

## PAKISTANI ENGLISH SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH VARIETIES: A STUDY FROM A WORLD ENGLISHES PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*This study investigates Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes towards Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties of English within the framework of World Englishes. Drawing on a quantitative survey design, data was collected from 300 Pakistani English teachers through a structured questionnaire. The analysis focused on teachers' learning preferences, their evaluative ratings of selected English varieties across eight personality traits, and their views on English varieties in educational contexts. The findings show that Inner Circle varieties, particularly British English and American English, were preferred more strongly than Outer Circle varieties. British English emerged as the most preferred variety for learning, while American English received the highest overall evaluative rating across personality traits. British English was associated more with clarity, familiarity, and friendliness, whereas American English was linked more strongly with intelligence, confidence, and fluency. Pakistani English received more favourable evaluations than Indian English and was viewed positively on traits such as friendliness, familiarity, fluency, and clarity, although it did not attain the same prestige as Inner Circle varieties. The study also found that teachers generally supported introducing students to differences among English varieties, but they were less certain about the representation of such variation in school textbooks. Overall, the findings reflect the persistence of traditional prestige hierarchies alongside limited acceptance of Pakistani English.*

**Keywords:** World Englishes; Pakistani English; English varieties; language attitudes; schoolteachers; Inner Circle Englishes; Outer Circle Englishes; English language teaching; Pakistan; teacher perceptions

### Introduction

English has developed into a global language with multiple recognised varieties shaped by their historical, social, and cultural contexts. The traditional view of English as a single uniform standard has gradually been challenged by the paradigm of World Englishes, which highlights the pluralised nature of the language across different regions of the world. In this framework, Kachru's (1985) model of the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles remains one of the most influential ways of understanding the spread and functions of English internationally. Inner Circle varieties, such as British English and American English, are often associated with native-speaker norms and linguistic prestige, whereas Outer Circle varieties, including Pakistani English and Indian English, have emerged through colonial histories and have developed localised forms and functions within multilingual societies. This perspective makes it necessary to examine how different English varieties are perceived in contexts where English is both an educational language and a socially valued resource.

In Pakistan, English occupies a powerful position in education, administration, and socioeconomic mobility. It is widely regarded as a language of status and opportunity, and its teaching at school level is closely linked with broader expectations of academic achievement and professional advancement. However, despite the widespread use of English in Pakistan, attitudes towards its varieties are not neutral. Historically, British English has enjoyed a particularly strong influence due to colonial legacy, institutional traditions, and its long-

standing role in education. At the same time, other prestigious Inner Circle varieties, especially American English, have become increasingly visible through media, technology, and global communication. In contrast, Outer Circle varieties such as Pakistani English are often evaluated through competing perspectives: on the one hand, they function as meaningful local forms of expression, while on the other hand, they may be viewed as less legitimate than traditionally privileged native norms.

Within this context, teachers occupy an especially important position because their attitudes can reflect broader ideological orientations towards language, standardness, and legitimacy in educational settings. Investigating Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes towards Inner and Outer Circle varieties is therefore important for understanding which varieties are valued, preferred, or marginalised in the school context. This study focuses on that issue by examining teachers' attitudes towards selected English varieties, including British English, American English, Canadian English, Indian English, and Pakistani English. In doing so, it contributes to the field of World Englishes by offering insight into how English variety hierarchies continue to operate in a postcolonial educational setting such as Pakistan, where global prestige and local linguistic identity intersect.

### **Rationale of the Study**

The rationale of this study also lies in the need to understand how language attitudes may influence the place given to different English varieties in educational contexts. In postcolonial settings such as Pakistan, English functions not only as a language of instruction and aspiration but also as a localised linguistic resource shaped by its own sociocultural context. Despite this, Outer Circle varieties are often positioned differently from Inner Circle varieties in terms of prestige, legitimacy, and pedagogical value. Investigating Pakistani teachers' attitudes towards these varieties is therefore necessary to reveal the underlying ideological orientations that may shape classroom preferences, judgments about correctness, and the relative acceptance or marginalization of localised forms such as Pakistani English.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the growing body of research on World Englishes from the Pakistani context. It provides empirical insight into how school teachers evaluate both internationally dominant and locally relevant English varieties, thereby contributing to broader debates on standard language ideology, linguistic legitimacy, and the place of non-native varieties in English language education. The study is also significant for curriculum development, textbook planning, and teacher education, as its findings may help policymakers and educational stakeholders reconsider whether English teaching in Pakistan should continue to privilege only Inner Circle norms or adopt a more inclusive approach that recognises the sociolinguistic reality of English in Outer Circle settings.

### **Literature Review**

World Englishes refers to the understanding that English has developed into multiple legitimate varieties shaped by distinct historical, sociocultural, and political conditions, rather than existing as a single uniform language tied only to native-speaker communities (Kachru, 1985; Schreier et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2020). This perspective challenges the traditional assumption that one codified native norm alone should define correctness, legitimacy, and pedagogical value in English language teaching (Schreier et al., 2020; Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024). In contemporary scholarship, World Englishes is therefore not merely a descriptive label for global variation, but also a theoretical stance that recognises plurality, localised norm development, and the sociolinguistic ownership of English across diverse speech communities (Schreier et al., 2020; Botha & Bolton, 2024; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

A central framework within this field is Kachru's Three-Circle Model, which classifies English-using contexts into the Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985). The Inner Circle includes countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, where English historically developed as a first language and where norms have generally been treated as norm-providing (Kachru, 1985; Schreier et al., 2020). The Outer Circle includes postcolonial societies such as Pakistan and India, where English became institutionalised through colonial contact and now performs significant educational, administrative, and professional functions; these varieties are often described as norm-developing (Kachru, 1985; Nelson et al., 2020; Rahman, 2020). The Expanding Circle includes contexts where English is primarily learned as a foreign language and remains more dependent on external norms, although recent scholarship questions the rigidity of these boundaries and emphasises greater fluidity across circles (Schreier et al., 2020; Botha & Bolton, 2024; Manzouri et al., 2024).

A major issue in the literature is that, despite theoretical recognition of plurality, Inner Circle varieties continue to enjoy disproportionate prestige in English language teaching (Rana et al., 2020). British English and American English are still commonly treated as the most authoritative models for pronunciation, grammar, textbook design, and classroom evaluation because of their historical codification and symbolic capital (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024). This continuing hierarchy reflects the persistence of standard language ideology, in which some varieties are constructed as inherently superior, more correct, or more teachable than others (Botha & Bolton, 2024; Rose et al., 2021). As a result, even when scholars advocate more inclusive approaches to English, actual educational practice often continues to privilege native norms over localised forms, especially in postcolonial contexts (Schreier et al., 2020; Fidan et al., 2024; Bon & Charubusp, 2023).

This tension has created overlap between World Englishes and related paradigms such as English as an International Language, English as a Lingua Franca, and Global Englishes. Although these paradigms differ in emphasis, they share a critique of the exclusive authority historically granted to native-speaker norms and instead foreground intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, multilingual practice, and broader participation in English use (Galloway, 2013; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021). Review-based scholarship shows that pedagogical research increasingly supports exposing learners to diverse Englishes and reducing overreliance on British and American benchmarks alone (Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024; Tajeddin et al., 2025). However, the same literature also shows that teachers and learners frequently continue to value native varieties more highly than local or regional forms, indicating a persistent gap between theoretical change and attitudinal practice (Manzouri et al., 2024; Rose et al., 2021; Fidan et al., 2024).

This debate is especially relevant in Pakistan, where English occupies a powerful place in education, bureaucracy, upward mobility, and elite culture. Pakistani English has long been recognised as an institutionalised Outer Circle variety that emerged through colonial history and developed distinctive lexical, phonological, and discourse features in a multilingual environment (Rahman, 2020; Rahman, 2007; Asgher et al., 2023). At the same time, English in Pakistan is deeply connected with class, prestige, and access to opportunity, which means that judgments about English varieties are rarely neutral or purely linguistic (Rahman, 2002/2007; British Council Pakistan, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2025). This makes Pakistan a highly relevant context for studying attitudes toward Inner Circle and Outer Circle Englishes, since the local variety coexists with persistent attachment to external standards (Rahman, 2020; Akram et al., 2025; Asgher et al., 2023).

The literature on Pakistani English suggests that local forms are increasingly visible yet still contested. On the one hand, Pakistani English is recognised in World Englishes scholarship

as a legitimate localised variety, and research continues to document its indigenization and sociocultural embeddedness (Rahman, 2020; Anwar, 2020; Shahzadi et al., 2022; Asgher et al., 2023). On the other hand, recent empirical studies indicate that many stakeholders continue to view Pakistani English ambivalently, valuing it as a marker of local identity while also treating it as a possible threat to international standards or global intelligibility (Akram et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2025). This tension reflects a broader ideological struggle between localised legitimacy and inherited prestige hierarchies in English language education (Botha & Bolton, 2024; Rose et al., 2021; Rahman, 2020).

Within this context, teachers are especially important because they actively mediate which Englishes are valued, represented, or marginalised in classrooms. Research in World Englishes and Global Englishes consistently shows that teachers' beliefs influence target models, pronunciation norms, corrective practices, and the symbolic value attached to different varieties of English (Rose et al., 2021; Fidan et al., 2024; Bon & Charubusp, 2023). A recent systematic review by Manzouri et al. (2024) found that studies of beliefs about World Englishes, EIL, and ELF repeatedly report strong attachment to native varieties even when respondents also express support for diversity and intelligibility. This suggests that teacher attitudes remain a key site where broader theories of English plurality are either implemented or constrained by standard-language ideologies (Manzouri et al., 2024; Rose et al., 2021; Fidan et al., 2024).

Empirical studies from outside Pakistan reinforce this pattern. Fidan et al. (2024), working with prospective ELT teachers in Türkiye, found positive engagement with World Englishes-informed pedagogy, but also noted that explicit pedagogical intervention was needed to strengthen genuinely pluralistic orientations. Li (2024) similarly found that Chinese English teachers acknowledged the existence of China English, yet many still preferred British or American English as pedagogical models. Bon and Charubusp (2023) likewise reported that teachers' attitudes toward ELF, World Englishes, and teacher identity remained intertwined with ongoing concerns about standards and legitimacy. Together, these studies indicate that acceptance of diversity does not automatically displace the prestige of Inner Circle norms; rather, attitudes are often mixed, layered, and context-dependent (Fidan et al., 2024; Li, 2024; Bon & Charubusp, 2023).

Pakistani research points to similarly complex attitudes. Rehman (2023), in a study of private sector schools in Peshawar, found that in-service teachers' views involved issues of language ownership, non-native accents, and the legitimacy of non-native English use. Ishtiaq et al. (2026) reported that Pakistani English teachers' preferences between Standard British English and Standard American English were shaped by academic preparation, media exposure, and institutional practices, showing that attitudinal positioning is socially and educationally conditioned rather than purely linguistic (Rehman, 2023; Ishtiaq et al., 2026; British Council Pakistan, 2022). Other Pakistani studies have focused more on learners than teachers, but still reveal the wider attitudinal environment in which teachers work. These studies show continuing prestige for British and American English, while localised forms such as Pakistani English are often rated less favorably in terms of correctness and desirability (Nadeem et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2025; Ali, 2025). Such work is useful for contextual understanding, but it cannot replace direct evidence about school teachers themselves (Nadeem et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2025).

Another important issue in the literature is that many studies, both Pakistani and international, focus narrowly on British and American English or on a general preference for "standard English" without placing multiple Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties into the same comparative frame. This can obscure the more subtle hierarchy through which teachers may value one native variety over another, accept localised English for familiarity but not

prestige, or distinguish between communicative usefulness and educational legitimacy (Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024; Ishtiaq et al., 2026). A broader comparison involving British English, American English, Canadian English, Indian English, and Pakistani English is therefore methodologically stronger because it makes attitudinal ranking more visible across circles rather than restricting analysis to a British-American binary (Schreier et al., 2020; Fidan et al., 2024; Ishtiaq et al., 2026).

Taken together, the literature establishes four key points. First, World Englishes provides a strong theoretical basis for recognizing the legitimacy of multiple English varieties, including Outer Circle Englishes (Kachru, 1985; Schreier et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2020). Second, recent pedagogical research continues to show that native-speaker norms retain considerable prestige despite theoretical support for plurality (Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024; Bon & Charubusp, 2023). Third, Pakistan is an especially significant context because English is both institutionally powerful and locally indigenised, making the status of Pakistani English particularly important (Rahman, 2020; British Council Pakistan, 2022; Asgher et al., 2023). Fourth, the available Pakistani literature remains limited in its treatment of school teachers' attitudes toward multiple Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties within one analytical framework (Rehman, 2023; Ishtiaq et al., 2026; Nadeem et al., 2025).

### **Research Gap**

Although the literature on World Englishes, Global Englishes, and English language pedagogy is extensive, a clear gap remains in relation to the Pakistani school context. Existing research has largely focused on theoretical debates, university students, tertiary teachers, or narrow comparisons between British and American English, while school teachers' attitudes toward a wider range of Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties remain underexplored (Rose et al., 2021; Manzouri et al., 2024; Ishtiaq et al., 2026). In Pakistan specifically, recent studies have begun to examine attitudes toward Standard British English, Standard American English, non-native accents, and Pakistani English, but they do not sufficiently address how school teachers comparatively evaluate multiple varieties across Kachru's circles within a single attitudinal framework (Rehman, 2023; Ishtiaq et al., 2026; Akram et al., 2025). It is this gap that the present study addresses by investigating Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes toward Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties of English.

### **Research Question**

What is Pakistani English school teachers attitude towards Inner and Outer Circle varieties of English?

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative survey design to investigate Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes towards Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties of English. A quantitative approach was appropriate because it enabled the systematic measurement of attitudinal tendencies across a relatively large group of participants and allowed the findings to be presented numerically for comparison and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). Survey research was especially suitable because the purpose of the study was to describe patterns, preferences, and evaluative judgments through structured responses rather than through experimental or qualitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023).

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the study comprised Pakistani school teachers who teach English at school level. This population was selected because the study specifically focused on the attitudes of teachers directly engaged in English language teaching in school settings. In educational survey research, participant selection must align with the research purpose, and

focusing on school English teachers was therefore methodologically justified by the research question itself (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022).

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants. This method was appropriate because respondents were selected on the basis of accessibility and willingness to participate, which is a common practice in applied linguistics and educational research where access is often shaped by time, institutional contact, and voluntary participation (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). Although convenience sampling is less representative than probability sampling, it is widely used when researchers aim to reach a reasonably large group efficiently under practical constraints (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). The final sample consisted of 300 Pakistani English teachers (PakETs), which was adequate for descriptive statistical analysis and for identifying stable patterns in the data (Field, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

### **Research Instrument**

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire was suitable because attitudes are commonly investigated through self-report items that generate comparable responses from many participants in a standardised form (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). In second language research, questionnaires are particularly useful for examining beliefs, preferences, perceptions, and evaluative stances that can be converted into quantifiable data for statistical analysis (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023).

The questionnaire included close-ended items and attitudinal statements. This format was appropriate because close-ended responses ensure uniformity, facilitate coding, and support statistical comparison across participants (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Since the study aimed to compare teachers' attitudes toward several English varieties, a structured format was more suitable than open-ended questions, as it produced data that could be directly entered into SPSS and interpreted through descriptive measures (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Field, 2018).

One part of the questionnaire asked teachers to indicate which English varieties they would prefer to learn. This was designed as a multiple-response item, allowing respondents to select more than one option. Such a format was justified because language preference is not always exclusive, and participants may value more than one variety at the same time, particularly in multilingual and World Englishes contexts (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). Another section measured evaluations of British English, American English, Canadian English, Indian English, and Pakistani English across eight personality traits: intelligent, pleasant, confident, fluent, gentle, familiar, clear, and friendly. This rating-scale format was appropriate because it enabled respondents to express degrees of judgment across comparable dimensions and generated scores that could be summarised through mean values (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Field, 2018). The questionnaire also included Likert-type statements on pedagogical issues, including differences between standard varieties, distinctions between standard and non-standard varieties, and the use of different English varieties in school textbooks. Such items are widely used in educational research to measure levels of agreement and capture the strength of attitudes in quantifiable form (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Field, 2018).

### **Data Collection and Analysis Procedure**

The questionnaire was distributed to Pakistani English school teachers through accessible channels, and participation was voluntary. Voluntary participation is a core principle of educational and applied linguistics research because it protects participant autonomy and strengthens the ethical quality of the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022). Only completed and usable questionnaires were included in the final dataset in order to avoid missing-value problems and improve the reliability of statistical analysis (Field,

2018; Mackey & Gass, 2022). After collection, the responses were coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. SPSS was appropriate because it is widely used in social science research for managing and summarizing quantitative data through descriptive statistics (Field, 2018).

The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, standard errors, and confidence intervals. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the multiple-response item on preferred Englishes because they show how often each option was selected and what proportion of the sample each response represents (Field, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Mean scores were computed for the personality-trait section to compare the average evaluative rating assigned to each English variety, while total means provided an overall summary of attitudes toward each variety (Field, 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2022). For the remaining attitudinal statements, mean, standard deviation, standard error, and confidence interval were used to show the overall level, consistency, and precision of responses (Field, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The findings were interpreted through the World Englishes framework, particularly Kachru's distinction between Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties, which provided the conceptual basis for categorizing the selected Englishes and linking the statistical results to an established theoretical model (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mackey & Gass, 2022).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, and their responses were used only for academic purposes. Written consent was obtained from the participants. No respondent was identified by name in the reporting of results, and all findings were presented in aggregate form, thereby maintaining anonymity, confidentiality, and responsible data use.

### **Data Analysis**

This section reports the findings on Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes towards selected Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties of English. The results are presented under four parts: preferred English varieties for learning, evaluative ratings of five English varieties across eight personality traits, attitudes toward differences between standard varieties, attitudes toward differences between standard and non-standard varieties, and views about the representation of English varieties in school textbooks.

#### **Preferred English Varieties for Learning**

The first item examined which varieties of English the respondents would prefer to learn. Since this was a multiple-response item, respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. The findings show that British English was the most preferred variety, selected by 131 teachers (43.4%), followed by American English with 109 responses (36.1%). Pakistani English was chosen by 85 respondents (28.1%), which places it in a notable third position. Canadian English received 43 responses (14.2%), while Indian English was selected by only 9 respondents (3.0%). A further 24 respondents (7.9%) reported that they were not sure. These results suggest that the strongest preferences remain attached to British and American English, while Pakistani English also occupies a meaningful place among teachers' learning preferences.

**Table 1**  
*Preferred English Varieties for Learning*

English variety	Frequency	Percentage
British English	131	43.4%
American English	109	36.1%
Pakistani English	85	28.1%
Canadian English	43	14.2%
Indian English	9	3.0%
Not sure	24	7.9%

**Evaluative Ratings of English Varieties Across Personality Traits**

The second part of the analysis focused on how respondents evaluated five English varieties across eight personality traits. A comparison of total mean scores shows that American English received the highest overall rating (3.8438), followed by British English (3.7350), Canadian English (3.6442), Pakistani English (3.6146), and Indian English (3.4913). This overall pattern indicates that Inner Circle varieties were rated more positively than Outer Circle varieties, although Pakistani English also received moderately favorable evaluations and ranked above Indian English.

Among the Inner Circle varieties, American English obtained the highest mean scores on the traits of **intelligent** (4.0067), **pleasant** (3.9933), **confident** (3.8300), and **fluent** (3.8667). British English, by contrast, led on **gentle** (4.0167), **familiar** (3.9733), **clear** (4.0333), and **friendly** (3.9667). Canadian English remained positively rated, though it did not exceed British English or American English on any major dimension. These findings indicate that American English was associated more strongly with competence-related traits, whereas British English was viewed more favorably in terms of clarity, familiarity, and interpersonal appeal.

Within the Outer Circle varieties, Pakistani English received comparatively stronger evaluations than Indian English. Pakistani English recorded higher mean scores for **friendly** (3.7642), **familiar** (3.7264), **fluent** (3.7170), **clear** (3.7075), and **gentle** (3.6321), suggesting that it was perceived as socially accessible and communicatively usable. Indian English received the lowest total mean score overall (3.4913), with its weakest evaluations on **familiar** (3.3833), **clear** (3.4167), **friendly** (3.4167), and **gentle** (3.4400). The trait-level pattern therefore shows that Inner Circle Englishes were linked more strongly with prestige and competence, while Pakistani English was viewed more positively than Indian English and retained a relatively favorable position in the data.

**Table 2**

*Mean Scores of Personality Traits Across English Varieties*

Personality Trait	BrE	AmE	CaE	InE	PakE
Intelligent	3.6600	4.0067	3.7200	3.5933	3.3700
Pleasant	3.1067	3.9933	3.7233	3.5800	3.4333
Confident	3.7500	3.8300	3.6367	3.5067	3.5633
Fluent	3.3733	3.8667	3.7067	3.5933	3.7170
Gentle	4.0167	3.7533	3.5967	3.4400	3.6321
Familiar	3.9733	3.7567	3.5700	3.3833	3.7264
Clear	4.0333	3.8000	3.6433	3.4167	3.7075

Personality Trait	BrE	AmE	CaE	InE	PakE
Friendly	3.9667	3.7433	3.5567	3.4167	3.7642
<b>Total mean</b>	<b>3.7350</b>	<b>3.8438</b>	<b>3.6442</b>	<b>3.4913</b>	<b>3.6146</b>

### Students' Awareness of Differences Between BrE and AmE

The next item examined whether students should be made aware of differences between British English and American English. The mean score for this statement was 4.01, with a standard deviation of 0.92. This indicates a generally strong level of agreement among the respondents. The result shows that teachers largely supported the idea that students should be introduced to distinctions between these two major standard varieties.

**Table** 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Awareness of Differences Between British and American English*

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
300	4.01	0.92	0.001	3.3	4.1

### Students' Awareness of Differences Between Standard and Non-Standard Varieties

The following item assessed whether students should be made aware of differences between standard and non-standard English varieties. This statement produced a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.98. The result again points to general agreement, though the level of support was slightly lower than that recorded for the previous item. This suggests that teachers were broadly positive toward exposing students to wider English variation, even if support was somewhat stronger when the contrast involved two established standard varieties.

**Table** 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Awareness of Differences Between Standard and Non-Standard Varieties*

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
300	3.84	0.98	0.001	3.3	4.1

### Representation of English Varieties in School Textbooks

The final item considered whether different varieties of English are used in school-level English textbooks. This statement received a mean score of 3.47, with a standard deviation of 1.00. Compared with the previous two items, this lower mean indicates a more moderate response. The respondents therefore appeared less certain that English textbooks actually reflect a range of varieties, even though they expressed support for students being introduced to such variation.

**Table** 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Use of Different English Varieties in School Textbooks*

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
302	3.47	1.00	3.3	4.1

Overall, the findings show that Pakistani English school teachers displayed stronger preference for British English and American English than for the other varieties. In the trait-based evaluation, American English ranked first overall, while British English performed especially strongly on familiarity, clarity, gentleness, and friendliness. Pakistani English received more favorable ratings than Indian English and showed a relatively positive profile on traits such as friendliness, fluency, familiarity, and clarity. The attitudinal items further

indicate that teachers generally supported introducing students to variation within English, although they were less convinced that such variation is adequately represented in school textbooks.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The findings of this study show that Pakistani English school teachers hold differentiated attitudes towards English varieties, with a clear overall preference for Inner Circle varieties over Outer Circle ones. In their learning preferences, British English emerged as the most preferred variety, followed by American English, while Pakistani English occupied a notable third position. Canadian English and Indian English received much lower preference. This pattern indicates that British and American English continue to enjoy stronger symbolic, educational, and institutional value among teachers. At the same time, the position of Pakistani English above Canadian English and Indian English suggests that the local variety is not rejected and retains a meaningful, though limited, degree of recognition.

These findings align with World Englishes scholarship, which has long argued that although English has diversified globally, native-speaker varieties still retain stronger prestige in educational domains (Kachru, 1985; Schreier et al., 2020). The continued prioritization of British and American English in this study reflects the persistence of standard language ideology, in which historically dominant native norms remain linked with correctness, legitimacy, and pedagogical authority (Kachru, 1985; Rose et al., 2021). In this sense, the teachers' preferences suggest that Pakistani school education continues to operate within an exonormative orientation, even if there is some degree of openness toward local or regional Englishes.

The particularly strong preference for British English can be interpreted in relation to Pakistan's colonial and educational history. English in Pakistan has long functioned as a language of governance, schooling, mobility, and status, and British English has traditionally occupied a central place within these institutional structures (Rahman, 2020; Kachru, 1985). Since school English has historically been shaped by norms associated with British usage, it is unsurprising that British English remained the most preferred variety for learning. However, the strong position of American English indicates that contemporary global forces also shape teachers' preferences. Through media, digital platforms, and transnational cultural exposure, American English has become increasingly visible and desirable, thereby creating a dual orientation in which British English represents formal educational authority while American English represents global modernity and contemporary relevance (Rose et al., 2021; Rahman, 2020).

The evaluative ratings across eight personality traits further reinforce this hierarchy. American English received the highest total mean score and was especially associated with traits such as intelligent, pleasant, confident, and fluent. British English, although ranked second overall, received the highest ratings on gentle, familiar, clear, and friendly. These results show that both British English and American English were evaluated positively, but not in identical ways. American English appears to have been associated more strongly with competence and dynamism, whereas British English was associated more with clarity, familiarity, and interpersonal ease. This distinction suggests that attitudes toward English varieties are more nuanced than a simple contrast between native and non-native Englishes, because even within the Inner Circle, varieties carry different social meanings and symbolic values (Schreier et al., 2020; Rose et al., 2021).

Canadian English, while positively rated, occupied a less prominent position than British English or American English. This suggests that not all Inner Circle varieties carry equal symbolic weight in the Pakistani context. Circle membership alone does not determine

prestige; rather, exposure, visibility, and sociocultural salience matter considerably. British and American English are far more visible in Pakistani educational materials, examinations, media, and institutional discourse than Canadian English. As a result, Canadian English appears positively viewed but not centrally imagined within teachers' hierarchy of desirable Englishes.

Among the Outer Circle varieties, Pakistani English received more favourable evaluations than Indian English and occupied an intermediate position between the highly rated Inner Circle varieties and the least favored variety, Indian English. Pakistani English was rated relatively positively on friendliness, familiarity, fluency, clarity, and gentleness. These results suggest that respondents associated Pakistani English with local relevance, communicative ease, and social closeness. However, its lower score on the trait intelligent indicates that it was not granted the same level of prestige or authority as British English or American English. Pakistani English was therefore accepted to a degree, but under unequal conditions.

This intermediate status of Pakistani English is theoretically important. It suggests that local English in Pakistan has attained some recognition as a valid sociolinguistic presence, but that this recognition remains incomplete. The findings support Rahman's (2020) account of Pakistani English as an established Asian English with localised linguistic features and social relevance. Yet they also show that local legitimacy does not automatically translate into educational prestige. Teachers may see Pakistani English as familiar and functional, but still hesitate to associate it with the same intellectual and institutional authority that they assign to British English and American English. The issue, therefore, is not simple rejection of Pakistani English, but rather its partial acceptance within an already existing hierarchy dominated by Inner Circle norms.

Indian English received the lowest total mean score and was evaluated least favorably across most of the eight traits. This is noteworthy because Indian English is also a well-established Outer Circle variety with a long institutional history. Its comparatively weak ranking indicates that teachers' evaluations are shaped not only by whether a variety belongs to the Inner or Outer Circle, but also by regional, ideological, and sociocultural distinctions within South Asia. The contrast between Pakistani English and Indian English suggests that local affiliation matters: respondents were more willing to accept their own localised variety than another regional Outer Circle variety. This complicates any simple binary between native and non-native Englishes and shows that Outer Circle varieties are not treated uniformly.

The pedagogical items add another important dimension to the findings. Teachers generally agreed that students should be made aware of the differences between British English and American English. They also agreed that students should be introduced to differences between standard and non-standard English varieties, although the level of support was slightly lower. These responses indicate that the respondents were not opposed to the idea of English variation itself. Rather, they appeared willing to introduce learners to diversity within English, especially when such diversity could be pedagogically structured and explained. This is consistent with wider pedagogical research which argues that although teachers may acknowledge diversity in theory, they often remain more comfortable with forms of variation that do not challenge the authority of established native norms (Rose et al., 2021).

The responses to the statement on the representation of English varieties in school textbooks are equally significant. Compared with the other attitudinal items, this statement received a lower mean score, suggesting a more moderate response. This indicates that teachers were less certain that different English varieties are actually represented in school textbooks, even though they were generally supportive of students being introduced to such variation. In other words, there appears to be a gap between teachers' support for awareness of English diversity and their perception of what textbooks currently provide. This gap points to an

important curricular issue: recognition of English variation may be conceptually acceptable to teachers, but it is not strongly reflected in their view of existing school materials.

This interpretation is supported by Batool et al. (2023), whose textbook study found that the analysed English textbook primarily drew on Standard British English and South Asian Englishes, while also revealing the presence of Pakistani English features. Their study argued that such findings are important for textbook writers and policymakers in determining which variety of English should be represented consistently in educational materials. When read alongside the present findings, this suggests that the issue of English variety in Pakistan is not only attitudinal but also curricular. Teachers may show some openness to linguistic plurality, but institutional materials still appear to reflect narrower standard models.

Overall, the findings and discussion show that Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes are shaped by a layered hierarchy of English varieties. British English and American English continue to dominate in prestige and preference, Pakistani English occupies a partially accepted but secondary position, and Indian English receives the weakest attitudinal support. These findings confirm that the theoretical recognition of World Englishes has not displaced the authority of traditional native norms in the Pakistani school context (Kachru, 1985; Rose et al., 2021; Schreier et al., 2020). At the same time, the relatively positive position of Pakistani English suggests that local English has gained some level of legitimacy in teachers' evaluative frameworks, even though that legitimacy remains limited when compared with the continuing prestige of Inner Circle varieties.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that Pakistani English school teachers' attitudes towards English varieties remain shaped by a clear hierarchy in which Inner Circle varieties, especially British English and American English, continue to enjoy greater prestige than Outer Circle varieties. The findings show that British English was the most preferred variety for learning, while American English received the highest overall evaluative ratings on several personality traits. Pakistani English occupied an intermediate position: it was viewed more positively than Indian English and was associated with familiarity, friendliness, fluency, and clarity, yet it did not achieve the same symbolic authority as British or American English. These results suggest that although local English has gained some degree of acceptance, traditional exonormative standards still dominate teachers' evaluative frameworks.

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