

*IN-SERVICE TEACHER
ATTITUDES TOWARDS
DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF
ENGLISH IN THE NORWEGIAN
EFL-CLASSROOM*

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Abstract

The English language has several oral varieties dependent on geographic area, social group and culture. American English and British English are often considered the two main varieties that traditionally are taught by teachers in the classroom. However, the new English subject curriculum does not specify which varieties to teach, meaning each teacher is free to determine which variety they wish to focus on in their classroom. The teachers' attitudes can therefore influence how they decide to teach and introduce the different varieties. This thesis focuses on EFL-teachers' attitudes towards the different varieties of English in the Norwegian EFL-classroom. Through a qualitative questionnaire the participants were asked about their attitudes towards the different varieties of English. There seems to be an overall openness towards the various varieties, and the majority of the teachers participating, all agreeing that intelligibility is the most important factor in English communication among EFL-students. That said, some of the teachers do appreciate the two standard English approaches, British and American English, and tend to focus more on these in their teaching.

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Introduction

In the last few decades, the advent of new technology and the effect of globalization has had an impact on the position of the English language: “Globalization has had a tremendous impact on the use of English both inside and outside the expanding circle..” (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 141). This has taken the exposure of the English language to a whole different level, especially in the countries where English has no official status; such as, Norway. English is today known as a global language that millions of people have some kind of knowledge of and familiarity with. When two billion people across the world speak one particular language, it is natural that there might be linguistic differences (Rindal, 2020, p. 24). These differences can be seen as varieties of the English language.

In the previous English subject curriculum (LK06), there was a larger focus on the inner circle countries, USA and Great Britain, both which were mentioned by name in several of the competence aims after year 10. It also stated that “(..) the subject of English shall contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary (..) language” (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2013, p. 2). This evidence suggests that LK06 were orientated towards a nativeness focus, viewing the English language as something that belongs to the countries that have English as a native language. The new English subject curriculum on the other hand, focuses more on English as an international language, as one may come across English in many ways. This is described in the curriculum as “It shall prepare the pupils for an education and societal and working life that requires English-language competence in reading, writing and oral communication” (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2020, p. 2).

This research paper examines how the different varieties of English are presented in the Norwegian EFL classroom, and in-service teachers’ attitudes towards them. The reason for choosing this theme is due to my own experience as a junior high student, having to choose between British English and American English. Other students in the same school were forced to select British English. My focus in this thesis is to find out whether teachers have the same narrow perception of the English language and its varieties today. The research questions this paper will focus on are: 1) What are Norwegian in-service teacher attitudes towards different varieties of the English language in the Norwegian EFL classroom? 2) Are the different varieties of English presented in the Norwegian classroom? If so, in what way?

The next section will present relevant theory and key terminology, fundamental for the later discussion. This, along with the findings, will be the foundation of the discussion and will help provide answers to the research questions. Important terminology such as varieties,

standard English, English as a lingua franca, intelligibility, and native speaker ideal will be explained.

Literature review

Varieties

Brook (1979) argued that “Language is a form of human social behavior and communities tend to split up into groups” (p. 12). These factors contribute to the different varieties that exist, as this reflects differences between groups (for example social status, culture, geographical adherence). English does not come in one specifically *right* oral version. There are many differences within the English language, even within a native-speaker country. In the South of England, for instance, the inhabitants speak *standard southern English*, which may be seen as the most common British variety, as it is to be found in many coursebooks and used by many teachers and examiners (Harmer, 2015). This applies to the USA as well, as Harmer (2015) argued that the typical *General American* can be considered equivalent of standard southern English. Here as well, there are clear differences in the oral language from state to state within the US. Both standard southern British English and General American is by many people seen as the two main varieties of English, and according to Harmer (2015), “teachers, exam boards and material writers generally opt for one of the two inner circle varieties” (p. 2).

English subject curriculum

In the “relevance and central values” section in the new English subject curriculum it says that the students should be able to communicate with others on different levels, despite each of the speakers’ backgrounds, both cultural and linguistic (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). Oral skills are an important part of a students’ basic skill. To create meaning in English communication, the students should adapt the language to the purpose, the receiver and the situation and choose suitable strategies (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p. 4). There are also a few competence aims after year 10 considering communication. One of the competence aims state that the students are expected to “use key patterns of pronunciation in communication”(Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p. 8). The meaning behind “key patterns” can be interpreted differently from teacher to teacher, depending on their attitudes towards the English language. Another competence aim says that the students should be able to “listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English” (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p,

8). This means that the teachers are expected to present and include different English varieties, in order for the students to reach this aim. However, as most of the competence aims in the new English subject curriculum, it is open for interpretation as they are a bit vague in the wording.

Nativeness vs. intelligibility

Andreou and Galantomos (2009) suggest a number of key points to define the concept of a native speaker. To be considered as a native speaker, one has to speak English as a first language and learned it «during childhood in an English-speaking environment» (Andreou & Galantomos, 2009, p. 201-202). To illustrate, the people in Kachru's inner circle, which will be described later on, are the ones that go under this definition. This concept of nativeness can also be relevant in an EFL-setting, as some teachers have their students aim for the nativeness principle. According to Rindal and Iannuzzi this means that the students are focusing on a native-like pronunciation, as the language used by natives is understood as the most “correct” way of speaking English (2020). As previously mentioned, there are also undoubtedly differences between native speaking varieties, so then the question is which native-speaking variety should be the ultimate goal.

As a counterpart to the native speaker ideal, the concept of intelligibility have in the recent years gotten considerably attention. Rindal and Iannuzzi defines intelligibility as something that “(..) suggests that the pronunciation goal for learners is to make themselves understood” (2020, s. 119). This perception also acknowledges that English communication does not have to be spoken with a perfect native accent. Communication based on non-native accents, can be just as successful (Rindal & Iannuzzi, 2020).

Pronunciation and intonation are factors that can affect intelligibility. Highlighting the wrong parts of the words or sentences, may cause misunderstandings in one's intentions (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 2015). How a person pronounces a word can be influenced by the native language. For a Norwegian English-speaker, consonant sounds and vowel length are typical problems that may occur due to the Norwegian language's impact (Rindal and Iannuzzi, 2020).

A study conducted by Bøhn and Hansen found that teachers in the Norwegian EFL-classroom seem to value the intelligibility aspect in English communication. However, the results also showed that a Norwegian-English accent could possibly “mark a student down from a top score” (2017, p. 62). There seems to be a stigma around a Norwegian-English accent, even though the teachers participating did treasure intelligibility.

Similar results can be seen in a master study by Dykeman in 2016, as it states that a Norwegian accent of English is stigmatized among Norwegian users (Dykeman, 2016). There was also found to be a stigma around a Norwegian-English accent in the classroom, and native-like accents were to be preferred spoken by both teachers and students (Dykeman, 2016). It seems that a big part of the reason is that the teachers do not feel confident talking with an accent, and therefore aim for a native-like variant, in order to sound more competent.

English into the future

English speakers are often divided into three categories defined by Kachru: the inner, the outer and the expanding circle (Galloway & Rose, 2015). The inner circle consists of the countries where English is the native language of the population. In the outer circle, English has an important official and stately role, in most cases because of colonization. The speakers who are defined into these two categories are often referred to as ENL-speakers (English as a native language) and ESL-speakers (English as a second language), (Galloway & Rose, 2015). The expanding circle consists of countries and speakers where English has no official role, and the speakers are referred to as EFL-speakers, as English is here taught as a foreign language (Galloway & Rose, 2015). This is the category that Norwegian English-learners fall into as English has no official role in Norway.

In the recent years the concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has grown as an alternative “variety” of the English language. In Harmer (2015) English as a lingua franca is defined as “English used as a means of communication between people who come from different language backgrounds ... not a variety in the traditional sense of term” (p. 3). Mainly when talking about English as a lingua franca, the speakers, who often have different native languages, are in need of an understandable and universal language, in order to communicate across their background (Galloway & Rose, 2015). This communication happens across Kachru’s circles, both among native – non-native speakers, and non-native-non-native speakers.

The speakers using English as a lingua franca often tend to ignore the typical Standard English grammar, as the aim is to communicate understandable, and not to be grammatically perfect. Harmer (2015) highlights some findings in an EFL-study conducted by Barbara Seidlhofer stating that there are multiple “deviations from native speaker forms” in ELF conversations (p. 3). English as a lingua franca have been criticized for allowing these errors and mistakes, which again makes the standard of the English language drop tremendously (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

Globalization is a considerable cause of why English has become the leading lingua franca of the world. Even though the ELF communication does include native speakers, it is by far the communication between ESL- and EFL-speakers, that dominates (Rindal, 2020). Therefore, Norwegian students are also more likely to talk with other non-native speakers. This again, can question the native speaker ideal, and why one should aim for this ideal, when the students to a higher extent are communicating with other ELF-speakers.

Teacher and student attitudes

As this thesis examines EFL-teachers' *attitudes* towards the different varieties of English, it can be helpful to make it clear what attitudes really means. Attitudes can be defined as "relatively lasting clusters of feelings, beliefs, and behavior tendencies directed towards specific persons, ideas, objects or groups" (Jain, 2014, p. 2). The ABC model of attitudes can also be helpful in this understanding. This model suggests that there are three components, affect, behavior and cognition, defining attitudes. Affect includes the person's feelings; behavior is about how one act and behave. Lastly, cognition describes the beliefs one has (Jain, 2014). It is apparent that the attitude of the teacher is quite complex, being formed and influenced by several factors, ranging from personal experience and culture to gained knowledge.

From the students' aspect their attitudes could be directed to their perception of the English subject generally, how they feel about the teacher and classmates and everything else that comes with the language learning (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). This means that the teachers should reflect on how they act in relation to their own attitudes, as the students will notice this. Attitudes and motivation are highly connected, which again shows how the student's motivation towards the language learning may be influenced, in either a positive or negative direction (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001).

A study conducted by Rindal and Piercy in 2013 examined English pronunciation among Norwegian high school students, in order to find out which variety the participants aimed for. The results revealed that two out of a total of twenty-one students, answered that they aimed for a different variety than American or British English (Rindal & Piercy, 2013). This can be an indication of their attitudes, and it seems like the inner circle varieties are favored.

Traditionally, there are two main varieties of the English language that are considered proper spoken English, American and British English. In the later years, there has been a greater focus on English as a global language of communication, where the accent itself is of

less importance. This has influenced the attitudes of the teachers, as well as the students, when teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

Method

The goal for this thesis is to examine: What are Norwegian in-service teachers' attitudes towards the different varieties of English in the Norwegian EFL classroom, and if the different varieties of English are presented in the Norwegian EFL classroom, if so – in what way? For that reason, the method chosen is a qualitative approach. As explained by Jackson et al. (2007), qualitative research is based on the participants in-depth answers, opening up for more detailed descriptions of own experiences. As this paper wants to examine teacher attitudes and their habits in the classroom, a qualitative method was considered the most appropriate for the understanding of the matter. A quantitative approach on the other hand, relies on statistics and numbers, with little or no room for the participants to elaborate on their thoughts (Jackson et al., 2007). That said, quantitative research usually has more participants in the research, whereas qualitative research has fewer, but more descriptive data. Therefore, generalizing the results of the data material is a feature that a quantitative approach offers, on the contrary to a qualitative approach. (Jackson et al., 2007). This means that the results of this study will be limited in making a broad and general assumption about the attitudes of in-services teachers on the subject in question at a national level.

Participants

The participants were English-teachers at the main author's practice school, which was a medium-sized junior high school, along with two other smaller elementary schools with classes 1-10. The thought was to get a more representative selection using several schools, which Marshall (1996) defines as a selection wide enough to be generalized for a certain group or population.

Eight teachers in total from all three schools answered the questionnaire. Boddy (2016) argues that a number of 10 samples can be appropriate in qualitative research. In short, eight samples might be a few less than ideal, yet it is reasonable to think that this amount is high enough to report valid findings. Considering the range of the thesis as well as the number of participants, one can suspect that this thesis cannot generalize in form of drawing wide conclusions based merely on the results presented. However, it may provide an indication on EFL-teachers' attitudes towards the varieties of English, especially when seen in context with

similar research papers on the topic. The following chart shows an overview of the distribution of the participants' age, as well as how long they have taught.

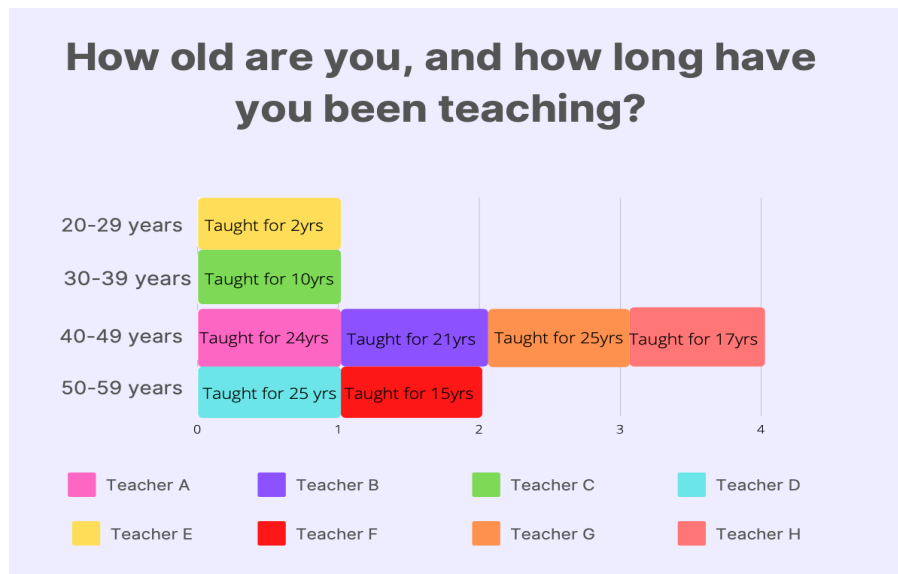


Figure 1: Participants' age and experience

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was intended to be written on paper, where the participants had to write their answers by hand. This way, it would seem more formal and serious. However, after advisement from the supervisor at my practice school, it was decided to modify the questionnaire to an online edition. This can be justified by the simplicity of an online questionnaire, both for the participants and for the researcher. In addition, it also made it easier collecting results from three different schools, which ensured a higher number of participants.

A study done by Harzing et al. (2005) revealed that the language in a questionnaire can affect the participants responses. The study focused explicitly on language in light of culture, but the central thought, can arguably be relevant for language in general as well. The questions in the questionnaire constructed for this thesis was written in Norwegian, which are the participants native language. Based on the findings of Harzing et al., this may have influenced the participants' responses in a positive way. When allowing their answers to be written in their native language, there is reason to believe that it was easier for the participants to go more in-depth of their experiences and be more descriptive of their thoughts.

The most appropriate analysis method for this thesis is content analysis, which can be defined as 'the longest established method of text analysis among the set of empirical methods of social investigation' (Kohlbacher, 2005, p. 10). Content analysis also includes

coding, as the data collected needs to be put in coherence in order to make sense in the bigger perspective (Kohlbacher, 2005). The answers collected from the questionnaire were coded with the intent to extract information of the main themes of this thesis and to collect as much information as possible to answer the research questions. A side effect of this method is the objectivity of the researcher, as the production of the results require interpretation. This can make the data vulnerable to the researcher's attitudes and opinions on the matter at hand, taking away the objectivity of the data. (Tjora, 2021). Qualitative data does bring a dimension not attainable using a quantitative method, making room for thoughts and analysis from the participants than can get lost when using quantitative interpretations. (Tjora, 2021). Content analysis therefore provides an important perspective not obtainable with a different choice of data analysis.

Findings

The research questions that are to be investigated are; What are Norwegian in-service teacher attitudes towards different varieties of the English language in the Norwegian EFL classroom? Likewise, it will also investigate, if the different varieties of English are presented in the Norwegian classroom. If so, in what way? This section introduces the results from the questionnaire submitted by the teachers. As previously mentioned, there are only eight respondents that have answered. The following will present a summary of the answers, while the complete answers can be found as an appendix. Some of the results are sorted and presented in visual charts, where each respondent is coded in separate colors. The data material that does not go in the charts is conveyed as citations, and further explanation are given when needed. As explained in the method section, the questions were asked in the teachers' native language, Norwegian, which means that all the questions as well as the citations from the respondents paraphrased, have been translated by the main author into English. This could make room for misinterpretations, as some meanings can possibly get lost in translation. However, as explained, having the questionnaire in the participants native language can lead to more in-depth answers. The first few questions the questionnaire asked contained some general information to get an overview of the teachers' backgrounds. The questions were asked individually; however, they are instead presented in one visual chart for practical reasons.

Teachers' understandings of varieties

The first content related question the respondents were asked, was “How would you define the different varieties of the English language and are you aiming towards promoting different varieties in your teaching?».

All of the teachers express that they are focusing on more than one variety, not including teacher F who skipped the question. Teachers A and B are both stating that their main focus is on American and British English, while teacher D explains that this has been the focus in the past, but that there has been a recent development towards including other varieties as well. Another teacher explains that she does look at several varieties of the English language, but does highlight that they are mainly focusing on American, British and Australian. This teacher also adds that the students are free to choose variety themselves, as long as they try to avoid a Norwegian accent. This may indicate that the teachers all agree in this field, by at least focusing on two or more variants in the teaching. However, there are differences in which varieties they tend to highlight, as a few are drawn to inner circle varieties.

Teachers' personal preference of variety

The teachers were asked about which variety they personally speak, and the data have been sorted and divided into three main categories: American, British and Canadian English. The reason for having the teachers to state their personal preferences of variety is that this could give an indication for further discussion of what they choose to include in their teaching, connected to their personal attitudes. The data can be seen in the following chart.

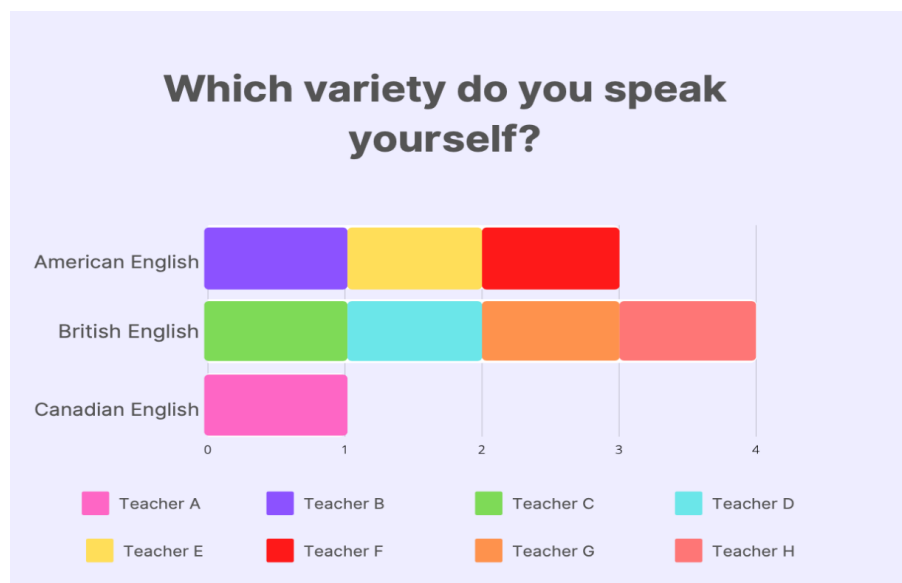


Figure 2: Teachers' spoken varieties

Most of the teachers stated that their preferred variety is a result of either studying or living in that particular area of that variety's origin. Additionally, teacher C admits to using a mix between Scottish and British, as a result of his own fascination of the British humor such as Monty Python. Teacher E, categorized under American English, pointed out that the variety spoken is leaning towards a neutral American variant. In addition, it also depends on who the recipient is, as teacher E has a tendency to change into a similar variety as them, mentioning Norwegian-English as an example.

The varieties in the textbooks

The next question asked about the textbook they use in class, if the book introduces students to different English varieties, whether this is something they look for and if they think the textbooks are doing a good job doing so. Textbooks are often the base of the teaching, and how teachers plan their classes. Whether or not, and in what way the textbooks handle the different varieties can be very interesting, as this may influence how the varieties are presented in the EFL classroom.

This question gave various answers, and the teachers seemed to differ. The overall conclusion, however, seems to be that using the textbook is acceptable to a certain extent, when it comes to the introduction of the varieties. Two of the teachers mention that the textbook focuses on American, British, and Australian, as the English-speaking countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, are emphasized areas. The texts connected to the different countries are often read by native speakers from that particular area. It is to be mentioned that the teachers come from three different schools, which could possibly mean that they have three different textbooks. Several of the teachers mention that the book works well as a listening tool, but it may seem that they are in need of other tools to supplement the book, in order to reach the competence aims in the curriculum. One of the teachers also states that the textbook is used to "a very small extent", using digital learning materials instead.

Activities to promote the varieties

In order to figure out if and how teachers present the different varieties in the classroom, they were asked about which activities they used to promote the varieties. The answers provided to this question were not very detailed, as most of the teachers stated that they

mainly use listening, reading, roleplay and interaction. However, one of the teachers described an activity, where the students were told to construct “their own English identity with place of residence, age, job, family situation etc”. This identity was regularly used in the teaching, starting in 8th grade. In short, the teachers seemed to use much of the same methods, many of them focusing on listening to different varieties, having the students read and interacting with classmates.

Teachers’ perspective of the importance of the different varieties

“Do you feel that one special variety is more important than others? If so, why?”. This question is very straight forward, asking them directly if they are considering one special variety over another, which is a good indication on their general attitudes.

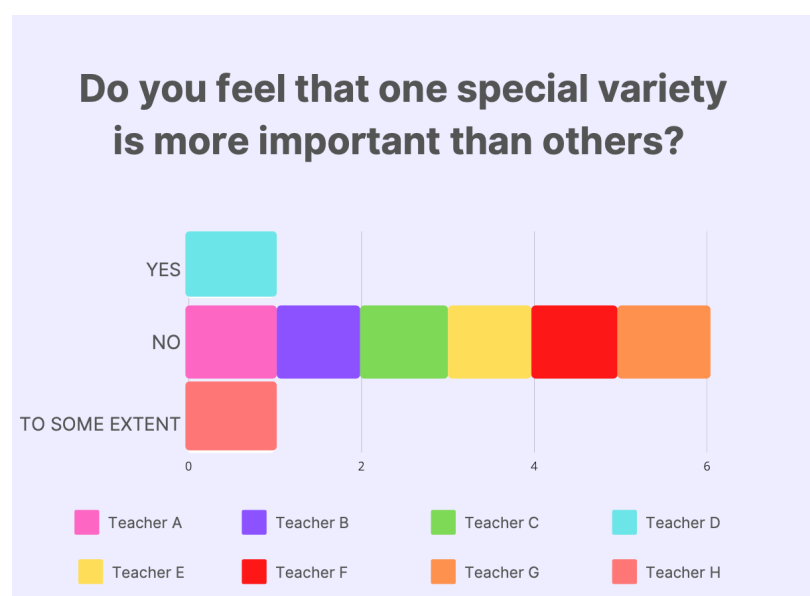


Figure 3: Teachers’ opinions on whether one variety is more important than others.

Teacher A, B, C, E, F and G were all clear and precise in their answers with a simple “No”, stating that no variety is more important than others. Teacher D on the other hand, expressed that “I think the most important thing is that the students understand and are able to use American and British English, which are the most common ones”. Teacher H was more vague, opening up for American and British English to be the two most important ones, but still emphasizes that no variety is more important than others: “No variety is more important than others, as the most important thing is to understand each other. However, it will be more natural for a Norwegian students’ pronunciation to be more American- or British-like, than for instance Indian”.

Teachers' definition of a successful English-speaker

The last question was asking about how the teachers would define a successful English speaker. This would help determine whether they look for a specific variety in order to be considered a successful speaker of the English language.

In brief, teachers A-F are focusing more on how well the person expresses itself and communication as the main aim. The speaker does not have to use a standard English approach, as the communication can be successful regardless of what form they use. The essential purpose is to be able to have a conversation that both parties understand, and the ability to respond and provide relevant answers. Teacher G's and H's impression are different, as they are additionally emphasizing a more native speaker related intonation and avoiding a Norwegian intonation pattern in the pronunciation.

Discussion

The thesis' aim is to explore what Norwegian in-service teacher attitudes towards different varieties of the English language in the Norwegian EFL classroom is. In addition, it also looks at the presentation of the different varieties in the Norwegian EFL-classroom, and in what way they are presented. The following section discusses the findings from the questionnaire and use the theory presented to draw conclusions.

The varieties in the classroom

If the English-teaching was only based on the textbooks, American, British, and Australian-English would be the three varieties most represented. Several of the teachers' stated that the textbook introduces the students to these countries, focusing on the culture and important landmarks in those areas. Also, there are texts that are read out loud by native speakers with that variety. These are all countries inside the inner circle where English is the native language (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Based on the answers, it seems like the teachers are familiar with the book's lack of diversity, and one teacher (teacher E), expressed that they very often move outside the book. From the textbooks' perspective the teaching is leaning against a narrow representation of the varieties. After the new English subject curriculum took effect in 2020, the textbooks were also renewed for the occasion, which means that they should be based on the new competence aims.

As mentioned, one competence aim after year 10 argues that the students should be able to "listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English" (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p. 8). However, it is very open and quite vague in

the wording, and it does not mention any specific variants by name, nor how many there should be. This allows the teachers to determine what they think is important, while they are given the professional room for interpretation. The teachers' attitudes towards the different varieties will therefore be of high importance as to how the English language is taught in the classroom, considering that the curriculum is designed to let the teachers decide which varieties to include. As a result of this, it will be particularly important that the teacher training programs allow pre-service teachers to explore and be introduced to several different varieties. The goal is that the pre-service teachers bring this into their own future classrooms, introducing the students to different varieties, and not just inner circle ones, creating a consciousness around the selection of varieties that exist. This may create awareness for both teachers and students around the different varieties at hand, shifting the focus from learning a specific accent, to English as a means of communication in a global world.

The responders were asked to comment on this competence aim, and there were several comments on how open the aim is. Additionally, some also mentioned that they felt that it is an important competence aim, as the students should be introduced to different varieties of English. Several of the teachers expressed that they actively used other sources in addition to the textbook material, like YouTube videos and movies. Roleplay and theater also appeared to be popular. This seems like an effective way of promoting different variants, and the students get to explore themselves in a fun environment. Then again, this is of course dependent on the teachers' openness, and that no limitations are being made in terms of language-varieties, in order for the students' exploration.

The data of this study indicates that there seems to be a lack of teaching materials, in the junior high school textbooks in particular, where they consistently focus on the inner circle varieties of the English language and failing to introduce other varieties. In addition, the English subject curriculum is vague when mentioning varieties of the English language, making it open for interpretation of each teacher to decide which varieties to include. As a result, the responsibility of which varieties to choose fall on the teachers, which again is determined by their attitudes and knowledge of the different varieties.

Teachers' attitudes

The native speaker ideal can be seen in the EFL-classroom, as Andreou and Galantomos pointed out that many teachers "seek to turn their students into native speakers or make them reach a near-nativeness level» (2009, p. 201). This indicates that the students' success is being measured by how well they sound native-like. This again has been criticized, and as can be

seen in the English subject curriculum, there is no such thing as a native speaking ideal included in either the competence aims nor any of the other parts of the curriculum. “..it is irrelevant for learners of English to “give up” their identify in order to take on a native-speaker identity” (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 160). The teachers in this current study do not seem to represent the same attitudes, at least to a minimal extent, which can indicate that there has been some evolvement considering language attitudes.

It seems like the teachers participating in this study lean towards the intelligibility concept. Six out of a total of eight of the teachers’ answers in the question on how they would define a successful English-speaker, focused on communication and whether or not the students can make themselves understood. A few of the teachers also mentioned that the students should adapt their communication to who the recipient is. This corresponds with the English subject curriculum, as the students should be able to «adapting the language to the purpose, the receiver and the situation and choosing suitable strategies» (Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2019, p.4).

However, some of the teachers do seem to be critical to a Norwegian-English pronunciation pattern and would like to see their students avoid this, as Teachers G and H mention in their answers. Both of the teachers are in the age group of 40-49 and have been teaching for at least 17 years. Teacher D in turn, expressed the opinion of British and American as the most important varieties for Norwegian students. This was justified by the fact that these are the most widely used ones, which makes it easier to use as well.

This may indicate that the teachers who are slightly stricter and have more preferences in their attitudes, are somewhat older and have taught for a longer period of time. This corresponds with the more traditional way of looking at the English language, where the focus was on British and American English and a more native speaker ideal (Andreou & Galantomos, 2009). It looks like more experienced teachers still tend to value the inner circle country varieties the most, despite the evolution of globalization and technological development that have affected the world in the recent years. It seems like they are less willing to introduce the other varieties to the students, especially Norwegian-English. The intelligibility focus has developed over the last years, and it is natural that the teachers who are used to other practices, needs time to expand their attitudes and to adapt their teaching processes. That said, it is important to keep up in time, and both English as a lingua franca and the English communication used for intelligibility purposes, are concepts that most likely are here to stay.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be argued that it seems to be an overall openness towards the different English varieties between the teachers participating in this current study. The teachers do appear to emphasize intelligibility as a mean of communication, where the goal is mutual understanding for all parties involved. By including different activities in the classroom, such as roleplay, YouTube videos and other interactive activities, the teachers facilitate an exploring environment where the students are allowed to discover their own way of speaking. Nonetheless, some teachers are more traditional in their attitudes and still tend to highlight the native speaker ideal to *some* extent.

This paper offers a piece of information that is relevant for a more developed understanding of the attitudes of in-service teachers on the varieties of the English language, as well as offering an indication on the attitudes described. The qualitative method applied will have some limitations as to the general assumptions among attitudes of *all* teachers, and this paper needs to be seen in context with other similar investigations.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire questions and participants' answers

How old are you?

20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+

Teacher A: 40-49, Teacher B: 40-49, Teacher C: 30-39,

Teacher D: 50-59, Teacher E: 20-29, Teacher F: 50-59,

Teacher G: 40-49, Teacher H: 40-49

How long have you been teaching?

Teacher A: 24 years, Teacher B: 21 years, Teacher C: 10 years,

Teacher D: 25 years, Teacher E: 2 years, Teacher F: 15 years,

Teacher G: 25 years, Teacher H: 17 years

How would you define the different varieties of the English language and are you aiming towards promoting different varieties in your teaching?

Teacher A: Yes, I am focusing on speaking British English, and with an American accent.

Teacher B: British, Welsh, Cockney, Northern English, etc. American, Australian / New Zealand, Canadian, Jamaican... Focusing on American and British.

Teacher C: A little unsure of what you mean, but if it is the classic British / American / Indian English / Australian, I have no preferences; students must find THEIR English identity, and then find their place among these various forms. If you mean different forms of e.g. British English; Cockney / Scouse / Kentish I do not think this is necessarily very interesting to study at lower secondary school level, but really interesting to get the students to understand language in a broader way.

Teacher D: This has changed over the years I have been teaching. There is a larger focus on listening to and using other forms than British and American now than before.

Teacher E: I want to define the different varieties of English as equal variants of the language. Yes, I do. My goal is to make students aware and familiar with the different variants and their legitimacy as different varieties of the same language.

Teacher F: Teacher F skipped (missed?) this question.

Teacher G: The students need to become familiar with several varieties, especially when learning about the different countries.

Teacher H: We look at different variants of English around the world, especially British ("Oxford English", Scottish and Irish accents. "Working class language") and American (Southern / Northern / New York). We have also visited Australian. We listen to authentic speech whenever possible. Pronunciation, accents, and dialects are natural topics of conversation when we watch movies. If students have a preference to a special form of pronunciation, this is perfectly fine, as long as they get away from the Norwegian sound and pronunciation pattern.

Which variety do you feel you speak yourself? Is this an intentional choice? (For example. British, Australian, American, South-African English, Indian English, Scottish-English etc.)

Teacher A: Canadian English, because that is where I learned the language

Teacher B: Mostly American, because I have lived in the US.

Teacher C: I use a mix of Scottish / British. This comes as a result of own fascination with the English humor that emerged in the 70s and 80s. The stage language used by Rowan Atkinson and Monty Python in particular was an inspiration, at the same time as I am one of the Braveheart generations. The interest for the British language has only continued to grow.

Teacher D: British (BBC-English)

Teacher E: I stick to a neutral American variant. However, I can quickly be influenced by the accent of the person I am talking to, so sometimes the pronunciation is a little more similar to British / RP English, and other times it is Norwegian-English.

Teacher F: American English, because I have been an exchange student in the US for a year.

Teacher G: British, because I studied in London for a year.

Teacher H: British

What does the textbook say, does it introduce several varieties? What does it focus on (within this theme)? Do you think the textbook is good enough?

Teacher A: No to everything.

Teacher B: The book says a bit.

Teacher C: We use the textbook to a very small extent. We are at a turning point where we are testing different digital learning materials, where my impression is rather bad so far.

Teacher D: It introduces several forms, but does not encourage use, only listening and recognition.

Teacher E: Yes, so far, I have only seen that Australian and American have been introduced and compared to "British" in the textbook. We often move outside the textbook when we plan our teaching, so I do not consider this a problem, but I think that this is individually from teacher to teacher. The textbook is ok.

Teacher F: The textbook focuses on the United Kingdom in 5th grade, the United States in 6th grade and Australia in 7th grade

Teacher G: It works fine when we can listen to the texts read by a native speaker, like the textbook I use.

Teacher H: The variation in the textbook is fine, as they often have English-speaking countries as themes. The texts are then often read by people from this part of the world.

Which activities do you use to promote the different varieties in the classroom?

Teacher A: Dialogue, videos, and audio files.

Teacher B: Depends on the theme.

Teacher C: We have used dramatization and theater. The students have also been asked to construct their own English identity with place of residence, age, job, family situation etc. They have followed this identity throughout all teaching in the subject from 8th to 10th grade.

Teacher D: Listening and reading.

Teacher E: I have carried out activities where we look at and compare words that are different in pronunciation. The students are creating the sounds themselves and trying out the pronunciation aloud for each other.

Teacher F: We are using YouTube-clips where kids and youths are talking in different variants and accents.

Teacher G: Listening, while encouraging them to try themselves.

Teacher H: Discussions of movies, roleplay. We have also used tongue twisters.

Do you feel that one special variety is more important than others? If so, why?

Teacher A: No.

Teacher B: No.

Teacher C: No. Or, in a way, but that is the students' own form.

Teacher D: I think the most important thing is that the students understand and are able to American and British English, which are the most common ones.

Teacher E: No, as long as the grammar is almost the same, and that there is awareness around the differences, the similarities and the historical background.

Teacher F: No, the aim is communication.

Teacher G: No.

Teacher H: No variety is more important than others, as the most important thing is to understand each other. However, it will be more natural for a Norwegian students' pronunciation to be more American- or British-like, than for instance Indian.

How would you define a successful English-speaker?

Teacher A: Someone who communicates, in what way does not matter.

Teacher B: Sentence structure and idioms are more important than UK / Am etc.

Teacher C: A speaker with a rich vocabulary, who both contributes to conversation, and can listen.

Teacher D: Someone who can communicate well, regardless of form.

Teacher E: I want to define a successful English speaker as someone who makes themselves understood and understands others when communicating in English. The person chooses the right words for the given context / situation, speaks relatively correctly grammatically, and has a relatively "correct" pronunciation. One must not speak "correct" English from an RP perspective, but one must be able to express what one wants to say without problems, be understood by the recipient, and be able to respond meaningfully in conversation with other English speakers.

Teacher F: Clear pronunciation, intonation and empathy make it easier for others to understand no matter what form.

Teacher G: Someone who phrases good sentences with flow and context, clear pronunciation, and intonation close to a native speaker.

Teacher H: Good vocabulary. Makes himself understood well. Has the ability to tell and explain. A pronunciation a lot like a native's pronunciation and does what he can not to let Norwegian intonation dominate.

