

THE IMPACT OF NON-STANDARD ENGLISH ON ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Prathyaksh Janardhanan ¹✉, Hidha Jayathilakan ²✉, K. Mangalaraj ³✉, G. Niranjadevi ⁴✉, Shiv Veer Singh ⁵✉

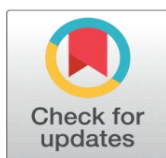
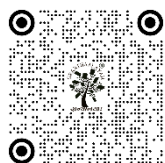
¹ Assistant Professor, GLS University, Ahmedabad, India

² Assistant Professor, St. Xaviers College, Tezpur, (Affiliated to Gauhati University), Jaipur, India

³ Assistant Professor, V.S.B Engineering College, Karur- 639111, Tamil Nadu, India

⁴ Assistant Professor, V.S.B College of Engineering and Technical Campus, Tamil Nadu, India

⁵ Research Scholar, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India



Received 23 February 2026

Accepted 27 April 2026

Published 16 May 2026

Corresponding Author

Prathyaksh Janardhanan,
prathyaksh.j@gmail.com

DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i10s.2026.8174](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i10s.2026.8174)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2026 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

The growing international application of the English language has given rise to various types of English that is generally referred to as non-standard English. The research question of this research was as follows: How does non-standard English affect the effectiveness of communication in an academic and professional setting? A combination of both qualitative and quantitative strategies was used, where 120 individuals were chosen with different linguistic and professional backgrounds. Respondents rated written documents in standard and non-standard versions and they were rated based on their clarity, credibility, and professionalism. Also, qualitative data were collected to examine the latent attitudes toward language variation. The result showed that non-standard English was not a significant factor in influencing the understanding because the participants could normally comprehend both types of communication. There were, however, significant variations in the evaluative perceptions with standard English always rating higher in respect to credibility and professionalism. There were mixed attitudes as well, with participants balanced between awareness of linguistic diversity and adherence to traditional norms in a formal context. The research outlines the difference between the effectiveness in communication and social perception, and the view that language judgments are not merely based on the clarity, but also on institutional expectations which are deeply rooted. These findings assert the necessity of ensuring the growth of sensibility towards linguistic diversity and the simultaneous persistence of effective communication initiatives in academic and work settings.

Keywords: Non, Standard English, Academic Communication, Professional Communication, Language Attitudes, Linguistic Diversity

1. INTRODUCTION

The language has evolved into English as lingua franca, which enhances the communication of other languages and cultures. This spread has also introduced other kinds of English language, which are usually referred to as non-standard or World Englishes. These are the local linguistic behaviour, which is already presupposed by the sociocultural factors and communicative needs. Nevertheless, standard English is still in wide use in the academic and professional world as

a norm of choice. This creates an active contradiction between the diversity of the world's languages on the one hand and the norms of the institution, raising the issues of the presence and functionality of the non-standard English in the context of formal communication (Bilikova and Seresova, 2021).

The scope of non-standard English is very broad and it is composed of different forms of language and includes regional dialects, vernaculars, and new varieties of global languages. These forms are not necessarily wrong, but they are acceptable systems of communication that are context-based and identities-based. The modern studies underline the need to acknowledge these varieties in paradigms, including Global Englishes, which interrupt the standard concept of linguistic superiority. The education and pedagogical changes have started to recognize the necessity of moving past the strict standardization and instead promote a more comprehensive view of the English use that is based on the actual communication patterns present in the world (Khany & Beigi, 2024).

Non-standard English will continue to be stigmatized in both educational and professional institutions even with the growing realization of linguistic diversity. The people who do resort to such forms may be deemed to be less competent or credible no matter how it can be understood. This is particularly acute when there is a professional appraisal where the use of language may lead to the biased evaluation of the professionalism and suitability to the job position. The studies on the issue of accent bias have proven that the linguistic difference may affect the impression of professional competence, which confirms the existence of implicit biases in the evaluations (Levon et al., 2021). This type of prejudices brings up the question of equity and inclusion within communicative practices.

However, despite the literature that has already been published on the attitudes towards the World Englishes and linguistic diversity, not any empirical study has been conducted to determine the direct impact of non-standard English on the understanding and evaluation of the academic and professional situations. The new study is considerably based on pedagogical suggestion and not practical communicative results. It has also not paid considerable attention to the fact that people in the real world process and evaluate non-normative forms of language simultaneously. These gaps have attracted the interest of the recent studies, and the place of classroom-based intervention and its effect on the language perceptions has been examined recently, and more studies are required to extrapolate the results to the broad-based context (da Costa & Rose, 2024).

The aim of the current study was to consider the role of non-standard English on academic and professional communication competency. In particular, it was aimed at discovering the influence of the use of such language on the understanding, credibility and professionalism. One of the objectives of the study was also to investigate the perception of the participants regarding non-standard English and to establish how the perception is influenced by other factors. By the achievement of the latter, the research was supposed to act as the means of the further discourse of the problem of linguistic inclusiveness and the emerging functions of English in the international relationships, to be more specific, in the institutional context (Lee, 2023).

There are numerous implications of this research to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of literature about Global Englishes and disrupts the primitive idea of the standardization of the language. In practice, the findings can be used by teachers, employers and policymakers who want to contribute to the fair communication. As it has been proved, the attitude towards the varieties of the English language can influence institutional decisions, including hiring or schooling policies, and thus, the general social implications of linguistic perceptions simply cannot be underrated (Noknoi and Prabjandee, 2024). Such dynamics need to be comprehended in order to develop inclusive settings.

The communication habits particularly in the world that is increasingly turning into a globalized entity are in a continuous shift and the non-standardized English is becoming a normal element and part of the communication. However, even in any scenario, e.g. career evaluation and work processes, there are still some prejudices based on accent and language diversities. It was hypothesized empirically that such types of biases can influence the hiring and working experience, negatively impacting individuals with non-standard versions of English language (Telo et al., 2024). The meta-analytic findings also justify the need to believe that accent-based biases are still significant in the process of evaluating the employees, and thus, even greater attention should be paid and implemented (Mainidze et al., 2025).

The attitude towards non-standard English is shifting gradually particularly among the young learners and the multilinguals. The more one is exposed to the various forms of the English language the more accommodative perceptions appear to be formed but the biases of preferring to use standard forms are also present in the formal settings. A study that examines the attitudes of students indicates that there is a greater appreciation of the validity of the different modes of English that can result in a shift in language practices that would be more sustainable and more inclusive

(White, 2025). The shifting attitudes are a reminder of the necessity to continue with research and formulation of policies to bring the communication practice to the realities of the global use of English language. The major objectives of this study are:

- 1) To evaluate the impact of non-standard English on comprehension, credibility, and professionalism in academic and professional communication contexts.
- 2) To examine participants' attitudes toward non-standard English and identify how linguistic background influences perceptions and evaluative judgments.

2. METHODS

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design that was taken is a mixed-method study, in which the effects of non-standard English on academic and professional communication were examined. The quantitative part evaluated perceptions of clarity, credibility and professionalism among the participants whereas the qualitative part tested the attitudes and understanding of the participants. This design was chosen as a way of having quantifiable results as well as detailed results, where the overall picture on how non-standard English works in various communicative situations can be understood. The combination of the two methods increased the validity and explanatory richness of the results.

2.2. STUDY SETTING AND CONTEXT

These studies were conducted in an academic and a work-related environment, in colleges and at the workplace where English was the most spoken language. Simulated communication activities were administered to the members and were both written and simulated and were rooted on real life situations which involved academic writing, email communications, and professional reports. These contexts were selected due to the fact that they are natural communicative activities; and to achieve ecological validity. The other concern that was considered in the study involves the increasing use of different varieties of the English language in the global communication arenas.

2.3. PARTICIPANTS / SAMPLE

The population used in the study was 120, made up of university students, academic employees, and working professionals of various lingual backgrounds. Purposive sampling technique was employed with the aim of ensuring that individuals with an in depth knowledge on the normal and non normal application of the English language are included. The sample size was considered to be sufficient to allow conducting relevant comparison both across subgroups and to enhance the applicability of findings. The dispute was that the participants belonged to various ages and had different education level and professional experience which enabled a more comprehensive analysis of the perceptions of the different groups of people.

2.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The information was gathered with the use of questionnaires and controlled evaluation tasks. The participants were requested to evaluate paired texts in standard and non-standard English in such dimensions like clarity, credibility, and professionalism. Also, semi-structured interviews were held with a part of the respondents to obtain a better understanding of their perceptions and arguments. The combination of the methods made it possible to triangulate data, as both the quantitative rating and qualitative explanation were obtained.

2.5. INSTRUMENTS AND MATERIALS

The study used well constructed small samples of language which were standard and non-standard versions of the English language. These samples were supposed to represent typical academic and professional forms of communication. A rating scale was developed to determine the perception of clarity, credibility and professionalism of the respondents. The instruments were checked by subject experts to be content valid and a pilot study of a small group of research

subjects was done to ensure that the instruments were coherent, understandable, and reliable prior to the data being collected in large amounts.

2.6. DATA ANALYSIS

To establish the patterns and the significant differences between reporting responses to standard and non-standard English texts, quantitative data were ascertained by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The changes in the perception were measured using such measures as the mean scores and comparative tests. The thematic analysis, in which repetitive patterns and prominent themes were identified, was used to interpret qualitative data that was obtained through interviews. The combination of these techniques made it possible to obtain the vision of the numerical tendencies and the latent attitudes as well.

3. RESULTS

3.1. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

One hundred and twenty individuals (students and academic members, and individuals with different language backgrounds) were involved in the study (Table 1). Diversity of the sample was ensured in relation to age, education level, and work experience, which ensured the wide coverage. The majority of the respondents mentioned that they were often subjected to both standard and non-standard English at school or in their place of occupation. This heterogeneity enabled major comparisons between groups of people. The number of participants did not have ardent skew which validated the analysis and the findings were justified because they represented different perceptions about the use of languages.

Table 1

| Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 120) | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
| Role | Students | 50 | 41.7 |
| | Academic Staff | 35 | 29.2 |
| | Professionals | 35 | 29.2 |
| Language Background | Monolingual | 45 | 37.5 |
| | Multilingual | 75 | 62.5 |
| Exposure to Non-Standard English | Regular | 82 | 68.3 |
| | Occasional | 38 | 31.7 |

3.2. EFFECTS ON COMPREHENSION

Participants also tended to have high levels of understanding standard and non-standard texts of English, nevertheless, some minor variations were noted. Writings in a standard variety of English scored a little higher on clarity especially in the case of complex academic writing. On the contrary, non-standard varieties of English texts were occasionally seen as less exact but readable. It was comparatively analyzed that perceptions were not significantly distorted, but less obvious, decreases in perceived clarity were observed. These results indicate that non-standard English has no significant negative effect on comprehension but could affect the perceived facilitation of information.

3.3. PERCEPTIONS OF CREDIBILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

There were evident differences in the perception of credibility and professionalism by participants. The texts in Standard English were rated higher all along both dimensions, especially in the formal academic and professional context as illustrated in Table 2. The use of non-standard English was frequently thought to be less formal and in other instances less competent. Such trends were more evident with those participants who had a rich academic or professional experience. The findings suggest that although non-standard English could be understandable, it might cause adverse influence on such things as authority, expertise, and professional acceptability.

Table 2

| Table 2 Mean Ratings for Standard and Non-Standard English | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Variable | Standard English (Mean) | Non-Standard English (Mean) |
| Clarity | 4.5 | 4.1 |
| Comprehension | 4.6 | 4.4 |
| Credibility | 4.7 | 3.9 |
| Professionalism | 4.8 | 3.8 |

(Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

3.4. ATTITUDINAL PATTERNS

The responses of the participants speaking non-standard English were mixed acceptance and bias. Though it was a common ground that there existed a validity of different versions of the English language, there was still a tendency on standardized versions in formal mode of communication. Members of the multilingual population exhibited inclusiveness in their attitudes more frequently and those members who had been trained in the conventional standard language were more predisposed to the conventional norms. Such tendencies imply that linguistic background and exposure prove to be very influential on perceptions. The findings indicate that a persistent conflict exists between the practices that are evolving in relation to language and the demands of academic and professional communication.

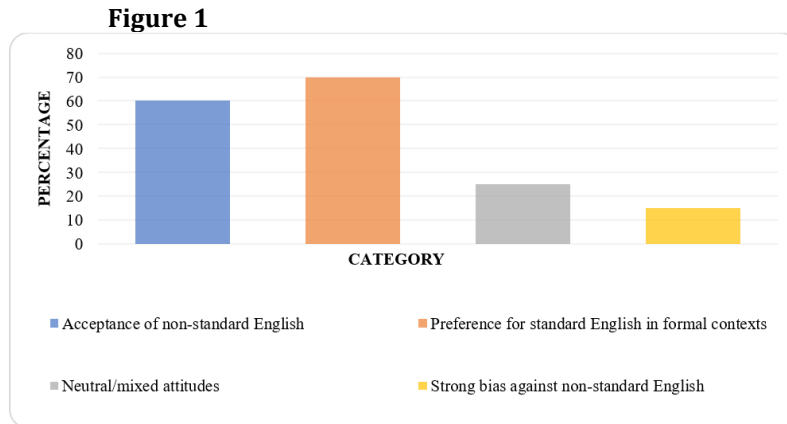


Figure 1 Participant Attitudes Toward Non-Standard English

3.5. QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

The qualitative analysis showed that there were some common themes such as the perception of clarity, appropriateness and social judgment. It was common to find that participants linked the standard English to professionalism and reliability whereas non-standard forms were seen to be contextual. Other respondents focused on inclusivity with some commenting that the varying varieties of the English language are a mirror of what is happening in reality and that some feel that the non-standard use in the work environment may be less formal. These hints reinforce quantitative results, as they show that perception is determined by comprehension and by social and institutional demands concerning language usage.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research project lead to the fact that non-standard English did not affect the lack of understanding significantly, but affected the perceived clarity in the formal situations in a minor adverse way. The participants were generally able to understand regular and non-regular texts, which means that the communicative efficiency did not decline significantly. However, there was less credibility and professionalism in the case of non-standard English particularly in terms of academic setting and workplace. These results indicate that there exists a difference between knowing and evaluation where the comprehension does not affect but social judgments do. The

findings provide a response to the research questions since the non-standard English has greater effects on the perception rather than the actual success of communication.

The existing findings are the reflection of the past research indicating the dominance of the norms of standard English in academic publishing sphere (McKinley and Rose, 2018). Also noted in the works of scholars have been the conflicts between the prescriptive norms and the evolving language in the scholarly writing (Stapleton, 2019). Later responses in the literature affirm the reality that, although the linguistic diversity has been growing, expectations that have been put on the standard language use still exist (McKinley and Rose, 2019). When World Englishes are implemented in the situation of language teaching, its role in the redefinition of the perspectives on the legitimacy of languages obtained much attention (Sadeghpour and Sharifian, 2019). The recent analyses on the field of pedagogy have emphasized that it is important to introduce the Global Englishes into the educational systems in order to reflect the practice (Rose et al., 2021). Empirical studies of the attitude of learners have shown that the acceptance of other forms of English is increasing and there are still biases in the formal sphere (Nur Patria, 2021).

The findings are relevant to the current research in the sociolinguistics of language standardization and variation. Although the traditional theories emphasize that standard norms are the sources of clarity and uniformity, the results indicate that the effectiveness of communication is never necessarily based on observance of the norms. Rather, standard English seems to have a social construction and situational value. The work confirms the structures that are related to World Englishes, which believe in the legitimacy of various English forms. It also manifests the necessity of reevaluating the strict linguistic hierarchies to more inclusive framework that encompasses the global communication patterns.

The study can be relevant to the schools, colleges and universities, and language educators. Academic writing and publication entail the need to strike a balance between being understandable and accommodative i.e. being able to recognize the different versions of English without compromising the norms of communication. Organizations can be helpful in the workplace by encouraging the concept of linguistic diversity to reduce prejudice in the assessment and hiring procedures. In addition, the language training programs will involve exposure to different varieties of English that imply that individuals are training to communicate in the real world. The strategies can potentially create more equitable communication situations and remain effective.

There are several limitations to the findings that should be considered when interpreting it. The sample however diverse, was also limited to a given group of people and may not be able to adequately represent large groups of people. The study was conducted in controlled conditions and this could not completely reveal a picture of the communication scenario in a real life. Besides, the use of the constructed text samples may have also influenced the perceptions of the participants in a dissimilar manner as in a real communication. Application of self-reported testing also generates the possibility of subjective bias that might result in the lack of consistency in responses among the participants.

In the future, the research studies should be further carried out by involving increasing number of different participants in the studies under varying cultural and linguistic conditions. The longitudinal study would provide a clearer insight into the change in the perception of non-standard English over time. It is also necessary to undertake more research on digital communication settings that have a preponderance of non-standard forms that are more accepted by the society. Further, experimental designs, which encompass real life communication activities can be used to enhance the ecological validity. Such studies would bring about a more holistic investigation of the use of non-standard English in communication environments that are more globalized.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper has discussed the implications of non-standard English on the effectiveness of any communication in academic and professional communication with particular regard to comprehension, credibility, professionalism and attitude. The findings revealed that even though the non-standard English was not identified to play any major inhibiting role in the comprehension process, there was an influence on the evaluative judgment more so in the formal setting. In the majority of cases, the participants could understand both standard and non-standard versions but standard English was always indicated with the higher credibility degree and professionalism. This is where the distinct distinction between the practical efficiency of a communication and the social concepts which are attributed to the use of language is made. The study has further revealed that the attitude towards the use of non-standard English gradually evolving particularly among individuals who have other lingual backgrounds. Nonetheless, despite such alteration, a strong tendency in standard English in the institutional and professional spheres still gives evidence of the strongly established

norms and expectations. These tendencies suggest that the usage of language is not a problem of understanding but a problem of status and assumed permission as well. Overall, the findings shed some light on the need to find a compromise between the linguistic inclusiveness and the communicative transparency in the globalized environment. Trying to pursue just academic and professional procedures, it is essential to take into consideration that the legitimacy of various types of English and therefore the necessity to achieve the minimal level of effective communication.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Bilikova, B., & Seresova, K. (2021). World englishes and their implications for university education. *Advanced Education*, 65-72.
- da Costa, N., & Rose, H. (2024). The impact of Global Englishes classroom-based innovation on school-aged language learners' perceptions of English: An exercise in practitioner and researcher partnership. *System*, 121, 103263.
- Khany, R., & Beigi, M. (2024). A Forty-Year Systematic Review of World Englishes: Implications for Teaching, Learning, and Language Policy. *TESL-EJ*, 28(2), n2.
- Lee, I. (2023). Problematising written corrective feedback: A global Englishes perspective. *Applied linguistics*, 44(4), 791-796.
- Levon, E., Sharma, D., Watt, D. J., Cardoso, A., & Ye, Y. (2021). Accent bias and perceptions of professional competence in England. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 49(4), 355-388.
- Maindidze, H. T., Randall, J. G., Martin-Raugh, M. P., & Smith, K. M. (2025). A meta-Analysis of accent bias in employee interviews: The effects of gender and accent stereotypes, interview modality, and other moderating features. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 33(1), e12519.
- McKinley, J., & Rose, H. (2018). Conceptualizations of language errors, standards, norms and nativeness in English for research publication purposes: An analysis of journal submission guidelines. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 42, 1-11.
- McKinley, J., & Rose, H. (2019). Standards of English in academic writing: The authors respond. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 44.
- Noknoi, S., & Prabjandee, D. (2024). Thai School Directors' Lived Experiences and Attitudes Towards Global Englishes: Do They Impact Hiring Foreign National Teachers?. *REFlections*, 31(1), 295-309.
- Nur Patria, A. (2021). Attitudes of non-native speakers of English studying in Australia towards World Englishes. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)* Volume, 12.
- Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Galloway, N. (2021). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language teaching*, 54(2), 157-189.
- Sadeghpour, M., & Sharifian, F. (2019). World Englishes in English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 38(1-2), 245-258.
- Stapleton, P. (2019). Standards of English in academic writing: A response to McKinley and Rose. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 44, 110-113.
- Telo, C., Silveira, R., Marcelino, A. F. B., & O'Brien, M. G. (2024). Accent bias in professional evaluations: a conceptual replication study in Brazil. *Applied Linguistics*, 45(6), 1010-1029.
- White, J. (2025). Sustainable Usage of English: Students' Attitudes to English Varieties.