

## Abstract

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Due to the many different forms and functions of the English language today, it has become obsolete to consider it a propriety of its native speakers. English is used internationally for communication between speakers of a great number of first languages. For many contexts it should not be native speaker norms that learners of English have to follow, but rather a form of language that takes account of their respective first language identities. The concept of English as an International Language (EIL) that has been discussed for two decades or so seeks to move away from the traditional focus on native speaker varieties to a way of speaking English that serves the needs of the international English speaking community.

In order for such a concept to gain ground, attitudes towards EIL have to be favourable. Thus, it seemed desirable to carry out an attitudinal study concerning EIL among future specialists and teachers of English. Teachers are important for the formation of attitudes and attitude change on a broader scale as they pass on their views to their pupils.

The study I conducted revealed several points. First, there is little awareness of the great diversity of English and the various functions different Englishes serve. Second, teaching and speaking a non-native or international variety does not have many supporters among my respondents. Exceptions were made only in a business context, taking account of the reality of communicative situations in such a context. Third, language varieties enjoying the highest prestige continue to be Received Pronunciation and General American. Non-native accents are generally rated unfavourably.

In order to establish teaching EIL it is therefore necessary to work out a description of EIL on the one hand, and to raise awareness and foster a change of attitudes towards this concept on the other hand.