Equally non-native?

Investigating the attitudes of Swedish students towards Swedish and Arabic L2 English speakers

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Abstract

The increasing use of English as a lingua franca has led to the emergence of many non-native varieties, but research indicates that despite the efforts of disciplines such as World Englishes and ELF to elevate the status of these varieties, speakers of native varieties are still valued higher by listeners all over the world. However, few studies have attempted to compare non-native varieties to each other without the presence of a contrasting native variety. In Sweden, a country where English has a notably high status and prominence, a significant amount of the population has other native languages than Swedish, and as such, there is a range of non-native Englishes spoken in the country. Moreover, speakers of the biggest immigrant language in Sweden, Arabic, are often subjected to discrimination and stereotyping, which makes it relevant to investigate if biases against groups influence how the English spoken by the groups is perceived. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the attitudes of Swedish people towards Swedish and Arabic L2 English speakers. Using the verbal-guise technique, 59 upper secondary school students were recruited to respond to a questionnaire measuring their attitudes towards the two varieties. The findings indicate that there are significant differences: the Swedish speaker was rated as more intelligent, educated, confident and responsible than the Arabic speaker, while the Arabic speaker was rated as kinder and less aggressive than the Swedish speaker. While more research is needed, the findings indicate that subconscious biases against varieties exist, and it is suggested that these need to be taken into account in English-speaking contexts, particularly in ELT classrooms.

Keywords

Language attitudes, Verbal guise, ELF, ELT, World Englishes, Sweden.

Contents

1. Introduction

As the most spoken language in the world, English exists in a multitude of both native and non-native varieties. While many English-speaking countries have internal regulatory bodies and conventions for spoken and written language, there is no internationally recognized official standard variety of the language. Despite this, research indicates that there is a vast difference in how correct different varieties are perceived to be, likely due to the strong connection between language and social identity (Meyerhoff, 2019). For instance, studies comparing attitudes towards spoken American and British English have found that both native and non-native listeners tend to rate British varieties as more professional and often more attractive than American varieties (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Carrie, 2017). In addition, there seems to be a general preference towards native accents over non-native accents, regardless of the country or native language of the listeners (see Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Groom, 2012).

In Sweden, the English language has had a persistently high status since World War II, often rated on par with Swedish and far above most other languages (Josephson, 2014). Furthermore, the attitudes displayed in Sweden towards spoken varieties of English tend to be highly hierarchical. In a study investigating the attitudes in English language teaching (ELT) classrooms in Sweden, Eriksson (2019) found that teachers perceived American and British to be the correct varieties of English, while other varieties were seen as "a funny thing". When asked to rate native and non-native English accents, Jeong et al. (2021) found that Swedish upper secondary school students strongly preferred the native accents. This indicates that, in line with research from other countries, a native-like accent is highly beneficial for being viewed positively in the Swedish context. However, few studies have investigated how the attitudes towards different non-native accents compare to each other. As many students in Swedish upper secondary school have other linguistic backgrounds than monolingual Swedish, the question of whether the native language of the L2 English speaker influences listeners' attitudes towards the speaker is relevant for discovering potential biases in the ELT classroom. An especially interesting area of study in the current political landscape of Sweden is comparing attitudes towards speakers of the biggest immigrant language in Sweden, Arabic, to native Swedish speakers, as this could shed light on how language views relate to larger cultural attitudes and stereotypes. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate Swedish people's attitudes towards the English spoken by native Swedish speakers compared to native Arabic speakers.

The research questions that this study aims to answer are as follows:

1. Is there a difference in Swedish students' attitudes towards the English spoken by native Arabic speakers and the English spoken by native Swedish speakers?
2. Do any potential differences in attitudes correspond to common stereotypes or presuppositions about the two groups?

2. Background

2.1 Varieties of English

2.1.1 World Englishes, Circles of English and ELF

The immense spread of the English language over the past centuries means that it now exists not only in a large number of native varieties, but also in many non-native varieties in contexts where it is used for international communication. In fact, studies indicate that English is now used more for intercultural communication than between native speakers (Baker, 2012). While increasing focus is being put on non-native English, there is still disagreement within the linguistic community regarding how to conceptualize and categorize these varieties (Jenkins, 2009).

One of the most influential theories in this area has been the Three Circles model, originally introduced by Kachru (1984, 1985, 1989, as cited in Bruthiaux, 2003). In this framework, the English language is divided into three spheres: the Inner Circle, which consists of countries that are historically monolingually English-speaking such as the United States and the United Kingdom; the Outer Circle, consisting mainly of former British colonies such as India and Nigeria where English is generally the language of the socioeconomic elite; and the Expanding Circle, which comprises all countries where English is used for international communication rather than within the population (Proshina & Nelson, 2020). According to this model, Inner Circle English is endonormative, meaning that the English spoken there is generally regarded as "correct", while Outer and Expanding Circle Englishes are exonormative, which means that their speakers orient themselves towards the norms set by Inner Circle English (Proshina & Nelson, 2020). Kachru's models have contributed to a considerable shift in the conceptualization of English, within the linguistics community as well as in national policies, with previously overlooked varieties increasingly being regarded as equal to standard Inner Circle varieties (Bruthiaux, 2003). This framework has, however, been subject to criticism: for instance, researchers have argued that the Three Circles model is outdated and too simplistic to be useful in the current state of the English language (see Bruthiaux, 2003; Schmitz, 2014). Nevertheless, Kachru's model has provided a framework for categorizing varieties of English according to their perceived status rather than assumed inherent linguistic characteristics. Therefore, while recognizing its shortcomings, the Three Circles terminology will be used in the present study to differentiate between varieties with differing sociolinguistic statuses.

The related term World Englishes (WE), also introduced by Kachru (1961, 1986, as cited in Proshina & Nelson, 2020) posits that due to the spread of English, it is now a pluricentric rather than centralized language, and as such, we should regard all varieties as equal regardless of if they are spoken by native or non-native speakers. This contrasts with the traditional English as a foreign language (EFL) paradigm, which centers Inner Circle Englishes as the norm (Proshina & Nelson, 2020). The WE framework has inspired the development of similarly non-hierarchical paradigms, some of which are critical of

the WE model's implication that there exist distinct, nationally bound non-native varieties (Jenkins et al., 2011; Proshina & Nelson, 2020). For instance, Jenkins (2009) and Dewey (2007) prefer the concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF)[1] as it centers the unique interculturally communicative function of non-native English, which inevitably makes it more fluent and dynamic than native varieties. Additionally, House (2003) has argued that ELF communication is distinct from L1 communication in that it is used for communication purposes only rather than for identification, which contradicts the WE principle that all variants are functionally equal. However, Jenkins et al. (2011) maintain that the similarities between the paradigms outweigh their differences, and as such should not be considered two separate paradigms. Indeed, an implication of both frameworks is that the traditional EFL view should be abandoned for a less centralized perspective.

The shift towards a less Inner Circle-oriented perspective can increasingly be noted in English language teaching (ELT)[2]. Jenkins et al. (2011) note that there is growing acknowledgement of World Englishes and ELF perspectives, but add that there is as of yet no consensus regarding how to integrate these frameworks into ELT. There have, however, been suggestions to how ELF-influenced ELT should be carried out. For example, Baker (2012) has argued that inclusive ELT practices require the integration of intercultural awareness (ICA). According to Baker, the fluid and multicultural nature of ELF necessitates a shift in focus from fixed linguistic and cultural norms towards developing skills in negotiating and communicating in intercultural, hybrid contexts.

Despite shifting dynamics, Inner Circle varieties continue to enjoy a high status across the world. Speakers of Inner Circle varieties are consistently shown to be rated higher than both Outer and Expanding Circle speakers by native speakers, with American and British usually rated the most favorably (see Giles, 1970; Garrett, 2010). While there are still comparably few studies with non-native listeners, the growing body of research in this area indicates that the preferences towards American and British English are largely repeated among non-native speakers, regardless of the country of origin or native language of the informants (Major et al., 2002; Groom, 2012). For instance, studies on Austrian, German, Iranian, Japanese and Chinese informants have all shown a clear preference towards Inner Circle L1 speakers over Outer Circle and L2 speakers, even above speakers of their own varieties (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; McKenzie, 2010; Fang, 2016; Melchien, 2016; Monfared & Khatib, 2018). This tendency has been found to be connected to the stereotype of non-native speakers as having lower status than native speakers, a perception that appears to be equally strongly held among native- and non-native speakers (Major et al., 2002). Indeed, while a preference for the listeners' own varieties has been found among native speakers (Garrett, 2010), this might not be true for non-native speakers: for instance, Seyranian and Westphal (2021) found that German and Armenian listeners had considerably more positive attitudes towards American and

[1] Sometimes used synonymously with the related term English as an international language (EIL)

[2] ELT refers to English teaching that is geared to non-native speakers.

British speakers across all traits than towards speakers of both their own and each other's L2 English varieties, which indicates that native speaker preference might be stronger than solidarity with the non-native speakers' own variety. In summary, while the less hierarchical World Englishes and ELF paradigms are becoming commonplace in the linguistic community and among policy makers, these ideas seem to still be largely rejected by both native and non-native speakers in favor of traditional, Inner Circle-oriented norms.

2.1.2 Standard and non-standard Englishes

Attitude studies have largely been concerned with the "standard" accents of the countries or regions of interest, such as General American (GenAm) and Received Pronunciation (RP) (Carrie, 2017). Standard English is, however, a controversial term: several researchers argue that standard language is an ideologically constructed concept, more often used to refer to the most prestigious or well-known variant than to the most widespread one (Milroy, 2001; Halliday, 2006). Moreover, it is doubtful whether it is possible to linguistically identify distinct "standard" accents, as the features thought of as standard tend to shift through history in accordance with changes in the speech of the socioeconomic elite (Milroy, 2001; Crowley, 2003). Nevertheless, standard and non-standard language have proven to be relatively stable mental constructs across respondents, and as such can still be argued to be a useful categorization when conducting language attitude research (Giles & Coupland, 1991; McKenzie, 2010). The present study will therefore employ the terms *standard* and *non-standard* to refer to generally agreed upon social constructs rather than absolute linguistic phenomena.

In general, both native and non-native listeners tend to rate standard varieties more favorably in traits relating to power, status, confidence and intelligence, regardless of if they themselves speak the variety or not (Bayard et al., 2001; McKenzie, 2010). This is thought to be related to the socioeconomic advantage that is usually associated with the speakers of standard varieties, as well as the extensive use of standard varieties in media (Giles & Coupland, 1991). However, non-standard accents are typically rated higher in solidarity- and social attractiveness-related traits such as friendliness, honesty and reliability, especially by respondents who themselves speak the variety (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Bayard et al., 2001). Furthermore, research indicates that the more contact that occurs between social groups, the more favorably non-standard varieties will be rated (Giles & Coupland, 1991).

2.2 The English language and multilingualism in Sweden

As previously mentioned, English has a notably high status in Sweden. The English proficiency level in Sweden is among the highest in the world (EF EPI English Proficiency Index, 2022). In addition, the English language has a prominent role in academic and work settings as well as in media and popular culture, and some researchers argue that it could now be viewed as somewhere in between a second language (L2) and a foreign language, or even as a primary language next to Swedish (Josephson, 2014;

Forsberg et al., 2020). Other foreign languages do, however, not enjoy as high of a status in Sweden. While between 15–20 % of the population are native speakers of other languages than Swedish, these languages are mainly used to communicate within the home and with family rather than in society at large (Josephson, 2014; Forsberg et al., 2020). The reasons for this preference for English are believed to be largely political. For instance, Josephson (2014) has argued that the high status of English is connected to the post-World War II idea of Sweden as a modern, international country, and proficiency in the most spoken language internationally thus becomes an important component of this national identity.

The English language also enjoys a stable position in the Swedish educational system. It has been the primary foreign language taught in Swedish schools since 1946 (Josephson, 2014). While British and American English have traditionally dominated Swedish ELT classrooms, the curriculum has recently started moving towards a more global perspective, thus moving towards a WE/ELF-inspired approach (Jeong et al., 2021). Despite this, studies show that Inner Circle English is still widely viewed as superior to non-Inner Circle varieties by both teachers and students: for example, Eriksson (2019) found that while ELT teachers in Sweden do teach several varieties of English, most teachers regard RP and GenAm as the standard accents, while other varieties are taught as a contrast to these two, often introduced as funny or interesting elements rather than as fully worthy alternatives to the "standard" accents. The study also found that a majority of the student respondents would like to sound American (48 %) or British (35 %) when speaking English, and only 2 % reported that they wanted to sound discernibly Swedish. Additionally, Jeong et al. (2021) found that comprehensibility and accent acceptance was significantly higher for American and British English than for Outer and Expanding Circle varieties among Swedish upper secondary school students. Evidently, despite efforts from educational institutions to promote the preservation of L1 accents when speaking English, the attitudes of Swedish students and teachers largely follow the international tendency for both native and non-native speakers to strongly prefer Inner Circle English.

2.3 Attitudes towards Arabic speakers and immigration in Sweden

Arabic speakers are a large minority in Sweden, with the primarily Arabic speaking countries Syria and Iraq being the most common birth countries for people born outside of Sweden as of 2021 (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2022). It has been estimated that after the 2015 refugee crisis, where many asylum seekers from Syria migrated to Sweden, Arabic replaced the previously largest immigrant language Finnish as the second most spoken native language in Sweden (Parkvall, 2019).

Sweden has long been perceived as a country that is welcoming to immigrants, largely owing to its comparatively generous migration policies (Munobwa et al., 2021). However, studies indicate that the 2015 crisis marked a turning point in the political discourse as well as in the general conscience, which can be exemplified by the increasing support for the anti-immigration Sweden Democrat party (Ericson, 2018; Munobwa et

al., 2021). In a longitudinal study of immigration attitudes between the years 2005–2018, Ahmadi et al. (2020) found that while attitudes towards immigrants became increasingly positive between the years 2005 and 2014, negative attitudes became more frequent again in 2016. Notably, in 2018, 66 % of the respondents in the study agreed with the statement "All people with foreign background who commit crime in Sweden should be forced to leave the country" and only 46 % agreed with the statement "Society shall create possibilities for people with foreign background to be able to preserve their cultural traditions" (Ahmadi et al., 2020, pp. 8–10). However, 74 % of the respondents also reported having had positive experiences from working or studying with people with a foreign background, which was a higher percentage than previous years (Ahmadi et al., 2020, p. 4).

While there is not much available research concerning attitudes towards Arabic-speaking people in particular in Sweden, several studies have investigated attitudes towards Muslims. In an overview from Diskrimineringsombudsmannen (2013) of studies that investigate Islamophobia and discrimination of Muslims, it was concluded that there is a growing acceptance of overgeneralizations of what being a Muslim entails. According to the overview, the most common prejudices include that all Muslims hold patriarchal views, that they are lazy and that they are prone to violence and criminality (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013). Additionally, it was found that employers tend to have a strong negative bias against Arabic Muslims compared to people with Swedish-sounding names, which has shown to be connected to the assumption that Muslims would be less productive (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013). Studies also found that there is a tendency to portray students with immigrant backgrounds as foreign and deviant in Swedish teaching material (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013). Additionally, it was found that Islam is often portrayed as "traditional, oppressive and patriarchal" in the media, as opposed to "Swedish values" which are constructed as "modern, free and equal" (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013, p. 46). Notably, there is a tendency for opinions about Muslim men and women to differ: while men are frequently thought of as unproductive, oppressive and a threat to Swedish culture, women are more often thought of as passive victims of patriarchal structures (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013; Ahmadi et al. 2020).

2.4 Language attitudes: theory and methods

2.4.1 Attitudes

Attitudes have been the focus of many sociolinguistics studies, and it is by now a well-established area of research. While "attitude" is a complex concept that lacks a universally agreed upon definition, the core of the concept could be summarized as an individual's relatively stable, summary evaluation of an object or phenomenon, which guides their reactions and behaviors towards the entity (Bohner & Wänke, 2002; Garrett, 2010). A common method for studying attitudes is the mentalist approach, which stipulates that since attitudes are mental states and not directly observable, research must rely on individuals self-reporting their attitudes (McKenzie, 2010). While the reliance on self-reporting might increase the likelihood of validity problems, it is generally preferred over

the reductions and simplifications that appear when only outwards behavior is studied (Bohner & Wänke, 2002; McKenzie, 2010). The mentalist approach often contains the idea that attitudes consist of a cognitive, an affective and a conative component (McKenzie, 2010). However, the existence of three separate, easily distinguishable components in any given attitude has been called into question by recent research (Garrett, 2010; McKenzie, 2010).

2.4.2 Language attitudes

Language attitudes has been an established field within attitude research since the 1960s, and it is today regarded as a central part of sociolinguistics (Garrett, 2010; Carrie, 2017). Given the close connection between language and identity, language attitudes could be considered to be evaluations of not only the language varieties that are being studied but, by extension, the social groups that are associated with those particular varieties (Carrie, 2017; Meyerhoff, 2019). Giles and Coupland (1991) have argued that there is an especially strong connection between language attitudes and ethnic relations, as the language one speaks is one of the most prominent markers of which ethnic or geographical group one belongs to. Accordingly, the investigation of attitudes to language varieties can provide valuable insights into general attitudes towards groups of people.

Language attitude research that assumes a mentalist view often uses indirect methods to elicit attitudes, as this allows the researcher to access attitudes that might be subconscious or seen as shameful by the informant (Garrett, 2010). The main indirect method has traditionally been the matched-guise technique (MGT), wherein participants listen to several recordings of the same text read in different linguistic varieties, not knowing that it is the same speaker in both instances (Loureiro-Rodríguez & Acar, 2022). The advantages of this method are partly that it can elicit subconscious attitudes, as the listeners are led to believe they are evaluating different speakers rather than different varieties, and partly that it reduces confounders since the only differing variable between the recordings is the variety itself (Loureiro-Rodríguez & Acar, 2022). However, a commonly raised concern with MGT is that speakers who are truly native in several distinct varieties of the same language are rare, thus creating a risk of "mimicking-authenticity" in which a speaker's attempt at approximating a variety that is not their own causes inaccuracies (Garrett, 2010). As an alternative to MGT, the verbal-guise technique (VGT) employs different speakers for each variety, which ensures that every speaker is an authentic representative of their variety (Garrett, 2010; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). This advantage combined with the difficulty to find suitable speakers for MGT has made VGT into an increasingly common method in attitude research (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). However, a disadvantage of VGT is that it cannot fully control outside variables, since there is inevitable variation in other factors than the variety itself across speakers (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). This can however be greatly reduced by matching the different speakers in factors such as sex, age, pitch, and speech rate (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). For MGT and VGT, a frequently used method for collecting attitude data from informants is the semantic differential scale, originally developed by Osgood et al. (1957, as cited in Garrett, 2010). In this design, informants are asked to fill in scales which have opposing semantic labels on each side (such as

kind/unkind) (Garrett, 2010). While other types of research instruments are sometimes used, the high test re-test reliability combined with the ease of use of the semantic differential scale, makes it highly suitable for attitude research (McKenzie, 2010).

3. Methodology

Following the established indirect method for the measurement of language attitudes, the study was designed as a verbal-guise test (see Garrett, 2010; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). Two speakers, one of each relevant variety, were recruited through contacts to be recorded reading the elicitation material (see 3.1). The audio recordings were then played to two groups of Swedish upper secondary school students (see 3.2) who responded to a questionnaire based on the Osgood semantic differential scales (see 3.3) after listening to the recordings.

3.1 Speakers and recordings

For the elicitation material, one Arabic speaker and one Swedish speaker were selected to be recorded reading a short text (see 3.1.1). There is reason to be cautious when attempting to select one or a few individuals to represent an entire speech variety, as there is considerable variation in factors such as fluency and comprehensibility, particularly among ELF speakers (Major et al., 2002; Kang et al., 2018). Additionally, verbal-guise tests require that the speakers resemble one another on all factors except for the variable that is being measured in order to ensure internal validity (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). Thus, careful measures were taken in the recruitment process to address these problems.

First, following Major et al. (2002), a filtering process was conducted wherein the speaker recordings were impressionistically evaluated by the student and her supervisor using the following criteria: 1) ability to sound conversational, 2) possessing the expected phonological features of the speaker's variety (see appendix B for an overview of the phonological features exhibited by the speakers compared to the typical phonological features of the variety), 3) familiarity with, and fluency of, the vocabulary in the text, and 4) having a neutral voice quality and pitch. There is an increased risk of subjectivity in impressionistic evaluations, and they are therefore often accompanied by methods such as pilot studies where listeners are recruited to rate the different vocal features of the speakers (Major et al., 2002; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). This additional process was, however, not possible due to the scope and time constraints of the present study, and as such, extra care was instead placed in controlling factors such as demographic characteristics and quality of the recordings to ensure that the two recordings would be as comparable as possible. For the demographic filtering, a questionnaire was administered which asked for the age and gender of the potential speakers as well as their L1(s) and L2(s) and self-assessed English proficiency (see appendix C). The languages were asked to ensure that neither speaker was a proficient speaker of the other's first

language, as this could cause an authenticity-mimicking effect similar to that of MGT (see Garrett, 2010). While not as precise as a professionally administered proficiency test, self-assessed English proficiency was asked to further match the speakers as closely as possible.

Initially, two different Arabic speakers were recruited through contacts. They were each given the questionnaire and then recorded, with the purpose of selecting the one whose speech was deemed to best fulfill the above-mentioned criteria. One of the speakers was subsequently filtered out on account of her possessing L2 knowledge of Swedish as well as being deemed to not be sufficiently fluent in English (i.e., criteria 1 and 3 for the impressionistic evaluation were not met). The other speaker was selected for the study, as her speech was judged to meet all four of the criteria and she did not report L2 proficiency in Swedish. Next, a Swedish speaker who demographically matched the Arabic speaker was recruited to respond to the questionnaire and read the elicitation material. As her speech was deemed to meet the four criteria and she did not report any Arabic proficiency, she was selected as the second speaker. Speaker information and responses to the questionnaire are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Information about the speakers. "English proficiency" refers to self-assessed proficiency.

	Age	Gender	L1(s)	L2(s)	English proficiency
Arabic speaker	39	Female	Arabic	English	5/5
Swedish speaker	35	Female	Swedish	English	4/5

3.1.1 Text: The Boy who Cried Wolf

The elicitation material selected for the verbal-guise test was the text "The Boy who Cried Wolf" (see appendix D). Traditionally, the fable "The North Wind and the Sun" has been used for phonetic analyses, and it is the text that is recommended by the International Phonetic Association for phonetic comparisons (Baird et al., 2021). However, Deterding (2006) has noted a number of problems with this text: among other things, several English phonemes such as the fricative /ʒ/, word-initial and -medial /z/, and the diphthong /ɔɪ/ are absent. Additionally, despite containing 113 words, only 64 of the words that occur in the text are unique (Deterding, 2006). Deterding suggests as an alternative a rewritten version of the classic fable "The Boy who Cried Wolf", which contains 134 unique words and includes the phonemes that are absent from "The North Wind and the Sun". This text was determined to be better suited as elicitation material for the present study, as several of the phonemes that are missing from "The North Wind and the Sun" (such as /ʒ/ and /z/) are relevant for Arabic and Swedish varieties of English (see Appendix B).

3.2 Respondents

The questionnaire was administered in person to two groups of students in their classrooms in an upper secondary school in Stockholm. In-person questionnaires, which typically employ student respondents, are generally preferred over those administered online on account of higher response rates and greater control over the test situation

(Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). In total, 59 students aged 17 and 18 responded to the questionnaire, of which 30 (51 %) were female, 28 (47 %) were male and one identified as other. 47 of the students (80 %) had Swedish as their only L1, while 12 students (20 %) had other L1s in addition to Swedish. Of these, two students reported Arabic and two students reported Russian as their L1. The other L1s that were reported (one person per L1) were English, Portuguese, Romanian, Flemish, Finnish, Assyrian and Dutch. All students (apart from the L1 English speaker) reported L2 knowledge of English.

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), a sample size of at least 30 is necessary to achieve normal distribution, but more than 50 respondents is recommended for L2 research to increase the chances of statistically significant results. Additionally, for the sample to be representative, it should be as similar as possible to the target population in demographic factors such as gender and age (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). The present study's sample, while limited to a specific age group (17-18), can therefore be considered appropriate as it consists of 59 respondents and has an even gender distribution as well as a similar percentage of L1 speakers of other languages than Swedish to the general population of Sweden.

Prior to the test, I informed the students about the purpose and procedure of the study, and they were asked to provide their consent to participate as well as to fill in demographic information (see Appendix A). After this, the recordings were played to the participants and they were asked to fill in the questionnaire. As the verbal-guise technique used in the present study entails both speakers reading the same elicitation material, there is a risk that the order in which the recordings are played influences the responses, especially regarding the comprehensibility factor (Kang et al., 2018). The audio recordings were therefore played in different orders to the two groups to reduce this effect.

3.3 Questionnaire

To collect data on the respondents' attitudes towards the varieties, a questionnaire using the Osgood semantic differential scale was created and distributed to the participants (see appendix A). The semantic differential scale is the measurement tool that is suggested for indirect attitude research (Zahn & Hopper, 1985). While some who use the indirect approach prefer to include Likert scales that specifically measure the affective and conative components of attitudes in addition to the (cognitive) semantic differential scale, this was decided against for this study for two reasons. First, as mentioned in section 2.4.1, recent research has indicated that it might be incorrect to assume that there exist three distinct dimensions to attitudes (McKenzie, 2010). Secondly, according to Garrett (2010), the risk of informants overthinking their responses is higher in Likert scales than in semantic differential scales, and the data that is collected from these scales therefore has a higher risk of being less reliable. The Osgood semantic differential scale was thus judged to be satisfactory for the purposes of this study.

A seven-point scale was used for the semantic differential scale. According to Garrett (2010), some scholars argue against the use of a middle point in semantic differential scales on account of the questionable existence of neutral attitudes. However, as seven is a commonly used number of points for semantic differential scales in attitude research, it was deemed to be the best choice for the present study in order to facilitate comparisons with previous research. Furthermore, research indicates that seven is the most appropriate number of points for attitude-rating scales, as more points have presented data analysis problems while fewer points has caused irritation among respondents (McKenzie, 2010).

The variables used in the present study were adapted from Zahn and Hopper (1985), who found that traits often used in attitude studies correlate along three overarching domains, which they labeled *superiority*, *attractiveness* and *dynamism*. The *superiority* dimension includes traits relating to status, education and competence, while the *attractiveness* dimension consists of traits related to social appeal and likeability (Zahn & Hopper, 1985). These dimensions largely correspond to the dichotomy that has been found between standard and non-standard varieties (see Giles & Coupland, 1991; Bayard et al., 2001). The *dynamism* dimension, which concerns self-presentation and activity level, is less established in attitude research, but Zahn and Hopper's study indicated that respondents evaluate it as a distinct dimension. Although there is some variation in how the dimensions are named, later studies have largely confirmed that respondent ratings tend to correlate within these distinct dimensions (Garrett, 2010). Therefore, attitude researchers usually select traits from each of the dimensions and analyze them according to which dimension they belong to (Garrett, 2010; Rindal, 2010). Thus, two items from each factor were selected: *educated/uneducated* and *intelligent/unintelligent* from *superiority*, *kind/unkind* and *honest/dishonest* from *attractiveness*, and *aggressive/not aggressive* and *confident/unconfident* from *dynamism*. Furthermore, Garrett (2010) suggests that in addition to selecting established semantic pairs, the researcher should add original items that are directly relevant to the study. Accordingly, the following four items were added for their connection to the prejudices against Arabic speakers that were presented in section 2.3: *responsible/irresponsible*, *open-minded/close-minded*, *hard-working/lazy* and *progressive/traditional*. While not proven to be its own domain, these four items were then grouped into a fourth category labelled *stereotypes* for comparison with the established dimensions. Following the recommendation by Mackey and Gass (2016) for administering questionnaires to L2 informants, the traits were given in both English and Swedish to ensure that the content was properly understood by all respondents.

In addition to the personality traits, the speakers were asked to rate the comprehensibility of the speakers. As opposed to intelligibility, which is the measurement of how well the speaker's intended meaning is actually understood by the listeners, comprehensibility measures only the self-perceived difficulty to understand the speaker and has shown to be strongly affected by attitudes (Major et al. 2002; Kang et. al., 2018). This was included in the study to gain additional insights into how the two varieties are perceived. For the comprehensibility, the questionnaire contained the question "how easy did you find it to

comprehend what the speaker was saying?" with a seven-point semantic differential scale with the two poles "very easy" and "very difficult".

4. Results

The means, standard deviations and p-values (using a two-tailed t-test) were calculated for the two speakers. Initially, all traits are combined to assess the overall rating of the speakers. Secondly, the traits will be presented separately. Lastly, the traits are grouped according to the four dimensions mentioned in section 3.3. Additionally, the means, standard deviations and p-value of the comprehensibility rating for the two speakers are presented in a separate table. To simplify the data analysis, the values from the questionnaire were converted so that the highest value (7) represented the positive end of the scale for all the semantic pairs (*educated, intelligent, kind, honest, not aggressive, confident, responsible, open-minded, hard-working* and *progressive* respectively). Accordingly, the closer a score is to 7, the more positive the rating is. As the middle of the scale is 4, a score higher than 4 is interpreted as positive, while a score lower than 4 is interpreted as negative.

The means of all traits combined for each speaker are presented in table 2. While both speakers had a mean rating that was slightly above neutral, the Swedish speaker was rated slightly more positively (4.38 out of 7) than the Arabic speaker (4.13 out of 7). However, with a p-value of .45, this difference cannot be considered significant.

Table 2. Mean evaluations and p-values of all traits combined. Standard deviation in parentheses. (N=59).

Arabic speaker	Swedish speaker	p-value
4.13 (1.55)	4.38 (1.44)	0.45

When instead looking at the means of each separate trait for the speakers, significant differences were found for the traits *educated, intelligent, kind, not aggressive, confident,* and *responsible.* The Swedish speaker was rated more positively on the traits *educated, intelligent, confident,* and *responsible,* while the Arabic speaker was favored on the traits *kind* and *not aggressive*. The largest differences between the speakers were found in the traits *confident, educated* and *intelligent.* The traits *honest, open-minded, hard-working* and *progressive,* however, produced p-values over 0.05, and the results for these traits can therefore not be considered significant. Out of the six traits with statistically significant results, the Swedish speaker was rated positively on all, while the Arabic speaker was rated positively on three of the traits and negatively on three. The results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Mean evaluations and p-values of each of the traits. Standard deviations in parentheses. (N=59).

	Arabic speaker	Swedish speaker	p-value
Educated	3.20 (1.42)	4.17 (1.29)	0.000184
Intelligent	3.56 (1.36)	4.40 (1.23)	0.000553
Kind	5.42 (1.16)	4.66 (1.49)	0.002456
Honest	4.98 (1.0)	4.81 (1.24)	0.416637
Not aggressive	5.44 (1.59)	4.76 (1.66)	0.025517
Confident	2.63 (1.34)	4.61 (1.75)	<0.00001
Responsible	4.02 (0.86)	4.56 (1.05)	0.002752
Open-minded	3.86 (1.24)	3.69 (1.22)	0.45562
Hard-working	4.56 (1.39)	4.37 (1.30)	0.453571
Progressive	3.59 (1.15)	3.75 (1.60)	0.555193

Following Rindal (2010), the traits were then grouped into their overarching domains, which in the present study were *superiority, attractiveness, dynamism* and *stereotypes*. As previously mentioned, the dimensions of *superiority*, *attractiveness* and *dynamism* were taken from Zahn and Hopper (1985), while the *stereotypes* category is the combination of traits that were added for the purpose of this study. The means of each dimension were calculated as follows: for each respondent, the *superiority* rating was calculated as the average of the ratings for *educated* and *intelligent,* the *attractiveness* rating as the average of *kind* and *honest,* the *dynamism* rating as the average of *aggressive* and *confident* and the *stereotypes* rating as the average of *responsible, open-minded, hard-working* and *progressive*. It should be noted that *aggressive* rather than *not aggressive* counts for a higher score in the combined *dynamism* rating. As can be seen in table 4, the Swedish speaker was rated higher in the *superiority* and *dynamism* dimensions, while the Arabic speaker was rated higher in *attractiveness.* The *stereotypes* category did, however, not result in a significant difference.

Table 4. Mean evaluations and p-values of the four dimensions. Standard deviations in parentheses. (N=59).

	Arabic speaker	Swedish speaker	p-value
Superiority	3.38 (1.25)	4.29 (1.15)	0.000075
Attractiveness	5.2 (0.86)	4.74 (1.10)	0.012225
Dynamism	2.59 (0.85)	3.92 (1.28)	<0.00001

Stereotypes	4.0 (0.70)	4.09 (0.76)	0.398711

The informants were also asked to rate the comprehensibility of the two speakers. This was analyzed separately from the other semantic pairs, as even though it has been shown to be related to attitudes towards the speakers, it is normally counted as a separate measure from attitude evaluations (see Major et al., 2002; Kang et al., 2018; Jeong et al., 2021). As seen in table 5, the Swedish speaker was rated as significantly more comprehensible than the Arabic speaker.

Table 5. Mean evaluations and p-values of the comprehensibility. Standard deviations in parentheses. (N=59).

	Arabic speaker	Swedish speaker	p-value
Comprehensibility	4.34 (1.67)	6.08 (1.13)	<0.00001

In summary, several significant differences were found in attitudes towards the two speakers. The Swedish speaker was generally seen as more educated, intelligent, confident, and responsible than the Arabic speaker. In turn, the Arabic speaker was regarded as kinder and less aggressive than the Swedish speaker. Additionally, when the traits were grouped into dimensions, the Swedish speaker was rated higher in the *superiority* and *dynamism* dimensions while the Arabic speaker was preferred in the *attractiveness* dimension. The Swedish speaker was also found to be perceived as significantly more comprehensible than the Arabic speaker.

5. Discussion

Most of the previous studies that have investigated attitudes towards non-native or Expanding Circle varieties have done so by comparing them to native varieties, particularly from the Inner Circle. By contrast, the focus of this study was to investigate if different non-native varieties are perceived differently. As such, directly comparing the results of the present study with previous research on L2 varieties might not give a complete picture, since the native speaker preference that has been noted in previous research (see Major et al., 2002; Groom, 2012; Melchien, 2016) could result in more negative ratings of the non-native speakers in studies that feature Inner Circle speakers than in those which do not. For instance, Seyranian and Westphal's (2021) study on German and Armenian students' attitudes towards American, British, German and Armenian English resulted in highly positive ratings for the Inner Circle speakers in both *superiority*- and *attractiveness*-related traits, while the German and Armenian varieties received similarly low-to-neutral ratings on all traits. Similarly, Jeong et al. (2021) found that Swedish students rated Inner Circle Englishes significantly more positively in terms of pleasantness and perceived status than they did Expanding and Outer Circle varieties (Indian, Chinese, Ukrainian and Ugandan), while the four Expanding and Outer Circle

Englishes all received similarly neutral ratings. This contrasts with the results from the present study, where both the *superiority*- and *attractiveness* dimensions yielded significantly different results for the two Expanding Circle speakers. It seems, then, that the absence of an Inner Circle speaker as a reference might cause biases other than the native speaker preference to become more salient. As such, more detailed comparisons of attitudes towards Swedish and Arabic varieties with attitudes towards other Expanding Circle Englishes might be more fruitful when there is more available research without native samples.

When expanding the comparison to language attitude studies that do not focus specifically on native versus non-native varieties, interesting parallels can be made. An especially notable result from the present study is that the Swedish speaker was rated more positively in *superiority*-related traits while the Arabic speaker was rated higher in *attractiveness*-related traits, a dichotomy that often appears in studies comparing standard to non-standard varieties (see Giles & Coupland, 1991; McKenzie, 2010; Carrie, 2017). This is noteworthy since both Swedish and Arabic are non-native Expanding Circle varieties and thus, at least in theory, equally non-standard from an international viewpoint. One possible explanation for this result is that the increasing use of English, and resulting familiarity with Swedish-influenced English, could have led to this variety being perceived as standard in the Swedish context. As previously noted, it has been suggested by several scholars that English is starting to resemble a primary language in Sweden, especially for the younger generations (see Josephson, 2014). The results from the present study might then be further indication that English has become so commonplace in Sweden that, despite their continued preference for Inner Circle English, students perceive Swedish-influenced English as more normative than other non-Inner Circle Englishes. Furthermore, varieties that are perceived as standard are generally connected not only to what the majority speaks, but also to what the socioeconomic elite speaks (Milroy, 2001). Accordingly, the results from this study might be an indication that awareness of the socioeconomic privileges of Swedish speakers in comparison to speakers of other native languages carries over to English-speaking situations. This could be a cause for concern in ELT contexts, where *superiority*-related traits will likely have a higher impact on evaluations of students' abilities than *attractiveness*-related ones. As Baker (2012) has argued, fair ELT practices necessitate recognition of, and moving beyond, stereotypes and preconceived notions. Therefore, the move towards preservation of L1 features in English teaching in Sweden might need to be accompanied by an increased awareness of potential cultural biases.

One of the aims of the study was to investigate whether differences in attitudes towards the speakers corresponded to specific stereotypes about the two groups associated with the speakers' native languages. In part, the differences in favor of the Swedish speaker in the traits *responsible*, *intelligent* and *educated* could be interpreted as a confirmation of the research question, as connections can be made to the discrimination of people with Arabic-sounding names in the workplace (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013). Interestingly, though, only one of the four semantic pairs that were added to the study specifically for their relevance to Swedish attitudes towards Arabic speakers,

responsible/irresponsible, yielded a statistically significant result in favor of the Swedish speaker, while no significant difference in attitudes towards the speakers could be found in the traits *open-minded/close-minded*, *hard-working/lazy* or *progressive/traditional*. Additionally, the tendency of the respondents to see the Arabic speaker as less aggressive and less confident than the Swedish speaker can be interpreted as contradictory to the presupposition that people of Arabic-speaking origins are more prone to violence than people of Swedish-speaking origins (see Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013). An explanation to this could be that, due to the limited scope of the study, it did not investigate if the respondents could identify the varieties correctly. As such, it is possible that the listeners' attitudes were not directed specifically towards Arabic speakers. However, as the phonological analysis showed that both speakers exhibited features that are typical to their varieties, one might expect that respondents were generally able to identify the varieties correctly. Alternatively, the results could be an indication that specific cultural stereotypes that exist in Swedish-speaking contexts are not as salient when the persons are speaking in English, in line with House's (2003) argument that ELF is devoid of cultural identifiers. However, it is unlikely that cultural biases do not play some role in the evaluations, given that stereotypes about groups have been found to be one of the main factors behind L2 respondents' ratings (Major et al., 2002). Instead, the perhaps most likely explanation to these results could be that the speakers' gender had a considerable effect on the listeners' attitudes. Research indicates that the gender of the speakers is an important factor for attitudes (Giles & Coupland, 1991), and several verbal-guise studies that have employed speakers of both genders for each variety have resulted in a larger difference between male and female speakers than between different varieties (see Bayard et al., 2001; Carrie, 2017). It is therefore highly likely that a study that included male speakers would yield different results. As previously mentioned, studies have shown that it is primarily Muslim men that are subjected to presuppositions about being aggressive and violent, while women are more often perceived as submissive and oppressed (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013; Ahmadi et al., 2020). The rating of the Arabic speaker as significantly less aggressive and confident than the Swedish speaker could then, rather than contradict the stereotypes, be an effect of the intersection of gender and cultural stereotypes in attitudes. For future research, the employment of male or mixed gender speakers could provide more insights on this. Additionally, the inclusion of a question about identification of the variety might give more precise insights into how specific cultural stereotypes relate to language attitudes.

A finding that might be of particular relevance in ELT contexts is that the Swedish speaker was perceived as significantly more comprehensible than the Arabic speaker. While it is possible that the Arabic speaker was, in fact, less intelligible to the listeners, it is likely that other factors influenced the ratings. As previously mentioned, comprehensibility is thought to be more affected by attitudes towards speakers of the varieties than by actual intelligibility (Major et al., 2002). Accordingly, the rating of the Arabic speaker as less comprehensible could be interpreted as an extension of her lower rating in the *superiority* dimension, rather than an effect of her pronunciation being less intelligible to the listeners. However, another factor that has shown to have a strong connection to comprehensibility is the respondents' familiarity with the variety (Gass &

Varonis, 1984). For instance, Jeong et al. (2021) found that the Indian speaker in their verbal-guise test was rated higher in comprehensibility but equal in perceived pleasantness and status to the other non-Inner Circle varieties, which the authors believed to be connected to the listeners' relative familiarity with Indian English. Accordingly, negative attitudes might not be the only explanation to the low comprehensibility rating. While Arabic is estimated to be the next biggest language in Sweden, Arabic English in particular is likely heard less in Swedish society, which could impact the listeners understanding. Nonetheless, as the two speakers of this study are estimated to have similar levels of proficiency and fluency of English, the fact that the Arabic speaker was rated significantly lower in comprehensibility is another indication that there might be biases that need to be addressed in order to achieve just evaluation in Swedish ELT situations.

A possibility that has not yet been mentioned is that the higher ratings for the Swedish speaker in four out of the six traits as well as in comprehensibility is simply due to the listeners' preference for their own variety, and thus not connected to negative presuppositions about the Arabic speaker. As previously mentioned, an in-group preference has been noted in Inner Circle attitude research (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Garrett, 2010). However, this preference tends to mostly affect *attractiveness* and *solidarity*-related traits (McKenzie, 2010). In my study, by contrast, it was the Arabic speaker that was rated more favorably in *attractiveness*, despite only two of the listeners being L1 Arabic speakers. Additionally, as several previous studies on Expanding Circle varieties have found that respondents tend to rate their own variety similarly to other L2 varieties (see Melchien, 2016; Seyranian & Westphal, 2021), it is not clear whether the in-group effect exists among Expanding Circle listeners. Therefore, it seems more likely that the ratings are connected to the idea of Swedish English as standard than to feelings of solidarity. However, further research on the effect of in-group preference on L2 listeners is needed before any conclusions can be drawn.

Finally, it should be noted that there are limitations to the verbal-guise technique which should be taken into account when interpreting the results. It is not possible to completely discount the influence of idiosyncratic speaker factors on listener attitudes (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). However, several careful measures were taken to ensure that the speech samples were as comparable as possible on dimensions other than those of accent. With the large and diverse sample of respondents, combined with the careful selection of speakers and material, the findings of the present study should be considered as comparable to previous attitude research as practically possible with the present conditions and resources. Finally, since this study focuses on the previously largely unexplored area of comparing Expanding Circle Englishes only to each other, it is only to be hoped that future research with similar goals but other speakers and methods will be conducted to test the more general validity of the present findings.

6. Conclusion

As previous research has largely focused on differences in attitudes towards native and non-native speech, the present study aimed at approaching the fields of ELF and attitude research from a slightly different angle, by investigating if and how attitudes towards different Expanding Circle Englishes differ. The research questions that guided the study were whether there are differences in Swedish students' attitudes towards Swedish and Arabic L2 English speakers, as well as if these differences could be connected to stereotypes about the two groups. While more research is clearly needed, several significant differences were found that indicate that attitudes towards different L2 varieties might be connected to preconceived notions about speakers of the varieties. Notably, the Swedish speaker was rated higher in superiority-related traits while the Arabic speaker was rated more positively in the *attractiveness* dimension, which is to a large extent similar to the results of research on attitudes toward standard- and non-standard L1 varieties. This could partly be an indication that Swedish English is approaching L1 status in Sweden, and partly an indication that listeners' awareness of differing socioeconomic statuses of speakers of different varieties is present also in English-speaking contexts. Additionally, while most of the traits from the *stereotypes* category did not yield statistically significant results, the differences in favor of the Swedish speaker in the traits *intelligent*, *educated* and *responsible* as well as in listener comprehensibility suggest a possible connection to negative presuppositions about Arabic speakers. However, when it comes to traits such as *confident* and *aggressive*, it is not unlikely that speaker gender comes into play, and that the results may not be valid for both genders. Nonetheless, the attitude differences that were found could be a cause for concern in ELT contexts where the English proficiency of students with many different native languages is evaluated. While part of the rationale behind moving the curriculum towards a World Englishes and ELF paradigm is to dismantle the obsolete hierarchies of the English-speaking world, the results from the present study suggest that other biases, such as racism and religious discrimination, might instead become more salient. However, more research on Expanding Circle Englishes, with a different selection of speakers, respondents and varieties, is needed to further explore how ELT can be approached in an interculturally conscious way.

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Appendix A

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Forskningsprojekt: attityder till talad engelska

Jag heter Alva och är lärarstudent vid Stockholms universitet. Jag genomför just nu en studie i lingvistik vid engelska institutionen.

Studiens syfte och genomförande

Studien handlar om attityder till olika varianter av talad engelska. Du kommer att få lyssna på ljudklipp från två olika talare och i samband med detta svara på ett antal frågor som rör åsikter om talarna.

Deltagande

Deltagande i studien är frivilligt och har ingen påverkan på elevens betyg.

Etik och sekretess

Allt material som insamlas i studien är anonymt. Materialet kommer endast att användas i forskningssyfte. Den insamlade informationen kommer att förvaras på ett säkert sätt och kommer att raderas efter att studien avslutas i enlighet med GDPR.

Kontakt

Om du har frågor om studien är du välkommen att kontakta mig på mejl:
alvaliljegren@gmail.com

Handledare:
Peter Sundkvist
peter.sundkvist@english.su.se

Samtycke

Jag har läst och förstått informationen ovan. Jag har fått möjlighet att ställa frågor och har fått dem besvarade.

☐ Jag samtycker till att delta i studien

Ålder:

Kön:

☐ Kvinna

☐ Man

☐ Annat/vill inte säga

Vilket/vilka språk talar du som modersmål?

Vilka övriga språk talar du? (alla språk som du kan tala/förstå till någon del men som inte är ditt modersmål)

Del 1: Talare 1
Svara på denna del när du lyssnar på talare 1.

I think the person sounds…/Jag tycker att personen låter...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
educated/utbildad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	uneducated/outbildad
intelligent/smart	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not intelligent/inte smart
kind/vänlig	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	unkind/ovänlig
honest/ärlig	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	dishonest/oärlig
aggressive/aggressiv	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not aggressive/inte aggressiv
confident/självsäker	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not confident/inte självsäker
responsible/ansvarsfull	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	irresponsible/inte ansvarsfull
open-minded/öppensinnad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	close-minded/trångsynt
hard-working/arbetssam	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	lazy/lat
traditional/traditionell	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	modern/modern

Hur lätt tyckte du att det var att uppfatta vad talaren sa?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
väldigt lätt	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	väldigt svårt

Del 2: Talare 2
Svara på denna del när du lyssnar på talare 2.

I think the person sounds…/Jag tycker att personen låter...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
educated/utbildad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	uneducated/outbildad
intelligent/smart	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not intelligent/inte smart
kind/vänlig	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	unkind/ovänlig
honest/ärlig	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	dishonest/oärlig
aggressive/aggressiv	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not aggressive/inte aggressiv
confident/självsäker	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	not confident/inte självsäker
responsible/ansvarsfull	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	irresponsible/inte ansvarsfull
open-minded/öppensinnad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	close-minded/trångsynt
hard-working/arbetssam	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	lazy/lat
traditional/traditionell	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	modern/modern

Hur lätt tyckte du att det var att uppfatta vad talaren sa?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
väldigt lätt	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	väldigt svårt

Appendix B

Phonological analysis

Arabic speaker

Arabic exists in many different varieties with some variation in phonological features between the varieties, but many of the features that set Arabic phonology apart from standard Inner Circle English are shared between the varieties (Smith, 2001). Some of the most typical phonological traits that differentiates Arabic L2 English from standard British and American English is the allophonic use of /p/ and /b/, the pharyngealization of /h/ as /ħ/ and the insertion of short vowels in initial and final consonant clusters (Smith, 2001). Additionally, Arabic speakers may pronounce the /r/ phoneme as a voiced flap, confuse /g/ and /k/ and insert glottal stops before initial vowels (Smith, 2001).

Table 1. Typical phonological features of Arabic English with examples from the speaker recording

Typical phonological features	Examples from speaker
Allophonic use of /p/ and /b/	[ˈbleʒ.əɪ] (pleasure), [pɔɪ] (boy)
Pronouncing /ŋ/ as /ŋg/ or /ŋk/	[ˈɹeɪzɪŋk] (raising), [lɒŋk] (long)
Insertion of short vowels in final consonant clusters	[ɪˈskeɪpəd] (escaped), [kənˈvɪnsəd] (convinced)
Pronouncing /v/ as /f/	[ˈfɪl.ɪdʒ] (village)
Pronouncing /h/ as /ħ/	[ˈħɝd] (heard)

As Table 1 shows, the speaker exhibited several of the expected phonological characteristics. However, some typical features, such as the insertion of short vowels in initial consonant clusters, the insertion of a glottal stop or the pronunciation of /r/ as a voiced flap were not present in the recording, which could be a result of the speaker's familiarity with Inner Circle English phonology. Nevertheless, the presence of many of the well-known features are likely to contribute to the speaker being perceived as a typical speaker of her variety.

Swedish speaker

Swedish phonology shares many features with standard American and British English, but there are several notable differences. Some common features of Swedish L2 English are replacing /z/ and /ʒ/ with their voiceless equivalents, confusing /w/ and /v/ as well as replacing the dentals /ð/ and /θ/ with /d/ and /t/ respectively (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder, 2001). Other common features are pronouncing affricates (such as /tʃ/) as fricatives and replacing the vowel /ʊ/ with a more rounded and close vowel (Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder, 2001).

Table 2. Typical phonological features of Swedish English with examples from the speaker recording

Typical phonological features	Examples from speaker
Pronouncing /tʃ/ as /ʃ/	[ʃeɪndʒ] (change), [ˈʃɪk.ɪn] (chicken)
Pronouncing /ð/ as /d/	[də] (the), [dɪs] (this)

Pronouncing /z/ as /s/	[su:] (zoo)
Confusing /w/ and /v/	[vʊlf] (wolf)
Pronouncing /ʒ/ as /ʃ/	[ˈpleʃ.əɪ] (pleasure)

Like the Arabic speaker, the Swedish speaker exhibited several of the features that are typical to Swedish phonology while the absence of others, such as replacing /θ/ with /t/ and pronouncing words with /ʊ/ with a more rounded vowel, indicate a certain familiarity with Inner Circle Englishes.

Appendix C

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Research project: Attitudes to spoken English

Who I am

I am a student at the English department of Stockholm University doing a research project in linguistics.

What the project is about

The study investigates attitudes to different varieties of spoken English.

What participation involves

You will read a short text in English. With your consent, I will audio record the reading and play it to a number of individuals who will respond to a survey related to the recording.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from participating at any time.

What will happen to the data

I will use the data from the recording and the survey in my degree project. I will not at any point mention any real names and I will remove any information that could reveal your identity.
The information you provide will be handled with care. The recordings will be kept in a safe space and will be deleted after the conclusion of the project in line with GDPR.

Contact details

For any further questions, please don't hesitate to email me at: alvaliljegren@gmail.com
Supervisor: Peter Sundkvist, peter.sundkvist@english.su.se

Alva Liljegren
alvaliljegren@gmail.com

Consent to participating in the research project "Attitudes to spoken English"

I have read and understood the information about the study in the document "Research project: Attitudes to spoken English". I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and I have had them answered. I may keep the written information.

☐ I consent to participating in the study described in the document "Research project: Attitudes to spoken English".

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place, Date: _____

Name:

Age:

1. Which language(s) do you speak as a **first** language?

2. Which other language(s) do you speak? (please write down any language that you can speak or understand, but that is not your first language).

3. How would you rate your own English proficiency?

1	2	3	4	5
Very basic	Basic	Ok	Good	Very good

Appendix D

The Boy who Cried Wolf

There was once a poor shepherd boy who used to watch his flocks in the fields next to a dark forest near the foot of a mountain. One hot afternoon, he thought up a good plan to get some company for himself and also have a little fun. Raising his fist in the air, he ran down to the village shouting “Wolf, Wolf.” As soon as they heard him, the villagers all rushed from their homes, full of concern for his safety, and two of his cousins even stayed with him for a short while. This gave the boy so much pleasure that a few days later he tried exactly the same trick again, and once more he was successful. However, not long after, a wolf that had just escaped from the zoo was looking for a change from its usual diet of chicken and duck. So, overcoming its fear of being shot, it actually did come out from the forest and began to threaten the sheep. Racing down to the village, the boy of course cried out even louder than before. Unfortunately, as all the villagers were convinced that he was trying to fool them a third time, they told him, “Go away and don’t bother us again.” And so the wolf had a feast.

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