings of this study provide novel insights into the perspectives of university students who are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) regarding EIL. Because of this, our understanding of the topic under study is enhanced. As a result, our knowledge of this area of study would be enhanced, and we would be able to make a contribution to the existing body of research on students' views on EIL.

Conclusion

The current study aimed at determining the Pakistani university students' attitude to EIL. The respondents consisted of English majors and non-English majors. Similarly, this research attempted to highlight the factors that influenced their viewpoints. As such, the quantitative analysis of the data reveals that optimism about VE & SMC is higher among English majors than those who are not majoring in English. According to qualitative findings, two main issues had caused the different views: informal digital language learning environments and a teaching approach – teacher-led or student-centered – for EIL. Both these aspects were found to be important sources of variance between them. Based on this, it seems that conventional language instruction in a classroom environment where IE is taught can positively shape students' perception of EIL. Students' impressions of English as a foreign language (EIL) may be strongly impacted by their participation in idle activities while EIL professors are not present. On the basis of these findings, this study also makes some recommendations for research and pedagogical purposes.

The research has limitations regarding certain situations and settings. Furthermore, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to a broader community owing to the inclusion of certain student demographics that were specifically targeted in the survey. Relying on information provided by individuals also heightens the likelihood of mistakes stemming from a lack of self-awareness or prejudice, such as social desirability bias, when individuals seek to portray themselves in ways they perceive as socially acceptable. The study may have overlooked key confounding variables such as varying levels of English proficiency among college students or their prior exposure to English with exceptional cases. The use of a quantitative technique in this research may oversimplify the intricate attitudes and viewpoints that students possess on EIL, thereby overlooking the nuances that define their ideas on EIL. An exhaustive examination of study results necessitates a thorough assessment of past constraints.

Implications

Helpful it may be to mention a few implications of the current study. The current findings may assist the policy makers in designing policies concerning language instruction, curriculum designing and material development at the undergraduate level. Particularly, they may consider inclusion of instruction on different varieties of English. In addition, they may require EIL learners to be exposed to different non-native versions of English such as Indian English, Pakistani English and so on. Incorporating a wider range of accents and speech patterns in instructional materials is an effective method to expose pupils to the many forms of English spoken in diverse global contexts. Schools may organize seminars and presentations to educate individuals about English as a global language and its significance in our increasingly interconnected world.

Recommendations

Further research is required to examine the influence of culture on individuals' perceptions of English as a global language and their proficiency in the English language. Subsequent investigations may use qualitative methodologies or adopt a more inclusive approach to get deeper insights into various viewpoints of EIL. Since the current study was limited to measuring the perceptions of the learners about EIL, different comparative enquiries with regard to pedagogic methods and strategies may be conducted to evaluate the effect(s) of the same on their perception. Moreover, various data collection instruments may be employed to cross-examine the relative validity and reliability of the findings of the study. Finally, extensive mixed-method research may provide us with a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. The proposed concepts aim to transcend the limitations of the present study and facilitate

Pakistani university students in acquiring a more comprehensive grasp of English as a global language.

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