

# Including Varieties of English in Teaching

*A Survey of Teachers' Practices in Swedish Upper Secondary School*



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## **Abstract**

English teachers in Swedish upper secondary school often focus on Standard British and American English, although they agree with the syllabus that different varieties of English should be included in teaching. This study aimed to investigate to what extent English teachers include different varieties of English in the classroom. Previous work has failed to provide a comprehensive overview of the extent Swedish upper secondary school teachers include different varieties of English. In this study, 343 English teachers responded to an online questionnaire that was emailed to 887 upper secondary school units all over Sweden. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions about the teachers' age group, time of graduation from a teacher education program, teaching experience, whether the teachers include different varieties of English in the classroom, how the varieties are included and how much the teachers perceived their teacher education programs to focus on different varieties. The responses were summarized and discussed in relation to the syllabus, previous research and whether the teachers' backgrounds relate to the extent they include different varieties in the classroom. The study found that the teachers use a wide range of teaching practices and materials in various teaching areas to include a rich array of varieties in the classroom. More research is needed to conclude if there is a connection between teachers' backgrounds and teaching about varieties of English. In conclusion, many English teachers in Swedish upper secondary school comply with the syllabus regarding varieties of English, although more varieties could be included to help raise the students' language awareness.

**Keywords:** Varieties of English, English Language Teaching, Syllabus, English as a Global Language

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# 1. Introduction

In Sweden, the syllabi for English in compulsory and upper secondary school have changed from prioritizing British and American English varieties to not specifying a particular variety that should be taught. A language variety is linguistic items and speech patterns that are connected to a specific context such as a geographical area, according to Wardhaugh (2010, p. 23). Before 1994, Swedish students had to learn Standard British English (Modiano, 2009, p. 66). Today, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) states that the teaching should give students knowledge about languages, culture and help them use this knowledge to develop language awareness (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 3). To comply with the requirement and raise students' language awareness, teachers should include various aspects such as different varieties of English in their teaching. Additionally, teachers should focus on different varieties of English in their teaching to help students discuss conditions in different contexts and areas where the language is used, which is a requirement for passing the first English course in upper secondary school (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 9). In conclusion, English teaching in Swedish upper secondary school should include different varieties of English to comply with the changes in the syllabus.

However, most teachers I have encountered before and during my teacher education have mostly focused on Standard British and American English. To clarify, in this thesis Standard British and American English refers to Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA), respectively. At most, some other varieties have been mentioned and briefly compared to the standard ones. My experiences align with previous research in the Swedish context, which found that although the change from a required focus on Standard British English occurred in 1994, it is not reflected in Swedish teachers' teaching (Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen, 2019). Practicing teachers also agree that students should be exposed to many different varieties, but their teaching often focuses on Standard British and American English

(Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen, 2019; Eriksson, 2017). Thus, students are not exposed to different varieties of English to the extent they should be according to the syllabus.

Although research on teaching varieties of English in Swedish upper secondary school has focused on teachers' perceptions and practices, there are limitations to these studies. For instance, Eriksson (2017) only interviews nine teachers. Although the goal with interviews is to yield elaborate responses, they take a long time to plan and complete, which means that the number of possible participants is limited. While Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen (2019) include 46 teachers, they only investigate which varieties the teachers use and if they prefer targeting certain varieties or focusing on communicative competence (i.e., being able to make oneself understood). Consequently, the conclusions that can be drawn from these studies do not represent the practice of every teacher in Sweden. Therefore, more teachers need to be included in research for the results to represent Swedish teachers' practices more accurately. Moreover, an in-depth study is needed to further investigate which varieties are included in English teaching and how the varieties are included.

Furthermore, the limitations of previous research in combination with my own experiences as a pre-service teacher made me interested in investigating to what extent different varieties of English are included by teachers in Swedish upper secondary school. Since previous research has focused on perceptions of varieties of English or how a limited number of teachers include different varieties in their teaching, my intention is to contribute to the research field with a more comprehensive overview. Therefore, I explore upper secondary school teachers' practices regarding different varieties of English to determine to what extent the changes in the syllabus have affected actual classroom practices. Additionally, the thesis prompts teachers to re-evaluate their teaching and hopefully inspire them to include other varieties than Standard British and American English in their teaching to comply with the syllabus.

## 1.1. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate to what extent different varieties of English are included in upper secondary school English teaching in Sweden. The method used to reach the aim is a questionnaire, which makes many responses possible and summarizing the results relatively simple. The following research questions are used to construct the questionnaire and achieve the aim:

- Which varieties of English do teachers include when teaching?
- How do teachers include different varieties in their teaching? What types of materials do they use and in which language areas do they include different varieties?
- How does the teachers' age, time of graduation from a teacher education program, perceived focus on different varieties of English in their teacher education programs and teaching experience relate to the extent different varieties are included in teaching?

I base the aim and research questions on two hypotheses. Firstly, that Swedish students are not exposed to different varieties of English other than Standard British and American to an extent that is supported in the syllabus. Secondly, that teachers' educational and linguistic backgrounds can help explain differences in how they include different varieties of English in their teaching. The hypotheses will be discussed in relation to the results. Firstly, I present background information on the global spread of English and different varieties of English. Secondly, I present research on different varieties in school contexts internationally and in Sweden in particular. Thirdly, I present the methodology of constructing and administering

the questionnaire to English teachers in upper secondary school and how the results are analyzed. Finally, I present the results of the study and discuss them in relation to previous research and the syllabus for English in Swedish upper secondary school.

## **2. Background**

In the following chapter, I discuss the global spread of English, then define the term “varieties of English” and present the current research field of varieties of English in education. Finally, I present the educational context regarding English and previous research in Sweden.

### **2.1. The Global Spread of English**

English is considered the first global language because of how vastly it has spread through colonization and globalization (Crystal, 2003; McKay, 2009; Mair, 2016). The global status has less to do with how many speakers there are and more with how influential they are in terms of political and military power (Crystal, 2003, p. 7). The same has been the case throughout history, for example, with the Roman armies’ spread of Latin and Alexander the Great’s spread of Greek through conquest (Crystal, 2003, p. 9). Military expansion and political power are not all it takes for a language to achieve a global status, however. Although English also spread through military and political might, the economic and technological advances of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries made international communication possible on an unprecedented scale, which meant that English could spread quicker and to more places than previous lingua francas (Crystal, 2003, p. 10).

Furthermore, it can be argued that any language that is influential when global communication becomes possible can achieve global status (Crystal, 2003, p. 10). Therefore,



English is not intrinsically more prone to being spread than any other language but was more influential than other languages at the right time (Crystal, 2003, pp. 77–78). The influence and global status of English in the world today mean that it is important for the two billion speakers all over the world (Seoane, 2016; Mair, 2016). Other languages have historically been considered *lingua francas*, such as French and Latin, but none of the previous ones have been used globally in the same scale as English (Mair, 2016, p. 1). Consequently, most countries must consider how to approach English language learning if they want their citizens to participate in global communication. In Swedish schools, the fact that English is the only language other than Swedish to be considered a core subject shows the importance of global communication for the policy makers.

## **2.2. Varieties of English**

Languages consist of different regional and social varieties, which include both accents and hybrids that are mixes of English and different vernaculars (Seoane, 2016, p. 1). Social differences occur within regional varieties since languages only exist in the forms they are used by their speakers (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016, p. 9). Moreover, English is spoken by around two billion people, which means that many different varieties exist. In this section, I therefore present some of the theories regarding different varieties of English. While several theoretical concepts exist, I use the broader term “varieties of English” because the idea of English being a language with many different varieties is central to all of the theories.

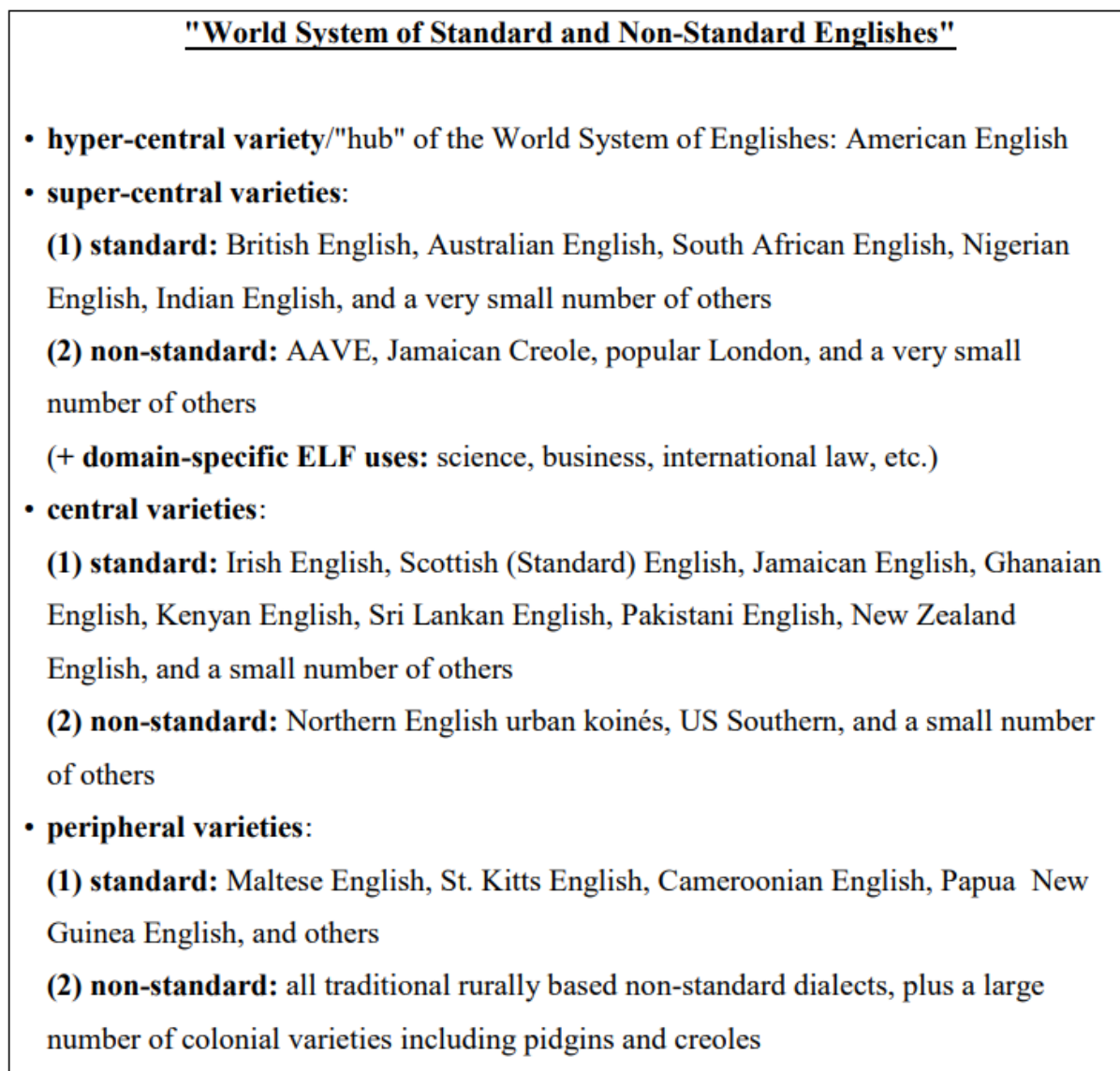
A highly influential theory regarding different varieties of English is Kachru’s (1992) World Englishes model. World Englishes has been influential in describing the different varieties and illuminating postcolonial and other varieties. The World Englishes-model sections English into three parts: English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a

Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Seoane, 2016, pp. 3–4). These sections are based on the spread of English through colonialism, with the Inner Circle being composed of Britain and countries where the language spread to first or where it is considered a native language (ENL). The Outer Circle is composed of countries where English was spread to in the second wave and where English is considered an official language (ESL). Finally, the Expanding Circle is composed of countries where English is widely used despite not being a native or governmental language (EFL) (Quirk, 1985, pp. 1–2). According to Kachru's (1992) model, Sweden can be found within the Expanding Circle since English is neither the native nor the second language.

Moreover, World Englishes has led to the development of other theoretical models for varieties of English. An example of such a model is Mair's (2013) World System of Englishes, which has been adapted from sociology. According to the model, there are four categories which are based on the number of speakers of the varieties. If there are more speakers of a variety, it is sorted in a more influential category. American English is considered hyper-central since it has the most speakers and the most influence on the language. British, Australian and Indian English among a few others are considered super-central. Irish and Scottish English among others are considered central and varieties such as Maltese and Cameroonian English are considered peripheral (Seoane, 2016, p. 5). The model can be seen in Figure 1 and is supposed to be more dynamic than the previous ones, since different varieties can change character from being peripheral to central, for example. Additionally, each category contains both Standard varieties (such as Australian and Indian English) and Non-Standard varieties (such as African American Vernacular English and US Southern English). In this study, I have chosen to use the terms from Mair's (2013) model to discuss the results from the questionnaire since the model is more recent and dynamic than Kachru's (1992) model.

**Figure 1**

*Mair's World System of Standard and Non-Standard Englishes*



*Note.* From *The World System of Englishes: Accounting for the transnational importance of mobile and mediated vernaculars* (p. 12), by C. Mair, 2013, *English World-Wide*, 34, 253–278.

### **2.3. Perceptions of Different Varieties of English in Teaching**

The fact that there are many different varieties of English raises an important question: which varieties should English learners be exposed to in their English teaching? Research on the topic shows that exposing learners to different varieties of English is important if we want to develop English teaching by raising awareness of the global spread of the language (Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020). Raising language awareness aligns with what Swedish learners of English should achieve. Because of the change in the syllabus in Sweden from a focus on Standard British and American English to a general focus on communicative ability, my interpretation is that learners should be exposed to as many varieties as possible to understand how the language may differ in various regional and social contexts.

Moreover, including different varieties of English in the classroom is connected to the pluricentric approach to English teaching. The pluricentric view of English means that the more the language is spread, the more varieties are developed (McKay, 2009, p. 48). Hence, the pluricentric approach entails exposing students to several varieties of the language instead of one Standard variety. According to Jenkins, applying a pluricentric approach “would enable each learner’s and speaker’s English to reflect his or her own sociolinguistic reality, rather than that of a usually distant native speaker” (2006, p. 173). Therefore, applying a pluricentric approach to English teaching should motivate learners and make them feel more connected to the language than if they had only encountered Standard British and American English. Although the pluricentric approach is promoted by researchers (Jenkins, 2006, p. 173), teachers prefer learners to become proficient in Standard British or American English, both in Sweden and other countries (Forsberg, Mohr, & Jansen, 2019; Tajeddin, Atai, & Pashmforoosh, 2020). Despite Swedish teachers’ preferences, the syllabus for English supports applying a pluricentric approach and thus including other varieties than Standard British and American English in the classroom.

Additionally, previous research has investigated teachers' and learners' perceptions of varieties of English in teaching in various settings. Lu & Buripakdi (2020) investigated how a pedagogy that includes different varieties of English affects learners' awareness of the position of the language in the world. The results show that university students' English language awareness is significantly raised, and their self-confidence is increased in international communication after being exposed to a teaching approach that focuses on different varieties of English. In conclusion, the study found that focusing on different varieties of English in a university setting is beneficial for learners' language awareness, communication and self-esteem. A similar study by Liu & Cheng (2017) showed positive attitudes towards different varieties among university students, although most students favored native varieties.

Furthermore, according to Lu & Buripakdi (2020 p. 126), awareness of the spread of English is important not only for learning to use English but also learning about the language. Similarly, the Swedish syllabus focuses on the position of English in the world (Skolverket, 2021c, p.3). In addition, Lu & Buripakdi (2020) argue that a critical approach should be applied to English teaching for the sake of development. Although them and Liu & Cheng (2017) focus on the university level in China and Taiwan, the results could also be applicable to the global context of English teaching on different education levels. Thus, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in other English teaching contexts such as Swedish upper secondary school, especially since the Swedish syllabus for English presses the importance of developing language awareness and knowledge about the spread of English.

In addition to research on varieties of English in teaching, research that specifically applies Kachru's (1992) World Englishes-model has shown that there is a difference between which varieties are favored by teachers in the Outer and Expanding Circles. Monfared & Khatib (2018) investigated Indian and Iranian English teachers' attitudes

towards their own varieties in relation to Standard British and American English. According to Kachru's (1992) model, India is a part of the Outer Circle while Iran is a part of the Expanding Circle. The results show that teachers in the Expanding Circle favored Standard British and American pronunciation while teachers in the Outer Circle favored local accents. Monfared & Khatib (2018) argue that it is important to encourage the use of different varieties of English and make teachers and learners aware of the global spread of English (i.e., raise their language awareness). Although knowledge is increased about perceptions of different varieties of English in teaching and attitudes towards them through such studies, more research is needed on how varieties are included in teaching.

#### **2.4. The Swedish Educational Context**

Before moving on to Swedish research, the English subject in Swedish education needs to be explained. The importance of English in Sweden can be seen by how early Swedish students start learning the language. Although the starting point is usually decided by the individual school or municipality, it can be as early as in preschool class up to the third grade. Beyond compulsory school, education in English continues from the B1 level according to the CEFR-scale in upper secondary school (Skolverket, 2021a, p. 4). Although Swedish students are not required to partake in education beyond compulsory school, only 11 % of the Swedish population have not attended an upper secondary school or had education on a corresponding level (SCB, 2021). Consequently, most people in Sweden learn English on an advanced level since English 5 is one of the core subjects. All programs in Swedish upper secondary school have the core subjects in common.

Since 1994, the focus of English teaching in Swedish schools has been to achieve communicative competence (Modiano, 2009, p. 66). Before 1994, the curriculum for

compulsory school stated that only Standard British English, or “English Standard Pronunciation”, should be taught as long as the student had not already learned American English or another variety (Skolverket, 1969, p. 12). The curriculum for upper secondary school, which is a continuation of compulsory school, stated that each English teacher should be acquainted with the policies of the lower levels (Skolverket, 1971, p. 152).

Because no specific variety is mentioned in the syllabus today, an argument can be made for focusing less on Standard British and American English in favor of learning about other varieties, the spread of English and how different varieties look and sound. Furthermore, the Swedish National Agency for Education states that the English courses in Swedish upper secondary school (English 5, 6, and 7) should include aspects of society and culture from different parts of the English-speaking world (Skolverket, 2021c). Language is a significant aspect of culture and many different varieties of English exist in the world. Therefore, this thesis investigates to what extent teaching practices follow the new syllabus and if Swedish students should be exposed to different varieties of English to a greater extent than is currently the case.

## **2.5. Perceptions and Use of Varieties of English in Sweden**

Recent studies within the Swedish setting have investigated teachers’ perceptions of including different varieties of English in teaching. Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen (2019) show that teachers focus on Standard British and American English or neutral/non-specific English. In the study, neutral means a combination of Standard British and American English (Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen, 2019, p. 55). Despite the teachers’ focus on Standard British and American English, they agree with the syllabus in that learners should achieve communicative competence rather

than a specific variety. The results of the study indicate that teachers do not comply with what is stated in the syllabus regarding language awareness and culture.

Another study by Eriksson (2017) suggests that while Standard American English is used more by Swedish upper secondary students, Standard British English retains a higher status among them. Despite the perceived lower status of Standard American English, Students today often seem to prefer to use it, which can be explained by the North American influence on students' lives through TV, movies, video games, and social media, for example (Eriksson, 2017, p. 2). Additionally, the teachers included in the study believe that Standard British and American English are the correct varieties, although they also believe that many different varieties should be included (Eriksson, 2017, p. 34). The teachers' beliefs support the findings of Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen (2019) that teachers focus on Standard British and American English. However, the studies focus on teachers' perceptions and use of target varieties in relation to communicative competence (Forsberg, Mohr, & Jansen, 2019), and teachers' and students' perceptions of including different varieties of English (Eriksson, 2017), respectively. Therefore, conducting a study about how teachers actually include different varieties in English teaching would further inform the knowledge of English teaching in Swedish upper secondary school.

As previous research has shown, Swedish upper secondary school students are not sufficiently exposed to different varieties since teachers often still focus on target varieties (i.e., Standard British and American English) to a great extent. In addition to the arguments for focusing on other varieties than Standard British and American English in Swedish upper secondary schools, the commentary material for the English syllabus explains that different contexts where English is used refers to the cultural and societal conditions (Skolverket, 2021a, p. 14). Moreover, the syllabus mentions the status of English, which means language political relationships in areas the language is used and how it is used in different parts of



society (Skolverket, 2021a, p. 15). Consequently, teachers should present the students with varieties of English from different parts of the English-speaking world. Since English is a global language, much of the world could be considered a part of the English-speaking world. There are thus a wide range of varieties that Swedish students could learn about, which would enrich their knowledge of the language and raise their language awareness to achieve the aims in the syllabus. Students would also be communicatively connected to two billion speakers.

### **3. Method**

The findings of this study are based on teachers' responses to a questionnaire. In the following section, I explain how I used the questionnaire as a method for collecting and analyzing relevant data. The starting point is constructing and administering a questionnaire in the Swedish upper secondary school context. Thereafter, the participants of this study, the creation and administration of the questionnaire, and the method for analyzing the data is presented. Finally, discussions about ethical considerations and limitations are included to make the process clear, provide transparency and ensure reliability and validity.

#### **3.1. Questionnaire as a Research Method**

The method used for gathering data is a quantitative survey of the extent that different varieties of English are included in English teachers' classrooms. The survey is completed using a questionnaire that is constructed with consideration of the aim and research questions. Using a questionnaire as a research method can yield factual, behavioral, and attitudinal data (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 5). The questionnaire in this study contains some factual questions to gather relevant background information about the respondents, such as age and

teaching experience. There is also an attitudinal question, where the answers are used to discuss reasons behind the inclusion of different varieties of English. However, the primary part of the questionnaire consists of behavioral questions that attempt to survey to what extent different varieties are included.

Regarding attitudinal questions, questionnaires can not only be used to gain information about explicit, but also implicit attitudes (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 6). Attitudes are relevant to my study since an attitudinal question will be used to find out why the teachers find it important to make students aware of different varieties of English (see Appendix 1, question 7). Although the question of why teachers find it important to make students aware of different varieties is not part of the aim of this study, it would be interesting to receive the teachers' reasons and include them in the discussion about implications for future research. The teachers in the study were not asked why they include different varieties because it was deemed that also focusing on why different varieties are included would be too extensive for this research project.

There are several positive aspects of using a questionnaire when collecting data. One of the most obvious is that questionnaires can be administered quickly to many respondents. Interviews, on the other hand, are time-consuming regarding administration, conduction and data summary. While the researcher must schedule appointments with the interviewees, questionnaires can be administered to hundreds of people instantly. The data can also be quickly processed by a computer program which is not the case with qualitative data.

However, there are limitations the researcher must be aware of when using questionnaires as a method for collecting data. Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010, p. 6) argues for the importance of using questionnaires that are well-designed. They argue that data that comes

from poorly designed questionnaires will fail to meet the standards for reliability and validity. Additionally, respondents are on their own when completing questionnaires, which means that they cannot get help with understanding unclear questions or concepts. The researcher must therefore make sure that the questions and concepts are sufficiently simple and clear, which makes it difficult to investigate more complicated issues that need elaborate answers (p. 7). The questionnaire for this study does not need to be complicated since simple questions can elicit to what extent the teachers include different varieties of English. Nevertheless, the thesis could benefit from eliciting some elaborate answers from certain respondents in addition to the questionnaire. Instead of also using interviews, some follow-up questions are included for participants to be able to clarify or elaborate on their answers.

Furthermore, several issues can arise when using questionnaires to collect data. According to Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010, p. 7), respondents might not be able to complete the questionnaire when they are still learning the language used. Understanding the language is not a problem for this project since English teachers should be at a sufficient level of proficiency, despite that English might not be their first language. Furthermore, participants are not always entirely truthful. One reason might be that they try to uphold a positive image of themselves or unconsciously deceive themselves as a defense mechanism. Moreover, people tend to agree with sentences when they are unsure and overgeneralize if they like or dislike someone or something. Finally, respondents might give inaccurate answers if they find the questionnaire boring or too long (pp. 8–9). These potential issues relate to human nature and are difficult to avoid, except for the questionnaire being too long, which can be avoided by trying to keep the questionnaire as short as possible, for example.

Moreover, a key aspect of using questionnaires to gather data is to create appropriate questions. Question items need to generate data that relate to what the researcher wants to find out. Also, the questions often need to be close-ended or at least not too open-

ended for the responses to be quantifiable. Theoreticians promote using interviews as a research method instead of questionnaires for qualitative research with elaborate responses, since respondents will most likely not give questionnaires enough time required for in-depth questions (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, pp. 9–10). Although qualitative methods with in-depth questions could yield rich and descriptive responses, it would not be possible to find out the attitudes of more than a few respondents. Additionally, since the aim and research questions of this study only entail teachers' inclusion of different varieties of English, the participants responses would not be descriptive enough to allow for making inferences about their attitudes. In conclusion, a quantitative approach with a questionnaire combined with an analysis of the responses will lead to more generalizable results if administered to many respondents.

### **3.2. The Questionnaire**

The main section of the questionnaire in this study consists of quantitative questions, which were deemed the most appropriate for this study since they can generate a large amount of data that is easy to process quickly (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. xiii). Some of the closed questions, such as “Do you include specific varieties of English in your teaching (other than Standard British and American), are supplemented with open-ended follow-up questions, such as “If you answered yes on the previous question, which variety/varieties?” Although open-ended questions are not always suitable for questionnaires, they can yield more elaborate responses than closed questions and sometimes make issues apparent (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 36). Thus, the responses to the open questions are analyzed in relation to the responses to the closed questions.

Furthermore, the questionnaire consists of two sections. In the first section, the first question is to make sure that respondents agree to participate in the study. That is, at the top of the questionnaire, participants were informed about the project, that their responses were anonymous, and that participation was optional. The second question asks if they are part of the targeted population of this study (i.e., “Are you an upper secondary-level English teacher?”). The remaining questions in the section concern the participants’ age, when they graduated from the teacher education program, and how many years they have taught English. These questions were included to map the representation of teachers in the study. Additionally, the responses are analyzed in connection with the second sections questions about different varieties of English to discuss if certain factors such as age or teaching experience affect the extent different varieties are included in the classroom. The results from the questions about the teachers’ use of English were deemed to be outside the scope of this study and were therefore not included in the final results (see Appendix 1).

Specifically, the question about when they graduated was included for the preliminary presumption that their teacher education affected their teaching, since there have been several changes to teacher education in Sweden throughout the years (Rudhe, 2013). The possible answers are the 70s, 80s, 90s, 00s, 2010-2021, and “I have not graduated from a teacher education program”. The responses will make it possible for me to know during which period of the teacher education that the participants graduated. In the case of not having graduated, reasons might be that they have completed a complementary pedagogical program, that they have not yet completed their teacher education or that they do not have a formal English teacher education but still work as one, for example. In certain cases, reasons for not having graduated might become evident if the participants decide to include this information when answering the final question: “Do you have any comments, or would you like to clarify any of your answers?”

Moreover, several choices had to be made regarding the options in the multiple-choice questions. Both the teaching materials and the teaching areas were based on my own experiences as a pre-service teacher, but I included the “Other”-option so the participants could write their own answer if they thought something was missing. It could be argued that the teaching areas should correspond with the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Nevertheless, more areas were included to make a more comprehensive overview of the teaching practices possible, although some of the categories might overlap (e.g., reading and literature). Additionally, one could argue that the categories “drama” and “films” are the same. Thus, “theatre” or “plays” could have replaced “drama” to clarify the distinction between the categories.

Finally, the questionnaire was piloted with the help of my peers to provide feedback regarding language, content, structure and time. Although my peers are not part of the target population yet, they are pre-service teachers with some teaching experience. Peer feedback suggested that the questionnaire would take approximately 10 minutes to complete, which was included in the information to the participants. Moreover, the questionnaire went through several drafts and continuous feedback was provided by my supervisor.

### **3.3. Participants**

The participants in this study are English teachers at upper secondary schools in Sweden. To find participants for the study, I sent an email to 887 Swedish upper secondary school units, in which the recipient (often a principal or administrator) was asked to share the online questionnaire link with English teachers at their school. A list of email addresses to Swedish upper secondary school units was accessible on the website of the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2022). In the email, I explained that I was conducting a study about

upper secondary school teachers' use of different varieties of English when teaching for my master's thesis in English for subject teachers and was looking for teachers to complete a questionnaire on the topic (see Appendix 1). The total number of participants who responded to the questionnaire was 345, but only 343 of them were part of the target population.

One strength of administering the questionnaire online is that the email list includes all the upper secondary schools in Sweden, which means that I could theoretically reach out to most active upper secondary school English teachers. However, there are still English teachers on the same level in other types of schools (e.g., folk high schools and municipal adult education) who are not included in the list. Furthermore, not all recipients were expected to share the link with teachers at their school, and the teachers who received the link might decide not to participate. Nevertheless, 887 school units were contacted, which included both public and charter schools. Since there are a total of 4,473 active English teachers in upper secondary school, of which 3,718 are qualified for the subject (Skolverket, 2021b), the response rate of the survey was 13% of the total target population.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

My analysis of the responses to the questionnaire is done as follows. The quantitative data generated by the questionnaire has been coded with numerical value and normalized in relevant cases. For example, 140 out of 343 teachers responded that they use a mixture of a British and an American variety when teaching, which equals 41% of the respondents. The data generated from the open-ended questions in the survey has been analyzed in relation to the quantitative responses in cases where necessary. For instance, regarding the question of how they make students aware of different varieties when teaching in one of the areas they selected in question 14, one respondent answered: "Vocabulary: looking at specific dialect

words. For example: bairn, kyrk, kist, bra (Scottish dialect words that have Swedish language roots!).” Thus, the response regarding teaching areas is supplemented with more in-depth information. Additionally, questions 7, 15 and 18 asked the participants to write in their own words, which meant that the answers had to be analyzed individually.

The third research question entails different background factors that participants are asked about in the questionnaire. The responses will be used to determine if the participants’ age groups, time of graduation, teaching experience and perception of the focus on different varieties in the teacher education programs relate to how participants include different varieties of English in their teaching. Thus, cross-tabulations, and a scatter plot where possible, are used to visualize the comparison between the background factors. The scatter plot includes a regression line to properly visualize the correlation. Additionally, a Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson’s  $r$ ) is computed to further show how the variables correlate.

Regarding the open-ended question, “How do you make students aware of different varieties when teaching in one of the mentioned areas, for example?”, I use content analysis to analyze the individual responses and sort them into teaching categories. These categories are based on how the respondents explain that they teach about different varieties of English. For example, if there are many responses about comparing different varieties, a category called comparisons would be created. The categories are then revised and refined several times by interpreting the responses (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 6).

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

This survey has been planned and completed with the fundamental principles of research integrity in mind. These are reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability (ALLEA, 2017, p.



4). The purpose of this method section has been to outline the process of constructing and administering the questionnaire so that other researchers would get comparable results if they used the same method. Moreover, the participants have been informed about the purposes of the questionnaire, that they are anonymous, and that participation is voluntary. They were also able to contact me if they had any further questions. If the participants responded no to either the question of consent or if they are an upper secondary English teacher, their responses were removed from the results. Furthermore, although I do include a question about the participants' age, the possible choices were non-specific (i.e., 20s, 30s, 40s etc.). Consequently, the information cannot be traced back to individual respondents which means that they are anonymous.

### **3.6. Limitations**

Although the study aims to find out how teachers include different varieties in teaching English, participants' truthful responses are required. I cannot know whether they are telling the truth because of response bias. To ensure truthful responses, I followed Dörnyei & Taguchi's (2010) advice about creating questions that avoid ambiguous phrases and do not include trigger words (section 3.1.) when creating the questionnaire. The problem of untruthful responses could be avoided through an observational study, for instance, but the scope of such a study would be too large for this thesis.

## **4. Results**

In this section, the responses from the questionnaire are summarized and presented in three sub-sections, which respond to each research question. Firstly, the varieties that the

respondents include in their teaching are presented. Secondly, how the respondents include different varieties is presented. Finally, the teachers' background information in terms of age, teaching experience, time of graduation from a teacher education program and perceived focus on different varieties of English in teacher education programs is related to how they include varieties of English in their teaching.

#### **4.1. Included Varieties of English**

The participants were asked which variety, or varieties, that they specifically include in their teaching. The participants could write freely since it would make it possible for them to include varieties that I might have missed if I created a list for them to choose from.

Unfortunately, being able to write freely also meant that some respondents did not mention specific varieties, and some only gave a few examples of varieties that they sometimes included in their teaching. As a result, the responses might not fully represent all varieties teachers include in the classroom. In Figure 2, the varieties have been manually sorted according to how many times they were mentioned in these responses. Twenty-one percent (73 respondents) did not answer the question while others stated reasons for answering no, as shown in (1).

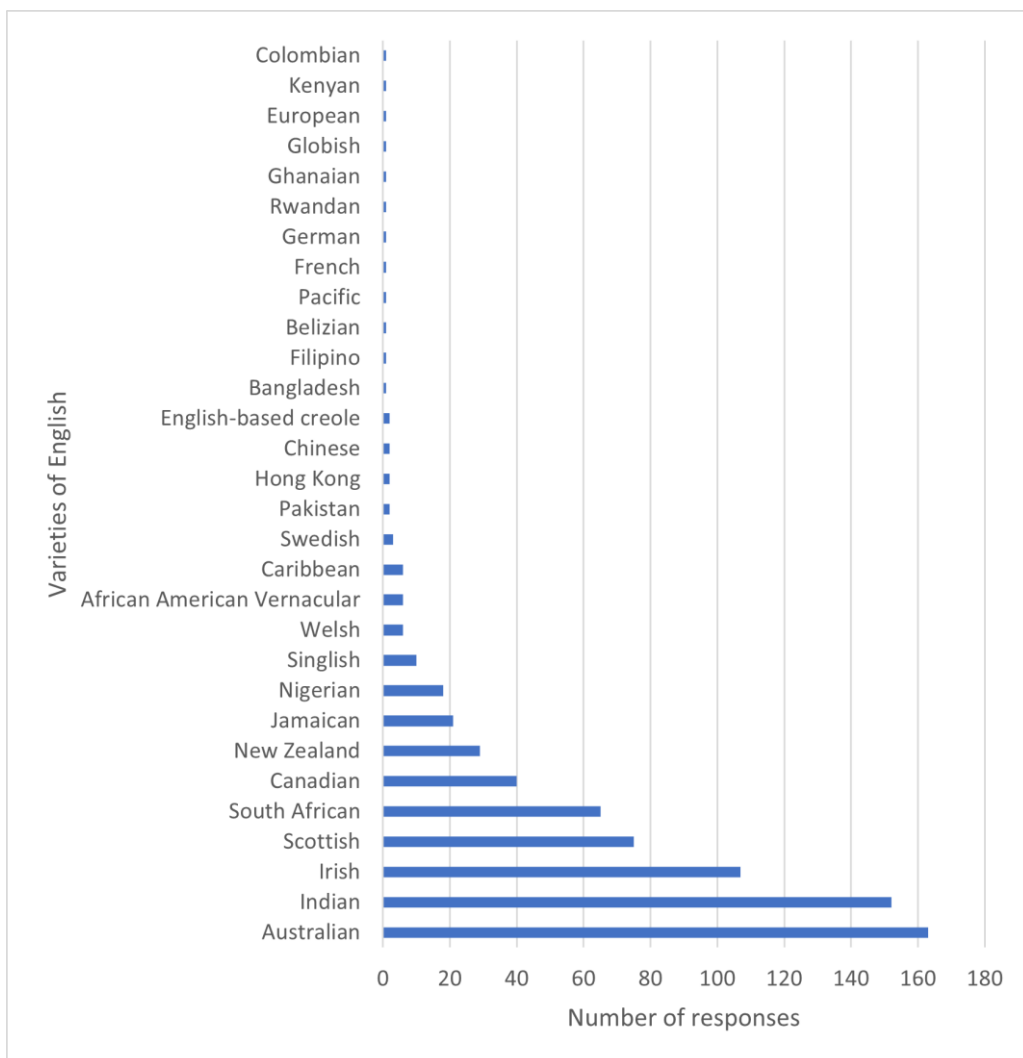
- (1) Because of my limited career (a new grad, only worked for less than 1 year) I've yet to use variations outside of British/American.

The response implies that the respondent may include other varieties in their teaching in the future.

Regarding the participants who did respond to which specific varieties they include in the classroom, the five most mentioned varieties were Australian (48%, 163 respondents), Indian (44%, 152 respondents), Irish (31%, 107 respondents), Scottish (22%, 75 respondents), and South African (19%, 65 respondents).

**Figure 2**

*Number of Mentioned Varieties*



As shown in Figure 2, the most included varieties are from countries where English is mostly spoken as a first or second language. Moreover, as can be seen in (2), (3) and (4), some respondents only gave general responses or a few examples, which might imply that they include more varieties in their teaching.

- (2) All kinds. In the teaching material (digital course books) I use all the listening tasks that are recorded using different varieties of English.
- (3) Australian, Irish, Indian, Canadian, Chinese, etc.
- (4) Australian, different accents within Britain/US, South African, Nigerian, Indian, etc.

Although respondents might not mention every variety they include, the responses indicate which varieties are the most included.

In total, 30 different varieties of English were mentioned in the responses to the open-ended question. Twenty of the varieties were mentioned by 2% (6 respondents) or less and 12 of the varieties were mentioned once. Furthermore, some of the varieties were not always mentioned like they are presented in Figure 2. For instance, English-based creole was included as a single entry in Figure 2 although the term includes many different languages (responses included different creoles and pidgins). Moreover, Caribbean English might refer to a specific variety of English or the many varieties and creoles that exist in the Caribbean.

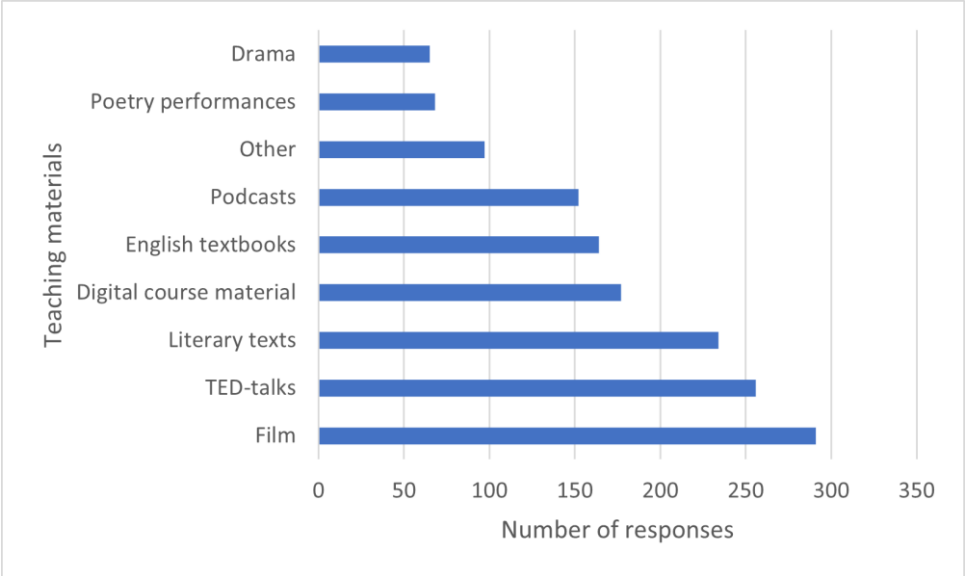
## **4.2. Teaching Materials, Areas and Practices**

The questionnaire contains questions about teachers' practices of including different varieties of English in the classroom. Firstly, the participants were asked what materials they use to make students aware of different varieties. Here, the participants had the choice of the

following responses: literary texts, English textbooks, digital course material, TED-talks, poetry performances, film, drama and podcasts. Respondents also had a possibility to add their own resources. The most common response was film with 85% (291 respondents). As shown in Figure 3, the materials have been sorted according to the respondents' most selected options.

**Figure 3**

*Number of Used Teaching Materials*



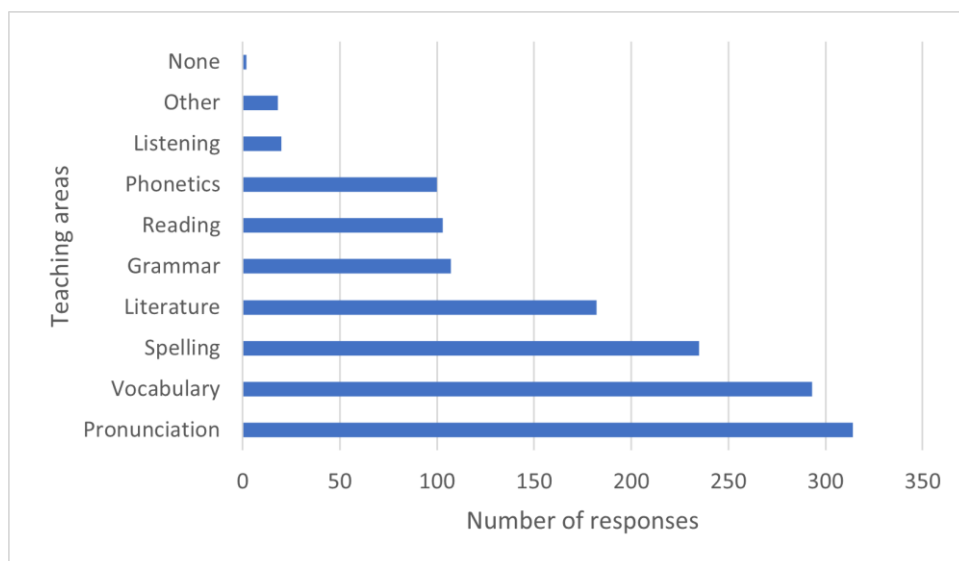
Despite the 226 respondent difference between the most used material (film) and the least used material (drama), drama was still chosen by 19% (65 respondents). However, it is not clear that I meant drama in the form of theatrical plays, so the respondents may not have made the same distinction as I made between film and drama. The “Other”-category included many different answers since the respondents could write freely. The most common teaching material mentioned in the “Other”-category was “Youtube” with 10% (35 respondents). Four

percent (14 respondents) mentioned news/news articles, 3% (10 respondents) mentioned listening comprehension exercises, 2% (6 respondents) mentioned music, 1% (5 respondents) mentioned tv programs, 1% (4 respondents) mentioned radio and 1% (3 respondents) mentioned interviews.

Secondly, the participants were asked in which areas of teaching they make students aware of different varieties of English. Here they could also choose multiple responses and write freely in the “Other”-category. As shown in Figure 4, pronunciation was the most selected response with 92% (314 respondents) followed by vocabulary with 85% (293 respondents). The least selected pre-written option was phonetics with 29% (100 respondents), although reading and grammar were only selected by slightly more respondents (30% and 31%, respectively).

**Figure 4**

*Number of Included Teaching Areas*



Listening was not included as an area but was mentioned by 5% (20 respondents) in the “Other”-category. An additional 5% (18 respondents) mentioned culture, history and realia. Two respondents answered that they do not include different varieties in any teaching areas.

For the next question, which was open-ended and not required for completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to exemplify how they make students aware of different varieties when teaching in one of the mentioned areas. In total, 85% (290 respondents) answered this question. Since it is not possible to show all of the responses, I use content analysis to attempt to define eight categories of teaching practices by finding similar responses and grouping them together. The teaching practices I could define from the answers are presented below in alphabetical order, accompanied by a brief description of the practice.

**Comparisons.** Many respondents mentioned teachers and students comparing different varieties. This was the most frequent response. Comparisons between Standard British and American English was the most frequent but contrasting a certain variety with Standard British English, Standard American English or both was also frequent. Some respondents mentioned comparing other varieties than Standard British or American English. Comparisons included showing their students differences between varieties in vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and grammar.

**Discussions.** Both group and class discussions were mentioned in connection with students learning about different countries or varieties in diverse ways, such as reading, listening and watching films.

**English as a global language.** Some respondents mentioned giving lessons specifically on the spread of English in the world. This also includes colonial and post-colonial aspects.

**Examples.** Respondents mentioned using examples from different varieties, such as information about countries, reading poetry or literature, listening to music and watching films that exemplify certain varieties, for instance.

**Explanations.** Some respondents mentioned teaching about explicit varieties or explaining when they encounter certain words, expressions, sounds or accents. This includes phonetic sounds, pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary, for example.

**Guessing games.** Some respondents mentioned letting students watch a film or listen to a recording of an English speaker and guess where the person is from or what variety they speak. Letting students guess the variety with the help of contextual information was also mentioned.

**Historical background.** Some respondents mentioned talking about literary and other history in terms of different varieties. This includes colonialism, its effect on varieties of English and post-colonialism.

**Production.** Some respondents mentioned different ways of making students produce their own texts and speech in different varieties (authoring a poem in a certain variety or mimicking speech, for instance). Students may sometimes explore and produce varieties in which they are interested.

Furthermore, the various categories were mentioned by a varying number of respondents. Although “comparisons” was the most mentioned category, the other categories were mentioned at least once. Furthermore, colonial and post-colonial aspects were mentioned in connection with both historical background and English as a global language.

Consequently, these two categories could be argued to be more closely related to each other than the rest of the categories.



### 4.3. Comparison between Background and Teaching

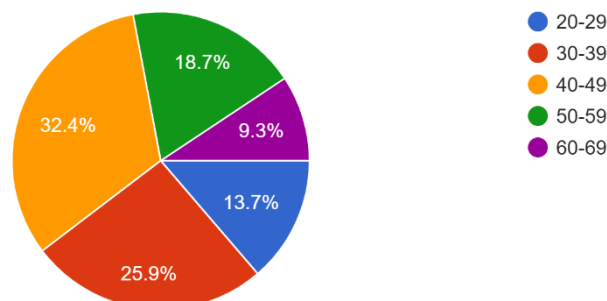
The following section presents the participants' age groups, time of graduation from a teacher education program, teaching experience, whether their teaching about varieties of English has changed and how much their teacher education program focused on varieties of English. The background information is included to be able to discuss connections between it and the extent teachers include varieties of English in their teaching.

The participants' age groups were not evenly distributed. Most of the participants were between 30-49 years old (58%, 200 respondents). Ages under 20 and over 69 were not included since it is unlikely that anyone under 20 is a teacher, and that any teacher above 69 has not retired. Figure 5 shows the participants' complete age distribution.

**Figure 5**

*The Participants' Age Distribution*

How old are you?  
343 responses



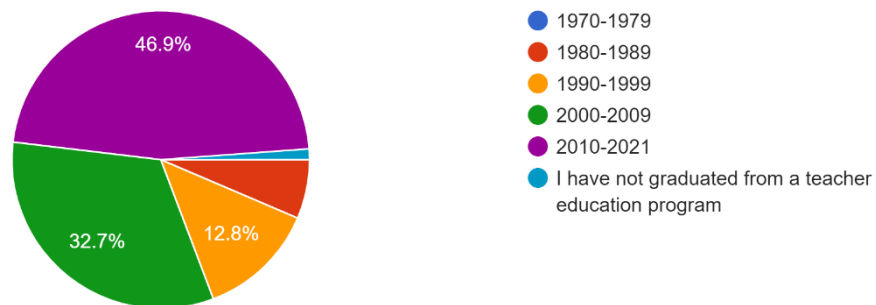
Regarding the participants' time of graduation, Figure 6 shows that 6% (22 respondents) graduated between 1980-1989, 13% (44 respondents) graduated between 1990-1999, 33% (112 respondents) graduated between 2000-2009, 47% (161 respondents) graduated between 2010-2021 and 1% (4 respondents) have not graduated from a teacher education program. One of these respondents gave additional information in the final question, stating that they take their final exam in June this year. The other three did not give any additional information about their responses. No one in the study graduated between 1970-1979.

## Figure 6

### *Proportion of Teachers by Time of Graduation*

When did you graduate from the teacher education program?

343 responses



The teaching experience of the participants ranges from zero<sup>1</sup> to 48 years, with a mean of 13 years and a median of 12 years. Moreover, 75% of the participants have five or more years of teaching experience.

The participants were first asked if they think it is important to make students aware of different varieties of English. In total, 98% (335 respondents) answered that they do. All eight respondents who answered “No” were between 30-49 years old. Five of the eight respondents who answered “No” graduated between 2000-2010. The other three graduated between 2010-2021. Seven of the respondents who answered “No” had 10 or more years of teaching experience. All respondents who graduated between 1990-1999 and 1980-1989 found it important to make students aware of different varieties of English.

Subsequently, the participants were asked if they include specific varieties of English in their teaching other than Standard British and American English. The amount of respondents who answered yes were 81% (278 respondents), while 19% (65 respondents) answered no. How each age group responded can be seen in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> The one participant who answered 0 years teaching experience had, presumably, recently started as an English teacher.

**Table 1**

*Comparison between Including Specific Varieties Other than Standard British and American English and Age Groups*

		Age					Total
		20	30	40	50	60	
Including Specific Varieties	No	7	18	26	9	5	65
	Yes	40	71	85	55	27	278
Total		47	89	111	64	32	343

*Note.* The age groups are denoted by a single number (e.g., 20 instead of 20-29 years old).

In all age groups, between 15-30% of the respondents answered “No”. Thus, the spread of the answers was similar between the age groups.

Table 2 presents the responses to the question if they include specific varieties of English other than Standard British and American English in their teaching in relation to when the respondents graduated from a teacher education program. Most respondents in each graduation category answered that they do include specific varieties in their teaching.

**Table 2**

*Comparison between Including Specific Varieties Other than Standard British and American English and Time of Graduation*

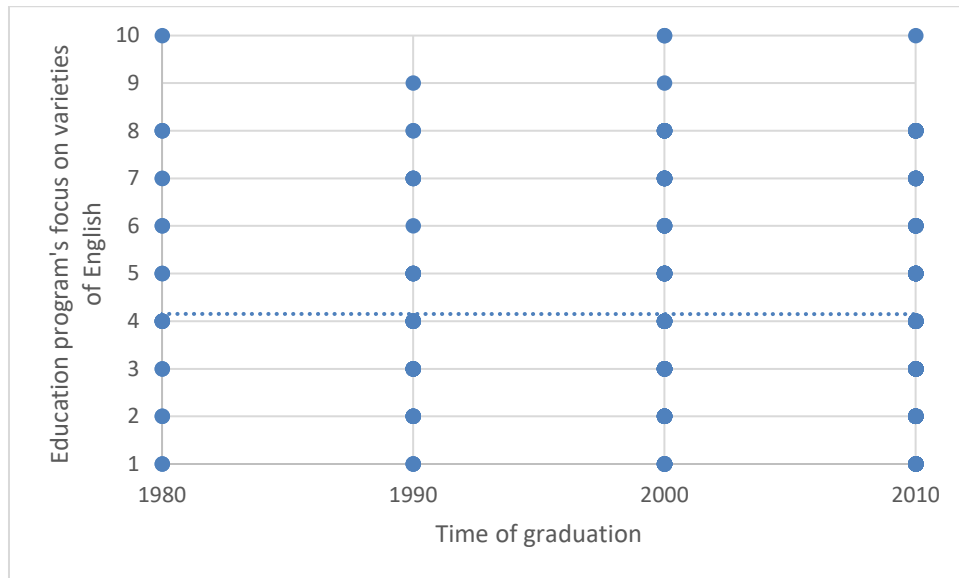
		Time of Graduation					Total
		0	1980	1990	2000	2010	
Including Specific Varieties	No	1	4	5	23	32	65
	Yes	3	18	39	89	129	278
Total		4	22	44	112	161	343

*Note.* In the top row, 0 denotes not having graduated from a teacher education program. Time of graduation is denoted by a single number (e.g., 1980 instead of 1980-1989).

In addition, a comparison was made between the perceived focus on different varieties of English in teacher education programs and the participants' time of graduation. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed which indicated no correlation,  $r(337) = -.03$ ,  $p = .602$ . The scatter plot and regression line in Figure 7 further visualizes the correlation.

**Figure 7**

*Scatter Plot for the Correlation between Teacher Education Program's Focus on Varieties and Time of Graduation*



*Note.* The four participants who had not graduated from a teacher education program were not included in the comparison. A single number denotes time of graduation (e.g., 1980 instead of 1980-1989).

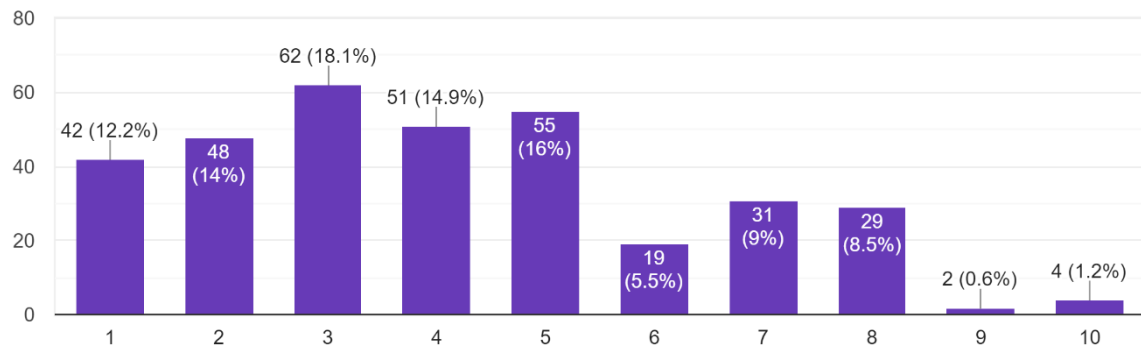
Moreover, the participants were asked how much they thought their teacher education program focused on different varieties of English. They could choose a response on a ten-point scale, where one meant “Not at all” and ten meant “All the time”. A majority, 59% (203 respondents), chose a response below five. Only 16% (55 respondents) chose five, which means neither little nor much focus. Figure 8 shows the rest of the results.

## Figure 8

### *The Focus on Different Varieties of English in Teacher Education Programs*

On a scale of 1-10, how much did your teacher education program focus on different varieties of English?

343 responses



Furthermore, the participants were asked whether they include other varieties than Standard British and American English more now than when they started working as a teacher. The reason for this question was to see how teaching experience may affect teachers' inclusion of varieties of English in the classroom. In total, 49% (167 respondents) answered yes and 51% (176 respondents) answered no.

Subsequently, a comparison was made between whether the participants include other varieties than Standard British and American English more now than when they started working as a teacher and the focus on different varieties in teacher education programs. Respondents who chose a five on the focus of their program were fewer (16%) than those who chose numbers lower than five (59%) or higher than five (25%). The complete results of the comparison between the focus of the programs and if the teachers include other varieties more now can be seen in Table 3. Most of the answers were relatively evenly distributed

between each point on the scale. The biggest difference between the amounts of “Yes”-answers and “No”-answers were in the group who answered eight on the scale of the focus on different varieties of English in their teacher education program.

**Table 3**  
*Comparison between Including Other Varieties More Now and the Focus on Different Varieties in Teacher Education Programs*

		Perceived focus on varieties in teacher education programs										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Including	No	22	24	29	24	28	12	18	18	0	1	176
other varieties	Yes	20	24	33	27	27	7	13	11	2	3	167
more now												
Total		42	48	62	51	55	19	31	29	2	4	343

As can be seen in Table 3, 51% of those who chose five on the focus on different varieties in education do not include other varieties more now. Among the respondents who answered anything below five, 49% do not include other varieties more now, while the corresponding number for those who chose a response higher than five was 58%.

## 5. Discussion

In this section, the results are interpreted and discussed in connection with previous research and the Swedish syllabus for English. The discussion is structured according to two themes that were found while analyzing the responses to the questionnaire. The first theme is the rich array of varieties that are included in Swedish upper secondary schools and the second theme is the audiovisual dominance when it comes to teaching areas and used teaching materials.



Finally, the results from the comparison between the teachers' background information and teaching practices are discussed.

### **5.1. Rich Array of Varieties in English Teaching**

The first result I found was that Swedish teachers include different varieties of English in their teaching. Most of the participants find it important to make students aware of different varieties of English and to include other varieties than Standard British and American English in their teaching. This does not necessarily mean that most teachers include varieties from other countries than Britain and the USA, since only Standard British and American English are mentioned in the question about other specific varieties the participants include. However, the results of the follow-up question show that varieties from other parts of the world are included.

Furthermore, Mair's (2013) World System of Englishes model will be used to analyze the varieties mentioned by the respondents. Among the five most mentioned varieties, Australian, Indian and South African English are all considered to be super-central varieties like Standard British English. Consequently, teachers seem to favor including varieties that have many speakers. Focusing on such varieties is logical on the one hand, since students will be able to communicate with more people which the syllabus emphasizes. On the other hand, a small number of included peripheral varieties could mean that learners develop a more limited language awareness than otherwise possible. As the World System of Englishes presented in Figure 1 is incomplete, I will not attempt to categorize the mentioned varieties according to the model if they are not mentioned in it. However, an example of peripheral varieties mentioned by the respondents are English-based creole languages. Consequently, peripheral varieties are included in English teaching in Sweden, although central and super-

central varieties are more prevalent. It might be the case that peripheral varieties are included to a reasonable extent in Swedish classrooms, since such varieties have fewer speakers.

Moreover, the question is to what extent policy makers can expect teachers to include other varieties than the most spoken ones, since there are many other topics to cover in English teaching. There might not be enough time for focusing on different varieties of English as much as teachers might want to, or as one respondent wrote: “Unfortunately, time is something that makes it difficult to go into depth. The goal is to make the students aware of different varieties.” Making the students aware of different varieties can be interpreted broadly, both as simply mentioning that there are different varieties or dedicating full lessons to them. However, according to the syllabus, teaching should give students knowledge about languages, culture and help them use this knowledge to develop language awareness (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 3). Therefore, simply mentioning varieties is not enough to comply with the syllabus.

Based on these results, on the one hand, English teaching in Sweden includes enough varieties to comply with what is stated in the syllabus since 30 different varieties were mentioned by the respondents. On the other hand, the number of different varieties do not make it possible to conclude that the teaching includes enough varieties to comply with the syllabus, since 20 of the varieties were only mentioned by 2% or less of the respondents. Thus, the teaching practice of including many of the other varieties than Standard British and American English seems to be relatively uncommon. However, while Eriksson (2017) found that other varieties are mainly used to contrast with Standard British and American English, this study identifies a rich array of other varieties and ways in which they are included.

In conclusion, the rich array of included varieties shows a better situation regarding how well teachers comply with the syllabus than previous research implied. Both

Eriksson (2017) and Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen (2019) showed that Swedish teachers focus mostly on Standard British and American English. Furthermore, previous research has found that Swedish learners prefer Standard American English (Eriksson, 2017), and Taiwanese learners prefer “native varieties”, which include Standard British and American English (Liu & Cheng, 2017). Teachers also prefer for their students to learn Standard British or American English (Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen, 2019; Tajeddin, Atai, Pashmforoosh, 2020). Such preferences can be a part of why teachers choose to focus more on Standard British and American English. Nevertheless, this study shows that many different varieties are included, which suggests that Swedish teachers are aware of the changes in the syllabus and are trying to implement them in their teaching as much as they can, given the time they have at their disposal and that English is a broad subject with many different topics that should be covered in teaching. Thus, my hypothesis that different varieties of English are not included to the extent that they should is not supported.

## **5.2. Wide Range of Teaching Practices, Materials and Areas**

The second theme of this thesis is the wide range of teaching practices, materials and areas that aim to raise the students’ awareness of different varieties of English. The different practices, materials and areas was found when analyzing how teachers include different varieties in their teaching. Firstly, the eight teaching practices that were defined are discussed in connection with the syllabus. Secondly, the participants’ teaching materials and areas are discussed.

The eight teaching practices I defined using the responses show that teachers work with varieties of English in a wide range of ways to comply with the syllabus. For example, teaching about English as a global language can be connected to what is stated in the

syllabus, that students should be given the opportunity to develop an understanding of living conditions, societal issues and cultural conditions in different contexts and areas where English is used (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 3). Teaching about English as a global language can be connected to previous research, which has shown that focusing on different varieties of English helps the students develop language awareness and communication skills (Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020). Other common teaching practices such as discussions and historical background provide the students with different perspectives and context that should also help them reach the goals in the syllabus.

Furthermore, the teaching practices show that teachers attempt to comply with all parts of the syllabus. The updated syllabus for English states four main points regarding what students should develop: (1) an understanding of English in speech and writing, (2) an ability to express themselves and communicate in English speech and writing, (3) an ability to adapt the language to different purposes, recipients and contexts and (4) an understanding of cultural and societal conditions in different contexts and areas where English is used (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 4). For instance, the most common teaching practice of comparing different varieties should help students develop an understanding of speech, writing, cultural and societal conditions and improve their communication and language adaptability. Thus, all four of the main points are covered with one of the eight practices. The rest of the teaching practices also cover linguistic, historical and/or societal topics, such as historical background, English as an international language and playing guessing games with contextual information. Consequently, the many different teaching practices comply with the syllabus regarding varieties of English in Swedish upper secondary schools.

Moreover, a wide range of teaching materials are used to teach about varieties of English, but audiovisual materials are most common. All of the teaching materials that were included as options in the questionnaire were selected by at least 19% (65 respondents), but

the most selected materials are audiovisual. Film was selected by 85% (291 respondents) and Ted-talks by 75% (256 respondents). The category “Digital course material”, which was selected by 52% (177 respondents), also entails audiovisual materials such as videos. Although Youtube videos were not included as a separate category, it was mentioned by 10% (35 respondents) as part of the “Other”-category. Thus, most teachers clearly prefer audiovisual materials when teaching about different varieties of English.

In addition to the audiovisual preferences among teaching materials, the same seems to be the case for the teaching areas. For example, 92% (314 respondents) chose pronunciation, which is how languages sound. Vocabulary, spelling and literature, which were also chosen by a majority, all focus on sounds or visual representation of the language. Furthermore, the respondents’ choices can be connected to what they wrote about in the follow-up question, “How do you make students aware of different varieties when teaching in one of the mentioned areas, for example?” Many respondents wrote that they talk about differences in pronunciation and spelling. Interestingly, reading was only selected by 30% (103 respondents), despite that 68% (234 respondents) uses literary texts to include different varieties. An explanation for the difference between reading and literature can be that the two are connected, which might have been confusing. Moreover, listening was only mentioned by 5% (20 respondents) in the “Other”-category since it was not included as a pre-written option. Thus, more participants might have chosen listening if it had been included as a separate category.

To summarize, the results show that the teachers use many different teaching practices, materials and areas to include varieties of English in teaching which depend on the teachers’ opinions and preferences. The most common teaching materials are audiovisual (e.g., films and videos). Furthermore, the teachers relate teaching about varieties of English to

how the varieties look and sound, which is not surprising as language varieties consist of linguistic items and speech patterns (Wardhaugh, 2010, p. 23).

### **5.3. Inconclusive Correlation between Backgrounds and Teaching**

In this section, the results of the comparison between the participants' backgrounds and their teaching are discussed. The comparison was made to investigate the extent teachers' age group, time of graduation from a teacher education program, teaching experience and perceived focus on different varieties of English in teacher education programs relate to how they include varieties of English in their teaching. My second hypothesis in this thesis was that teachers' different educational and linguistic backgrounds could help explain potential differences between different teachers' practices of including varieties of English in the classroom.

Firstly, the results show a discrepancy between participants who think that including different varieties of English in teaching is important, and participants who include specific varieties other than Standard British and American English in their teaching. This discrepancy could suggest that the teaching does not match the teachers' beliefs, as Forsberg, Mohr & Jansen (2019) show. However, the discrepancy could also have to do with how the questions are asked. The first question asks if the participants think that including different varieties of English is important, and the second question asks whether the participants include other specific varieties than Standard British and American English in their teaching. The participants who answered "No" on the second question could mean that they include different varieties depending on student preferences, for example, rather than not including other varieties at all.

Moreover, neither the participants' age nor their time of graduation seem to relate to how they include different varieties of English in teaching. This is evident by the fact that most respondents in each age and graduation group include other varieties of English in teaching. The age groups were not compared to other factors since time of graduation was deemed more relevant to compare for this study. Additionally, more research would be needed to investigate whether age correlates to how different varieties of English are included in the classroom.

Furthermore, the participants seem to believe that their teacher education program had a similarly low focus on different varieties of English since most of them responded with a four or less on the ten-point scale. However, almost a third of the participants chose a level of six or above, which means that some believe that their teacher education program did focus on different varieties to a greater extent. The possibility to draw any conclusions based on the participants' beliefs is limited as this study has not investigated the actual teacher education programs. However, it might be a long time since the respondents graduated so they might not remember everything from their education. Furthermore, since the only descriptors for the scale are at one and ten, the responses depend on the respondents view of what each number means. In retrospect, a descriptor for number five could have been beneficial since it might not be clear that it meant neither much nor little focus.

The participants were also asked if they include different varieties of English more now than when they started teaching. Among the participants who believe that their education program had a low focus on varieties of English, those who include other varieties more now were about as many as those who do not. Additionally, more than half of those who chose a number higher than five do not include different varieties more than when they started. Participants who believe their teacher education program focused on varieties of English to a greater extent do not include different varieties more now. Thus, their perceived

high focus of the teacher education programs might have made them feel like they have included different varieties in their teaching to a sufficient extent since they graduated. However, an investigation of the teacher education programs is needed to be able to draw further conclusions about the relationship between the programs and English teaching in upper secondary school.

In conclusion, the teachers' age, time of graduation, teaching experience and perceived focus on varieties of English in teacher education programs cannot be argued to relate to each other or how teachers include different varieties of English in the classroom. However, further investigation is needed to be able to draw conclusions about the relationship between teachers' background factors and their teaching. Hence, my second hypothesis, that educational and linguistic backgrounds can help explain differences in how different varieties of English are included, is neither supported nor unsupported.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this section, the findings of the study are summarized and connected to the aim and research questions. I also discuss the relevance of my findings to practicing teachers and mention some limitations to the study. Finally, I suggest directions for future research.

The aim of this study was to investigate to what extent different varieties of English are included in upper secondary school English teaching. To achieve the aim, three research questions were used:

- Which varieties of English do teachers include when teaching?



- How do teachers include different varieties in their teaching? What types of materials do they use and in which language areas do they include different varieties?
- How does the teachers' age, time of graduation from a teacher education program, perceived focus on different varieties of English in their teacher education programs and teaching experience relate to the extent different varieties are included in teaching?

The first two research questions have been answered, but more research is needed to answer the third question.

Firstly, teachers include at least 30 different varieties other than Standard British and American English to some extent. The most included varieties are Australian English, Indian English, Irish English, Scottish English and South African English. However, varieties are included from all three levels below the hyper-central level, according to Mair's (2013) World System of Englishes. Although super-central varieties such as Australian and Indian English are the most common, central and peripheral varieties such as Irish English and English-based creoles are also included. Secondly, English classrooms in Sweden contain a wide range of teaching practices that cover linguistic, societal and historical topics. The most common teaching practice is comparing Standard British English to Standard American English, as well as comparing the Standard varieties to other varieties. Most of the teaching practices are audiovisual (film and videos) and cover the teaching areas speaking and listening. Consequently, many teachers seem to relate varieties of English to pronunciation and accents. Finally, no correlation could be found between any of the factors mentioned in the third research question. Therefore, the teachers' backgrounds cannot be determined to relate to how they include different varieties of English in the classroom.

Furthermore, one of the hypotheses I presented at the start of this thesis was that the changes in the English syllabus in Sweden since the 90s support including more varieties of English than is currently the case. My findings could be interpreted to confirm the hypothesis because the most mentioned varieties are on the same hierarchical level as Standard British English (i.e., the super-central level) while not as many are on the lower levels. However, I would argue that the teaching does comply with the syllabus since at least 30 different varieties of English from all levels are included. Additionally, the mentioned teaching practices cover the main points in the syllabus.

In conclusion, this study shows that different varieties of English are included to a greater extent than previous research in the Swedish school context has shown. Although much of the focus still is on contrasting Standard British and American English with other varieties, as well as comparing the two Standard varieties to each other, there is a wide range of teaching practices regarding varieties of English. Consequently, teachers who read this thesis can hopefully be inspired to re-evaluate their teaching by learning about how the participants include different varieties of English in the classroom, especially regarding teaching practices, materials and areas. Additionally, the list of the participants' mentioned varieties can be used as an inspiration for which varieties to include.

## **6.1. Limitations of the Study**

Although the intention for this thesis has been to be more comprehensive than previous research in Sweden, there are some limitations when conducting a quantitative survey. Quantitative questions yield limited responses, and respondents might interpret questions and terms differently. Furthermore, the scope of the survey made it impossible for me to administer the questionnaire in person and thereby provide clarifications. In retrospect, this

questionnaire may have benefitted from including a list of terms for clarity since some respondents mentioned not knowing if they interpreted terms as intended.

Moreover, teachers interpret the policy documents differently, which leads to different teaching practices and topics that they focus on. Therefore, the results may not fully represent the practices of all Swedish English teachers in upper secondary school since not all were included in the study. However, the results cover at least 13% of the target population's teaching. Thus, the results give an indication of the situation regarding varieties of English in Swedish upper secondary school.

Additionally, some of the questions in the questionnaire are binary (Yes/No), which might be a limitation since the results would have been more nuanced if a scale with more steps had been used, such as in question 10 (see Appendix 1). Instead, I chose to include a follow-up question where the participants could explain their answer freely, such as the one for question 6. However, using a scale would have made the process of analyzing the results less time-consuming in addition to yielding a more nuanced result.

## **6.2. Suggestions for Future Research**

Furthermore, more research is needed regarding how varieties of English are actually included in teaching. Although this study has aimed to be more comprehensive than previous research, the results could be supplemented with an observational study since the researcher would be able to observe real classroom situations and actual practices less affected by the teachers' self-image. Thereby, the researcher would be able to compare the teachers' practices to the syllabus unbiased by the teachers' own views. Additionally, qualitative studies are needed where many teachers are interviewed about their teaching. The reason would be to gain in-depth information about teachers' thoughts behind deciding how much focus to put on

varieties of English in connection with the syllabus. Finally, an investigation of the teacher education programs in terms of varieties of English would be interesting, since this study only investigated teachers' perceptions of their teacher education programs.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

### Teaching with different varieties of English

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire! It is a part of my master's thesis in English for subject teachers at Lund university. The thesis investigates upper secondary-level teachers' use of different varieties of English in the classroom in Sweden. The data that this questionnaire generates will be analyzed with a quantitative method.

The questionnaire should only take about 10 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. You may exit the questionnaire at any time if you do not wish to participate any more. The raw data will only be viewed by me and my supervisor and will be deleted after the project is completed.

If you have any questions or if anything is unclear, you may contact me at:  
[da4440pe-s@student.lu.se](mailto:da4440pe-s@student.lu.se)

Once again, thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Daniel Pettersson

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\* Required

## General questions

This section's questions are included to make sure that you are willing to participate, and that you are part of the study's targeted population. There are also questions about general background information.

1. Do you consent to participating in this study. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

2. Are you an English teacher on the upper secondary level? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

3. How old are you? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69

4. When did you graduate from the teacher education program? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1970-1979
- 1980-1989
- 1990-1999
- 2000-2009
- 2010-2021
- I have not graduated from a teacher education program

5. How many years have you taught English? \*

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**Questions  
about teaching  
with different  
varieties of  
English**

This section contains questions about teaching with different varieties of English in mind. The questions are in different formats as follows: Yes/No-questions, writing freely, multiple choice, checkboxes, and linear scale.

6. Do you think it is important to make students aware of different varieties of English? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

7. Why do/don't you think it is important?

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8. Which variety of English do you use when teaching? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

British

American

A mixture of them

No particular variety/I don't know

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which variety of English do you use outside of teaching? (For example at home, with friends, family, or otherwise in your everyday life) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

British

American

A mixture of them

No particular variety/I don't know

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you use English outside of teaching? \*

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Not at all           All the time

11. Do you include specific varieties of English in your teaching (other than Standard British and American)? \*

Mark only one oval.

Yes  
 No

12. If you answered yes on the previous question, which variety/varieties?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What materials do you use to make students aware of different varieties of English? You can choose multiple answers. \*

Check all that apply.

- Literary texts
- English textbooks
- Digital course material
- TED-talks
- Poetry performances
- Film
- Drama
- Podcasts

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

14. In which areas of English teaching do you make students aware of different varieties of English? Choose the option(s) that apply to your teaching. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Pronunciation
- Reading
- Phonetics
- Literature
- None

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

15. How do you make students aware of different varieties when teaching in one of the mentioned areas, for example?

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16. Do you include other varieties of English (than Standard British or American) in your teaching more now than when you started as a teacher? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

17. On a scale of 1-10, how much did your teacher education program focus on different varieties of English? \*

Mark only one oval.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Not at all

All the time

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18. Do you have any comments, or would you like to clarify any of your answers?

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Thank you for  
completing this  
questionnaire!

As previously mentioned, if you have any further questions, you can contact me at:

[da4440pe-s@student.lu.se](mailto:da4440pe-s@student.lu.se)

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