

Fostering Students' International Posture by Using English Varieties through Project-Based Learning A Case Study in a Secondary School

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FOSTERING STUDENTS' INTERNATIONAL POSTURE BY USING ENGLISH
VARIETIES THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING – A CASE STUDY IN A
SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

Including varieties of English in EFL classes increases students' knowledge on the wealth of the language while, at the same time, their perspectives around the international community can be encouraged. The present paper analyses if students' interest in interaction with native and non-native speakers of English is improved by incorporating varieties of English through a Project-Based Learning methodology.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to evaluate any enhancement in International Posture and students' knowledge on varieties of English. For this study, students of First Sixth Form Education created a blog to promote their proficiency in the language for future encounters with English speakers.

Despite the limitations of the study, the results suggest that Project-Based Learning increases participants' knowledge of varieties of English, but the findings regarding International Posture are not conclusive due the short period of time and the initial level of participants.

Keywords: International Posture, varieties of English, Project-Based Learning.

Resumen

Incluir las variedades del inglés en las clases de la primera lengua extranjera aumenta el conocimiento de los estudiantes sobre la riqueza de la lengua mientras que, al mismo tiempo, se fomentan sus perspectivas en la comunidad internacional. Este documento pretende analizar si se produce una mejora en el interés de los estudiantes para interactuar con hablantes de la lengua inglesa, nativos o no nativos, al incorporar las variedades del inglés a través del Aprendizaje basado en Proyectos.

Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal del estudio es evaluar cualquier mejora en *International Posture* de los estudiantes y su conocimiento sobre las variedades del inglés. Para este estudio, los alumnos de primero de Bachillerato crearon un blog, con el cual fomentar su competencia en la lengua para futuros encuentros con hablantes de la lengua inglesa.

A pesar de las limitaciones del estudio, los resultados sugieren que el Aprendizaje basado en proyectos aumenta el conocimiento de los participantes sobre las variedades del inglés, pero los hallazgos relacionados con *International Posture* no son concluyentes debido al corto período de tiempo y al nivel inicial de los alumnos.

Palabras clave: International Posture, variedades del inglés, Aprendizaje basado en proyectos.

1. Introduction

This study addresses the need for students to know and learn the different possibilities that the English language offers to them in terms of varieties and dialects. The English language is quite rich in varieties, dialects and accents that could enhance students' knowledge about the language itself. One of the ideas in which this study is based on is how students' knowledge on varieties of English is fostered through Project-Based Learning. The purpose of this study is to show whether working with varieties of English increases and expands students' perspectives on language itself and whether there are changes on how they relate to English and non-English speaking communities. This research seeks to figure out how Project-Based Learning on varieties of English fosters the way students relate to the international community in order to increase their motivation to speak in the target language.

English varieties, dialects and accents are not studied in English classes either due to the lack of time or because it is not established in the curriculum. Learners are taught what is understood as standard English and by ignoring other English varieties, they do not realize that there is no such a thing as standard language, which tends to be spoken by minorities. This project endeavours to introduce varieties of English from a different perspective by connecting it with Yashima's International Posture (2009). By learning about varieties of English, their historical background and linguistic features, students may appreciate English as a diverse and global language which may enrich their vision of the ideal self in an international context. The methodology selected to connect these two notions is Project-Based Learning.

The structure of this paper is divided in seven sections, including the introduction. Firstly, a justification of the study is presented in section 2, where the research questions are stated. Then, in section 3, the theoretical framework which is divided in four sub-sections: varieties of English, International Posture, Project-Based Learning and Peer-assessment. In section 4, the methodology of the study is explained. This section is divided in four sub-sections: the school context, the participants of the study, the procedure to carry out the study and the instruments employed for collecting data where the questionnaires, rubric and blog are detailed. The results are analysed in section 5, which is divided between the impact of Project-Based Learning on the knowledge of varieties of English and the impact on International Posture. Afterwards there is the discussion of the results. Finally, the conclusions I reached after conducting the students' project and the study.

2. Justification

English has become an international language and is essential in the social and economic world, thus students ought to know the multiple benefits that the English language and its diverse varieties could offer to them. The reason for focusing on International Posture through Project-Based Learning on varieties of English is to increase students' motivation and willingness to use the English language outside the classroom and to avoid shyness or embarrassment caused by the idea of native-like competence. This seeks to eradicate the idea of being proficient in the language to be able to communicate perfectly.

Due to the attachment to studying only British and American English, students lack referents in other varieties of English, which makes them believe they do not perform correctly in the target language. The lack of English varieties referents might cause challenges in the future because they could experience problems while interacting and communicating because they may not know important linguistic aspects from other varieties of English.

During my internship at the end of November, the perception was that students lacked input other than British or American English during their English classes. Consequently, I reached the conclusion that with this study I would like to foster students' interest in varieties of English and their motivation to interact with others in international contexts.

Since the project pursues to promote interaction and communication, the chosen methodology to carry out the project is Project-Based Learning. This methodology belongs to the philosophy of the school, so the students are used to this approach and it implies cooperation and interaction from the students, which is one of the aspects this research wants to improve.

The specific research questions which this proposal addresses are:

- RQ1: Does Project-Based Learning enhance International Posture and knowledge about varieties of English?
- RQ2: How is International Posture promoted through Project-Based Learning on varieties of English?
- RQ3: If there is an improvement on International Posture, could it be related to studying varieties of English through Project-Based Learning?

3. Theoretical framework

Before reviewing the relevant research, it is important to outline the pillars on which this study is based. The investigation is centred around the possibilities that varieties of English through Project-Based Learning might offer to language teaching and to students' International Posture. These concepts are key to carrying out the study.

3.1. Varieties of English

To begin with, we shall define the terms *varieties* and *dialects* to differentiate both of them. According to Hickey (2014), varieties of English are:

any form of a language which can be sufficiently delimited from another form. The grounds for such differentiation may be social, historical, geographical or a combination of these factors. The necessity for the neutral term variety arose from the use of dialect with reference to the speech of an older rural male population. (p.331)

A dialect is depicted as:

A term referring to a variety of a language spoken in a certain place, that is a geographically distinct variety of a language. There are urban and rural dialects. The boundaries between dialects are always gradual. [...] Dialects are generally different from the standard variety of a language in a particular country and thus are often stigmatized. (Hickey, 2014, p. 91)

Considering Hickey's (2014) definition of varieties, English as an International Language (EIL) tends to be mistaken as such. Linguists emphasise that "EIL does not refer to a particular variety of English" and its purpose is not to become a certain variety, but a language of communication (Sharifian, 2009, p.2)

English has become, in Crystal's words (2003), a 'global language' which means that "a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country" (p.3). Depending on the different level at which the English language is spoken, its role in that country is assigned in various manners: as a mother tongue, as an official language or as a foreign language (Crystal, 2003).

English is a global or international language not for its number of native speakers but for being a language for broader communication used by both native and non-native speakers (McKay, 2002). What made English a powerful language was the connexion between language power and economic, technological, and cultural power reinforced by mass media (Crystal, 2003). There are also historical reasons behind that development which will be discussed later.

As speakers in a globalised world, we needed a common language to be able to communicate with others. This is understood as a ‘lingua franca’. However, the necessities for a non-native speaker to learn and use an additional language differ from those of the native speakers. A non-native speaker will need English for working contexts and to overcome cultural boundaries (Crystal, 2003; McKay, 2002). This use of the language has increased due to international and financial institutions which use English automatically as the medium of communication (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997).

Nevertheless, there exists some historical reasons behind this development of the English language. Before English became a lingua franca, French took that place in Europe by being the language of the court, the language employed in treaties or the language learnt by upper classes (Melchers & Shaw, 2011).

The spread of English began in the 16th century when the first pilgrims settled in Plymouth, North America (Crystal, 2003; Melchers & Shaw, 2011). The dispersals of English happened in two diasporas. The first diaspora corresponds to the migration of people from England to North America, Canada, and Australia and led to the creation of new mother tongue English varieties. The second diaspora entailed the colonisation of territories in Africa, Asia, and South Pacific during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, corresponding with the expansion of the British Empire (Crystal 2003; Jenkins, 2015). The colonised territories incorporate English as a second language, and they referred as ‘New Englishes’ (Jenkins, 2015; Melchers & Shaw, 2011). The decay of the British Empire began in the early 20th century, when the United States grew as a superpower due to the industrialization caused by the First and Second World Wars (Crystal, 2003). Therefore, “the present-day world status of English is primarily the results of two factors: the expansion of British colonial power [...] and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century” (Crystal, 2003, p.59). Nowadays, it is the number of L1 speakers (more than 70% of L1 English speakers) and the economic and political power of the United States which controls the development of the English language (Crystal, 2003).

Since the 1980s, four models for the classification of the spread of English have been designed in order to organise the diversity within the language. These are the four models:

- Stevens' model (1980) suggests a tree diagram to show the relationship between English varieties:

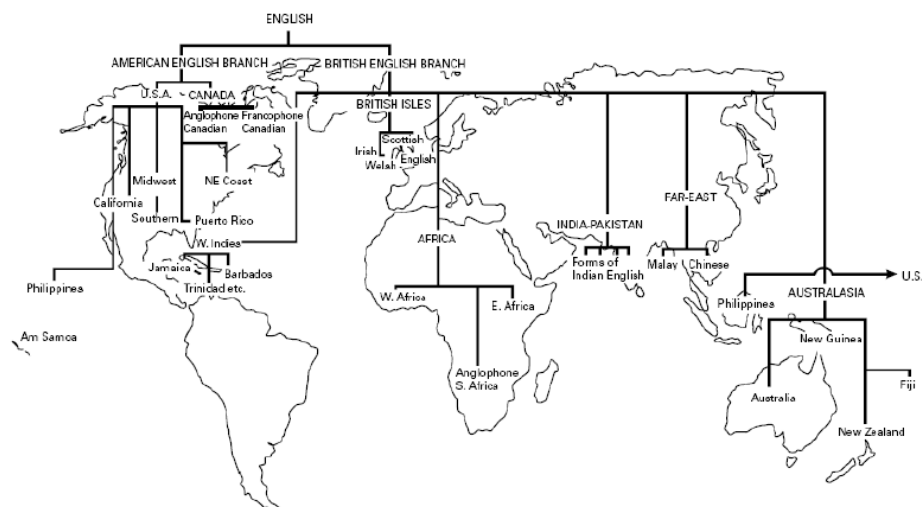


Figure 1: Stevens' map. Source. Stevens, 1992, p.33

- McArthur's Circle of World Englishes (1987) locates 'World Standard English' in the centre of the map and the regional varieties outwards around the centre:

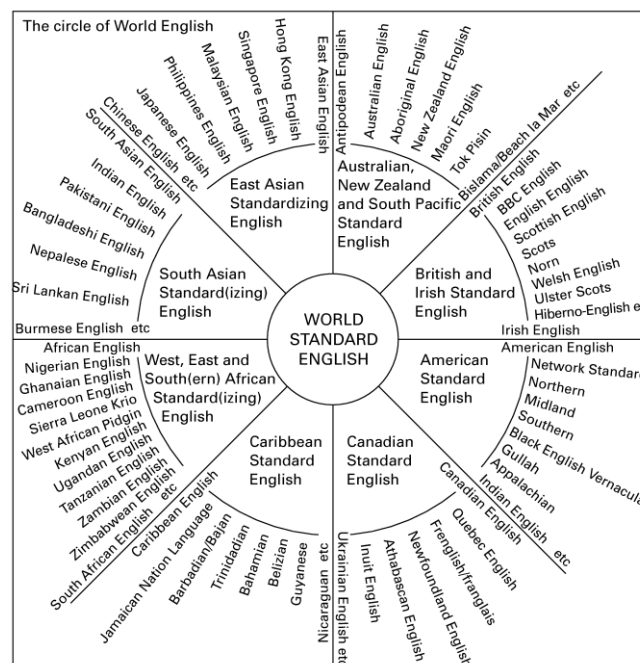


Figure 2: McArthur' Circle of World Englishes. Source: McArthur, 2002, p.97.

- Görlach's circle of International English (1988) imitates McArthur's model by organising regional standards around its centre where is located international English:

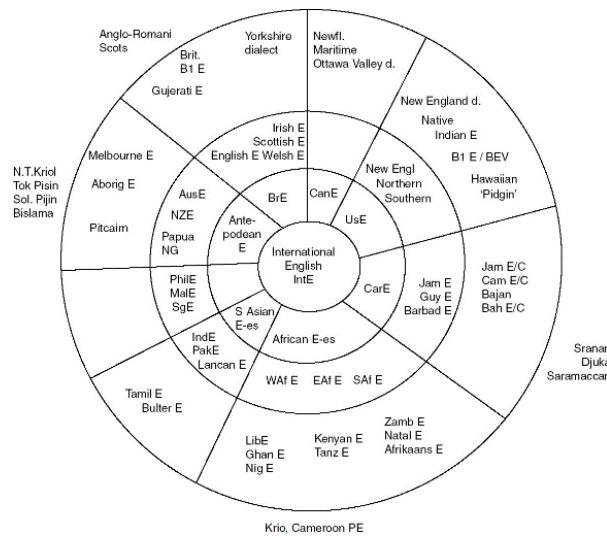


Figure 3: Görlach's circle model of English. Source: McArthur, 2002, p.101.

- Kachru's three circles model (1988) has been the most useful and predominant version for the spread of English.

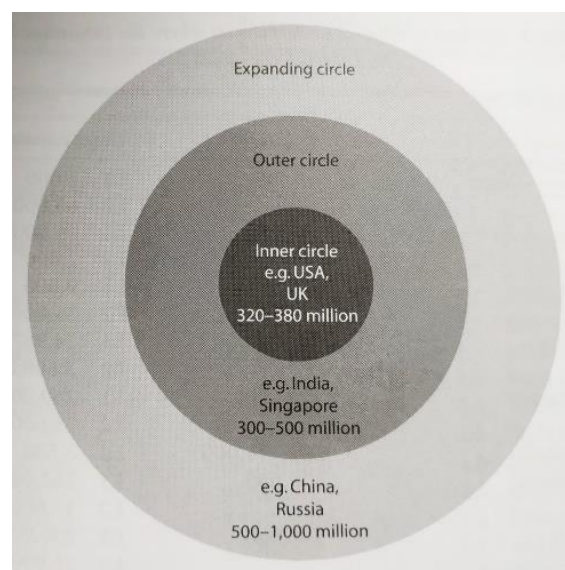


Figure 4: Kachru's circle model of World Englishes. Source: Crystal, 2003, p. 61.

This model was followed to explain the spread of English during the students' project, since it is visually easier for students to understand it. However, using this model implies some drawbacks. It locates L1 speakers at the centre of the model which can imply that those speakers provide the standard and the rules that L2 and non-native speakers have to follow (Graddol, 1997).

Kachru proposed the term ‘World Englishes’ so as to include all the varieties of English while describing the English language. The term refers to “the fact that there are multiple and varied models of English across cultures and that English is not limited to countries where it has traditionally been regarded as a mother tongue” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.639). Therefore, this definition includes British, American, Australian as well as other legitimate English varieties such as Singaporean, Indian, Nigerian, among others.

Including ‘World Englishes’ in language teaching would not only improve English classes themselves, but also benefit students’ education (Matsuda, 2003). Enriching their English language instruction by adding varieties of English is demanded by several linguists. They claim that ELT teachers should not continue focusing on English varieties from the inner circle since it does not prepare students to maintain real English conversations (Bieswanger, 2008; Matsuda, 2003).

Since English is not solely owned by native speakers, and those speakers do not use standardised forms of the language either, ELT teachers should incorporate ‘World Englishes’ in order to make students aware of the different possibilities of the English language (Llurda, 2004; Matsuda, 2003). As Matsuda (2003) asserted, “English is seen (...) as a means to open doors to parts of the world that are not accessible to them otherwise” (p.719). However, teachers and students ought to erase “preconceived notions about language called language ideologies” (Peterson, 2019, p.7). English students have to dismiss the idea of having ‘standard’ pronunciation and that only L1 native speakers of English use the language perfectly. By teaching varieties of English and EIL, teachers help students to encourage their confidence in their own English, so that they are aware of the multiple possibilities that the language can offer (Jenkins, 2006). Therefore, the more exposure to varieties, the more competent and communicative students will be in the real world (Bieswanger, 2008).

Linguists argue that varieties of English should be incorporated into language teaching as well as teaching culture from those varieties so as to avoid misunderstandings and to prevent biases (Bieswanger, 2008; Peterson, 2019). Furthermore, with this exposure to English varieties, students will acquire new competencies and skills to adapt their discourse and to negotiate meaning, thus being prepared for international situations (Farrell & Martin, 2009; Jenkins, 2006).

Nevertheless, there exists a lack of teaching materials in varieties of English and EIL. Despite the superb variety in the English language, textbooks and materials, which are primarily

published in inner circle countries, they have little representation from outer and expanding circle countries (Strevens 1992; Matsuda, 2003). However, some outer circle countries are creating and publishing their own textbooks and materials (Graddol, 1997).

3.2. International Posture

As previously mentioned, ELT courses should include World Englishes in their language learning in order to stimulate students' interest in the English language and its context around the world. The principal problems that students experienced while learning the English language are their lack of interest in using the language outside the classroom and their shyness to interact with others. Their willingness to talk might be detrimental or beneficial to their motivation and interaction with others. For that reason, how they see themselves using the language outside the classroom is key to developing language proficiency. This project aims to observe how learning varieties of English can enhance students' International Posture, i.e. how they interact with the international community and how to involve them in the community.

The concept *International Posture* proposed by Yashima (2009) is built on Gardner's concept on *integrativeness*. This idea consists of the "favourable attitudes toward the target language group" and their eagerness to communicate with members of the target language (Gardner, 2005, p.10). Integrativeness sustains learners' motivation to learn the L2, which is indispensable for acquiring the language (Yashima, 2009). However, nowadays learners study English in their home country and they have little interaction with native speakers (Thurston, 2015). Furthermore, the existence of World Englishes makes how students can relate to those communities very complex (Thurston, 2015).

Therefore, Yashima's International Posture (2009) enlarges the meaning of integrativeness and is described as the "tendency to relate oneself to the international community" (p.145), whereas Gardner's idea is restricted to the L2 community. This approach to "foreignness and non-ethnocentric attitudes" connects language users to other cultures (Yashima, 2009, p.146). International Posture is based on three subcomponents:

- Intergroup approach tendency, i.e. the bias to interact with speakers of other cultural backgrounds (Lee, 2018).
- Interest in international vocation and activities, e.g. working abroad.
- Interest in foreign affairs, e.g. reading foreign news.

(Yashima, 2009, p. 146)

Yashima's study (2009) provided evidence that if learners picture their 'English using selves' interacting with other L2 speakers, they tend to be more motivated and have more willingness to communicate (WTC). According to Dörnyei (2009), our possible self is the idealised version of whom we would like to become; in other words, the 'future self-guide'. Within the notion of possible selves or future self-guide, we encounter our ideal and ought to selves. The ideal self "refers to the representation of the attributes that one would ideally like to possess" whereas the ought to self "refers to the representation of attributes that one believes one ought to possess" (Dörnyei, 2009, p.13). Consequently, the role of our imagination is crucial in motivating our possible self, ideal and ought to self. In addition, in order to motivate oneself, we need the proper conditions, i.e. the high expectations of the ideal self need to be plausible and achievable for the person (Dörnyei, 2009).

Imagination not only is essential to create the ideal L2 self, but it also helps to create an imagined international community for the students, which in some cases where English is taught as a foreign language could be difficult to imagine. The higher the level of international posture, the more likelihood to participate in the imagined international community (Yashima, 2009). For those students who would struggle more to visualise their L2 self in the international community, teachers should create the appropriate climate in class by providing new experiences that connect them to the international community (Yashima, 2009).

L2 WTC is the propensity to communicate in the L2 which derives from the lack of anxiety and the perceived competence in the target language, thus L2 WTC is a strong predictor for students' success in language learning (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pietrzykowska, 2011). MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels (1998) specified that L1 WTC differed from L2 WTC. The former is the human tendency to talk in different situations; the latter is the communication in the L2 influenced by situational (e.g. knowledge about the topic) and enduring factors (e.g. personality) (MacIntyre et al., 1998). They conceptualised all the variables affecting L2 WTC:

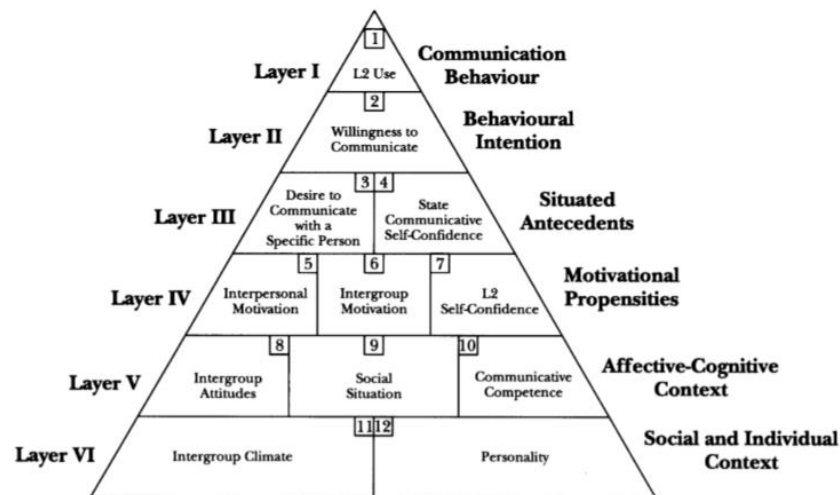


Figure 5: The Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC. Source: MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547

The model is divided in six layers. The three first layers (I, II, III) depict situational influences in a given time; and layers IV, V and VI correspond to enduring factors exemplified in Figure 5.

Therefore, Yashima, based on her studies in Japanese EFL classes, proposed the schematic relationship between International Posture, L2 WTC and language proficiency. “International posture affects learner’s motivation, which leads to proficiency as well as self-confidence, which, in turn, accounts for L2 WTC” and “resulting in frequency of communication” (Yashima, 2009, pp. 147, 154)

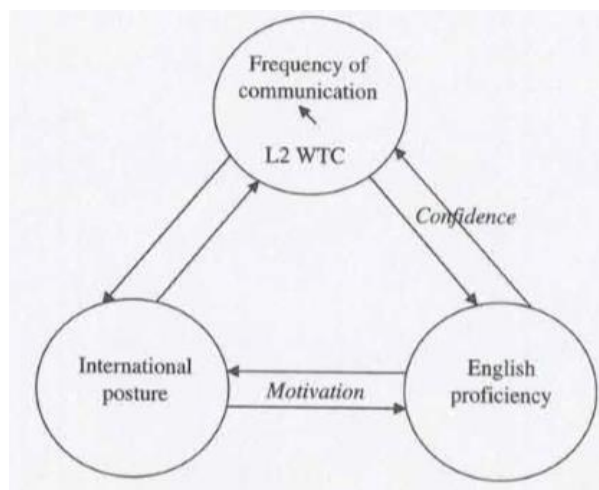


Figure 6: Yashima’s schematic representation. Source: Yashima, 2009, p. 154

This study seeks to promote Yashima’s International Posture (2009) by applying Project-Based Learning methodology to teach varieties of English in order to increase students’ motivation and WTC.

3.3. Project-Based Learning

As stated above, International Posture can increase students' motivation to learn and relate with others in international contexts. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a suitable methodology in order to incorporate varieties of English while enhancing students' confidence in international encounters and WTC. The project carried out with students tried to incorporate this methodology, although some changes had to be made due to the circumstances during the internship period.

“Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge” (What is PBL?, n.d.). This methodology “allows students to acquire knowledge and competences in the 21st century¹” (Trujillo, 2015, n.d.).

The knowledge that students can acquire with this methodology is a working process which will help students to use High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) with the teacher becoming a learning guide who creates the opportunities for learning (Trujillo, 2015). As Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) stated, Project Based Learning should be the ‘main course’ and not the ‘dessert’. With this comparison, they were trying to explain the difference between ‘dessert’ projects and ‘main course’ projects. A ‘dessert’ project, which does not follow PBL methodology, is the zenith of a unit or topic which has previously been covered by the teacher, and usually these projects are done as homework and are seldom presented and do not necessarily have to be connected with curriculum standards (Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010).

The principal characteristics of PBL methodology are the following:

- The project must include significant content whose objectives derive from learning standards and competences.
- It implies critical thinking and the use of HOTS as well as collaboration from students to solve the problem or question.
- It has to be organised around a problem or a driving question to help students maintain the focus.
- It demands investigations in order to solve the driving question

¹ Author's translation

- Students should be triggered by presenting a complex situation or problem so as to create a need to know more about the project.
- It enables a certain degree of voice and choice for students, so they can be more responsible in the working process.
- The project needs to be revised and both students and teachers should receive feedback during and at the end the working process.
- The project or the final product should be presented to a public audience.

(Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010; Trujillo, 2015)

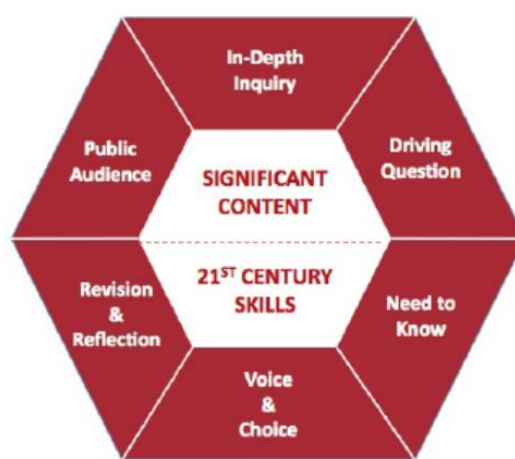


Figure 7: Essential elements for PBL. Source: Trujillo, 2015, n.d.

The theoretical bases on which PBL methodology is built on are constructivism, multiple intelligences and cooperative learning. The constructivist theory has had important contributions from authors such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, and sustains that “knowledge is not discovered, it is constructed: the student constructs his knowledge [...]. From this perspective, the student is a responsible being who actively participates in his or her learning process²” (Massimino, 2010, n.d.).

By applying this theory, it is recognised that the learning process is different for each student and that their capacities to learn are distinct; these ideas were recognised in multiple intelligences theory (Vergara Ramírez & Pérez Gómez, 2016). In his theory, Gardner identified eight intelligences: verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic (Vergara Ramírez & Pérez Gómez, 2016).

Since PBL methodology understands the learning process as a social process, it implies that the work should be done in cooperation with other classmates. The principal characteristics

² Author’s translation

of cooperative learning are that each member of the group has a responsibility, they are assigned different roles and tasks to develop and they have to reflect about the functioning of the group (Vergara Ramírez & Pérez Gómez, 2016).

This methodology possesses advantages and drawbacks. Among the advantages is worth mentioning the following:

- It fosters critical thinking.
- It allows them to learn in diversity by working in groups.
- Students learn from each other as they work cooperatively.
- They can assess their own progress and classmates' progress.

(Ortiz, Calderón & Travieso, 2016)

Among the drawbacks are the workload for teachers, the difficulty to evaluate, time management or the transformation of information into knowledge (Ortiz et.al, 2016).

Vergara Ramírez and Pérez Gómez (2016) described seven steps to create and develop a project. Firstly, teachers should find out the motive or occasion behind the particular project. This step can be done either with the agreement of students such as a situation or problem that spontaneously arouses the students' interest; or it can be triggered by the teacher or the school department. The second step consists of "creating the intention" (Vergara Ramírez and Pérez Gómez, 2016, p.75) where the project is connected with the learners. This step could be posing an open question (the driving question of the project) or a situation in which learners can empathise. Thirdly, the teacher or school department design the project. The fourth step is the implementation of the project in the classroom, the creation of the working groups and students' research about the project. In the fifth phase, there is the reflection about the project in order to make the necessary changes. In the sixth step, the contents of the project are visualised or made public, for instance posting the contents in a blog, putting on a theatrical performance or creating a magazine. Finally, there is assessment of the project and its process. This step should be done by both students and teachers and should provide feedback for students and teachers.

3.4. Peer-assessment

Assessment plays an important role in students' projects and for the analysis of data in this paper. The purpose of the chosen assessment for the project was formative and based on peer-assessment. Formative assessment is a dynamic and cognitive process which encourages teachers and students "to continuously and systematically gather evidence of learning with the

express goal of improving student achievement” (Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p. 6). It is used while learning takes place and to observe if learning happened (Moss & Brookhart, 2009). This sort of assessment is intended to detect weaknesses and strengths of students, to assist educators while planning, to guide learners during their learning process, to promote learners’ autonomy, evaluation skills and responsibility (Andrade & Cizek, 2009).

In the case of this project, each group had to assess the work of their classmates. For this reason, they co-evaluate their classmates through peer-assessment which is an “arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance of other equal-status learners” (Topping, 2009). “In formative peer assessment, learners give elaborated, qualitative, formative feedback about the relative worth of each other’s work” (Andrade & Cizek, 2009). Therefore, formative peer-assessment provides multiple benefits for students and teachers such as feedback, group work and time-saving for teachers (Topping, 2009). Moreover, if students provide positive and constructive feedback, it will enhance students’ self-esteem and participation in future tasks, projects and assessments.

4. Methodology

4.1. School context

The context in which this research study was carried out is Escuela IDEO, which is a private school in the northern part of Madrid, near Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. The school centre is newly created, and it opened in 2014. The school includes all educational stages from pre-school to Sixth Form Education. The school covers the educational demand in the area. The characteristics of students correspond to upper-middle class, who live in the surrounding areas of Alcobendas, Tres Cantos, Colmenar Viejo or Sierra de Madrid.

The school facilities are new and fully conditioned. Each floor corresponds to one different educational stage. The centre has line 3 courses from Pre-school to Obligatory Education. For this research study, I worked with First Sixth Form Education students. These courses are divided in three modalities (Scientific-Technological, Artistic and Social Sciences Sixth Form Education); however, for common subjects, the students are mixed only into two groups.

The school is distinguished by offering an inclusive education, attending to the different educational needs of the students. For that reason, the school offers innovative methodologies such as Cooperative Learning or Project-Based Learning in order to achieve students' inclusion and autonomy. In the case of Obligatory Education and Sixth Form Education, students are provided with laptops which are used for their everyday classwork. They have access to an online platform, *Google Classroom*, where they have access to the materials and upload the tasks and activities. In the case of ESO, students also work with a book whose methodology is based on competences and cooperative learning. Sixth Form Education students do not use any book and the teacher creates or provides the materials. Therefore, this clearly influences the way teachers work.

Since the school offers an inclusive education, teachers count on the guidance department which helps them to create the educational adaptations. This department also works with these children and their families to help them to accomplish the educational objectives. More students with educational needs can be found in Obligatory Education than in Sixth Form Education.

4.2. Participants

All the participants involved in this study belonged to Sixth Form Education. The students from 1st Sixth Form were between 16 and 18 years old. The reasons to choose this course are due to their high command of the language, their capacity to analyse the English language from a different linguistic perspective. Furthermore, I did not consider the project appropriate neither for students of 4th year ESO due to the difficulty of the topic, the level and curricular adaptations of some students, nor for 2nd Sixth Form because of EvAU exams. However, the contents and the project procedure had to be adapted to the online format due to the lockdown that we were living through at that moment in Spain.

The courses of Sixth Form Education have 31 students in each class. Nevertheless, during this situation the school mixed both classes, thus in total, there were around 60 students in the whole online class. In one of the classes, there are 11 girls and 20 boys, whereas in the other class, there are 12 girls and 19 boys. All these students had personal computers and accounts which were provided by the school, as they are the principal working tools for everyday work.

The majority of these students had the corresponding language level for the English subject. They were between B2 and C1. In none of the cases these students are divided into classes based on their level of English, since this goes against the inclusive values promoted by the school.

4.3. Procedure

Before explaining the instruments used to collect data, I will address the steps of the project done by the students, which are fundamental to understand the results. Firstly and before starting to create the project, I read theory about varieties of English in order to support the project and to provide a theoretical framework which could help students to understand and develop their projects. Afterwards, I selected the theory that was used to explain the key terms to the students. Some of these concepts were: varieties, dialects, standard and non-standard English, English as a mother tongue, English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL).

Once the theory was selected, I began creating the project itself, following the seven stages described by Vergara Ramírez and Pérez Gómez (2016). The first phase consisted in thinking about the project and how it emerged. This step was done before collecting the theory for the project. This happened in November during my first period of internship at school. I could observe the lack of knowledge on varieties of English those students had. Secondly, I had to think about the driving question or situation where students would be portrayed. Therefore, to create this feeling I wrote two testimonies (See appendix 1) from two teenagers similar in age to the participants of the project. In these testimonies, they explained situations they had experienced when traveling abroad and using English to communicate. Then, students were asked how these situations could be avoided or fixed by incorporating and teaching varieties of English into the course contents. The testimonies activity and the previous question were used to conduct or drive the project. The next stage in this process was the creation of the project and the design of the materials that were used to guide students. Within those materials were also included the instructions for the students.

The project initially was created to be implemented in face-to-face classes; however, the project had to be rapidly adapted to the new and provisional educational situation. In order to do so, I made use of ICT tools to be able to conduct the classes and activities, and to have control over students' progress. To organise the lessons and activities, I used the following ICT tools: *Google Meet* (to have video calls with students and teach), *Nearpod* (to make online

presentations where students could participate in activities), *Mentimeter* (this website allows you to create visual and interactive word clouds to create interactive slides where students post their answers), *Padlet* (to create a personal or group wall where students posted documents or notes related to their project, similar to an online Portfolio, so the school tutor and I could observe students' progress), *Google Classroom* (to upload the assignments and to post the instructions and materials), *Google Sites* (to create the blog) and *Google Drive* (to make the list of group members and their chosen topic for the project).

The next two stages corresponded to the implementation of the project with the students (creating the groups, choosing the topic, etc.) and the reflection about the information found. The sixth step consisted in making public the product that students had to create. This product was creating a blog entry whose content had to be related to varieties of English. Finally, students assessed their classmates' products. At the beginning of the project, they were given the rubric, so they knew the categories that were going to be assessed. To make the peer-assessment more visually useful for students, they expressed the results of the rubric in a dartboard evaluation. Furthermore, in this stage, the website *Mentimeter* was used to give me feedback about the project and the lessons.

For the next section of this research paper, I will explain the instruments used to collect data and how they were created.

4.4. Instruments for data collection

This study analyses how students increase their International Posture and knowledge on varieties of English through Project-Based Learning. For the analysis of the data, I conducted a mixed-method research study which combines the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to “strengthen the outcome of the study” and confirm and validate the results (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012, p. 40; Masrizal, 2012). The type of mixed-method research I used to conduct the study involved the use of triangulation, more specifically across-method triangulation, because I made use of quantitative and qualitative data (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). I used a quantitative approach with the two questionnaires, which is explained below. I also applied a qualitative approach to obtain data from open-ended questions, the students' peer-assessment and blog.

4.4.1. Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed to answer (RQ1: Does PBL enhance International Posture and knowledge about varieties of English? and RQ2: How is International Posture promoted through Project-Based Learning on varieties of English?) which relate to whether the use of varieties of English may promote students' International Posture or not. On the other hand, I wanted to see if students increase their knowledge about the topic of varieties of English and if they reduce their anxiety about their English pronunciation.

Two questionnaires were administrated to the participants at the beginning of the first session and at the end of the project. The first questionnaire (See appendix 2) was used to examine participants' prior knowledge on the topic of the project and to verify if any changes occurred with regard to the end of the project. The final questionnaire (See appendix 3) was used to find out if participants had changed their ideas and if there was any improvement after the project. Both questionnaires contained the same items and statements. Only in the case of the final questionnaire, four open-questions were added at the end, so that students could elaborate their responses in order to obtain qualitative data for this study. Within the questionnaires, the items were divided between two main areas: varieties of English and International Posture. The items related to varieties of English focused mainly on knowledge or interest in the topic and in accent or pronunciation. The rest of the items were related to the three subcomponents of International Posture.

Both questionnaires were self-created following the instructions provided by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012). In both questionnaires, there are 17 statements formed by closed-ended items, which "do not require the respondents to produce any free writing" (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012, p.76). Participants had to answer on a six-point Likert scale, which was ranked from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These items were used to collect quantitative data for the results section. Only in the case of the final questionnaire four open-ended questions were included to obtain students' ideas and beliefs.

Following Dörnyei and Csizér (2012), the process to create the questionnaires was the following. Firstly, I conducted research on actual questionnaires about two of the key concepts behind this research paper: International Posture and varieties of English. Secondly, I noted down questions from those established questionnaires that could help to specify those items of the final version of the questionnaires. When these steps had been accomplished, I started the writing of the items. In order to write them correctly, I aimed to be sure that the items are short,

simple, unambiguous and avoid negative statements (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012). Once the content was written and suitable for the level of the participants, it was piloted with another fifteen students of the same age as the participants to ensure that all items were clearly understood.

As previously mentioned, the two versions of the questionnaires were distributed at the beginning and at the end of the project. Due to the sanitary situation that occurred when this research was being conducted, the questionnaires were delivered through *Google Forms*, as they guaranteed the participants' anonymity.

4.4.2. Rubric

The second method employed to analyse data was the rubric used for peer-assessment. “Rubrics define standards and describe the various levels of achievement that represent progress toward those goals” (Greenstein, 2010, p.116). In the case of the rubric used by the students, the standards assessed were variety, accuracy of information, accuracy of examples, choice of topic and organisation. The parameters of the rubric were established between needs improvement to excellent (See appendix 4). The rubrics and the description of criteria were self-made because the rubric needed to adapt to the objectives, and they were based on other rubric examples from Brookhart (2013) and Rubric Maker (n.d.). To make clear students' progress, the rubric was supported with a dartboard evaluation where students draw their classmates' performance.

The rubric and the process for peer-assessment were explained at the beginning and at the end of the project, so students knew beforehand what they were going to evaluate and the criteria on which they had to focus. The reason to do it in this manner is because they “must have access to the criteria before actual work begins so that they may set goals and assess their progress” (Greenstein, 2010, p.117).

Since rubrics are extraordinary tools for feedback (Greenstein, 2010), this one was used in order to answer how students evaluated their participation in the blog and to analyse the content examined in the results section.

4.4.3. Blog

The blog formed part of the result of students' project. As noted earlier, in PBL methodology a public product is necessary. This product needs to be visible for an audience. For that reason, the blog was selected as the best manner to present the information that students

found. The ultimate purpose of this blog is to help other students increase their knowledge on the different varieties of English. This blog also helped to mitigate any negative effect of the distance learning, in which student were involved.

Blogs offer several benefits to students such as autonomous learning, motivation to write using different linguistic structures, fostering the use of online resources and Digital Competence, and they decrease the distance between schools, teachers and students (Luján Mora, 2013).

The blog was created with *Google Sites*, which is a simple blog and practical for users. The link to the blog is in Appendix 5. The blog is composed of an index, where all the entries are collected, and the different posts of students can be found below. The posts were uploaded as a presentation or PDF to unify the appearance of the blog. The role of the blog in the analysis of the results was to analyse the awareness of the language or varieties of English and if their products showed evidence of the improvement in their International Posture.

5. Results

In this section, the data collected from the questionnaires, rubric and blog are presented. The structure of this section is divided in two main categories: the impact of PBL on the knowledge of varieties of English and the impact of PBL on International Posture. In turn, both of these sections are divided according to the instruments used for data collection. Firstly, I will analyse the data collected from the questionnaires, rubric and blog about varieties of English. Afterwards, I will study the results on International Posture. it is important to bear in mind that only those items related to the research questions will be analysed and discussed in the forthcoming sections.

5.1. Impact of PBL on knowledge of varieties of English

5.1.1. Results from questionnaires

This section presents the results of the questions related to varieties of English from the first and final questionnaires. The graphs show the comparison of the results from both questionnaires. the results from the first questionnaire are shown in blue, whereas the results of the final questionnaire are shown in orange. The graphs and tables are divided in two main

areas: knowledge or interest on varieties of English and accents or pronunciation in the English language.

The next three graphs correspond to questions one, two and thirteen from the questionnaires. They are related to the students' interest in learning about varieties of English. Figure 8 shows a slight change after the project. Before the project, 34% of students agreed on their interest in learning varieties of English whereas, after the project, students who strongly agreed on the statement increased up to 33 % (versus 23% in the first questionnaire). In total, 84% of participants continued interested in learning more about the topic.

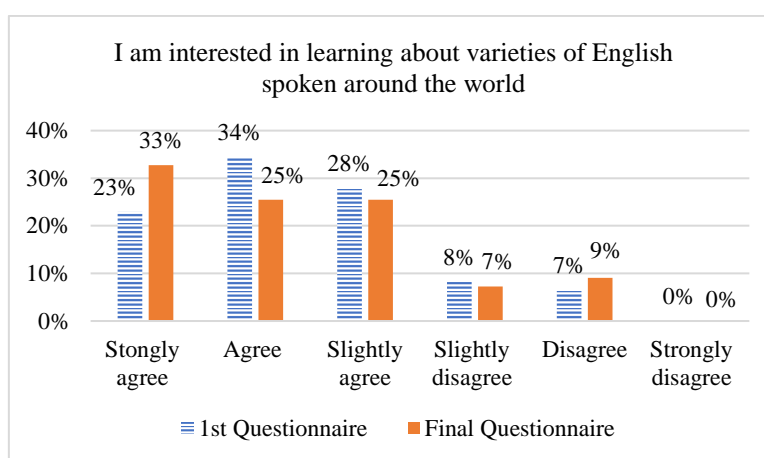


Figure 8: Item 1 from questionnaire.

Observing Figure 9, there is a decrease in the total number of students who agree on the statement (89% versus 82%). Despite the difference, students still consider that introducing more information on varieties of English in their language classes would be beneficial for their academic knowledge. However, the different number of participations in the first questionnaire (61 participants) and in the final questionnaire (55 participants) may explain this difference.

	1st Questionnaire	Final Questionnaire
Agree	54 (89%)	45 (82%)
Disagree	7 (11%)	10 (18%)
Total	61 (100%)	55 (100%)

Table 1: Total number in item 2

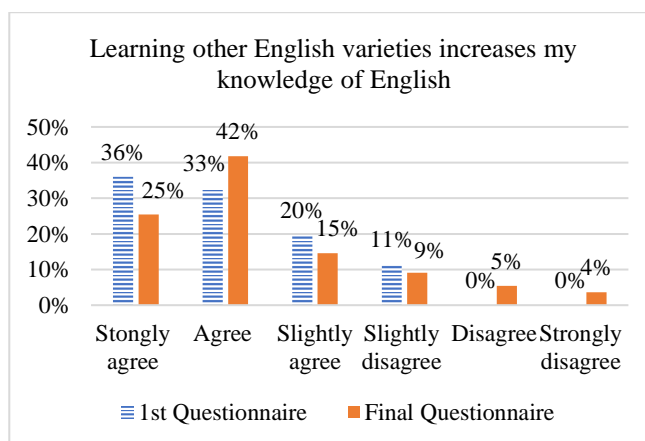


Figure 9: Item 2 from questionnaire.

Although students' interest in varieties of English is high, they state a preference for British and American English over other sorts of varieties. The results from Figure 10 show that students want to be taught in the mentioned varieties rather than to be taught other aspects from other varieties of English. In the first questionnaire, 64% of the total agreed on the statement whereas 36% of students disagreed. Compared to the second questionnaire, the total number of participants who wanted to focus on other varieties of English decreased by 9% (from 36% to 27% in total). This means that the percentage of students who agreed on the statement grew from 64% to 73% after the project.

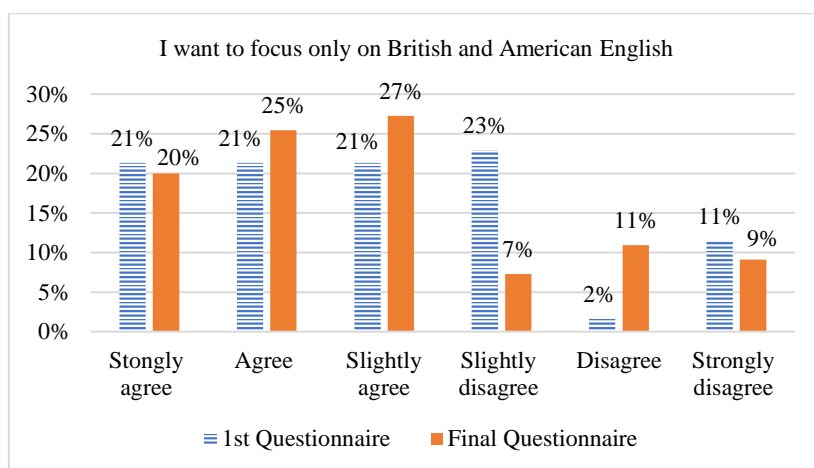


Figure 10: Item 13 from questionnaire.

Another aspect that changed after the students' project is their level of worry about pronunciation. This point shows an important difference from the first questionnaire. In general, questions five, eight and twelve express a change in students' thoughts. As can be observed in Figure 11, the total number of students who agreed in the first questionnaire (85%) decreased to 76% in the second questionnaire. This meant an increase in participants who disagreed with the statement, 24% compared to 15% in the first questionnaire.

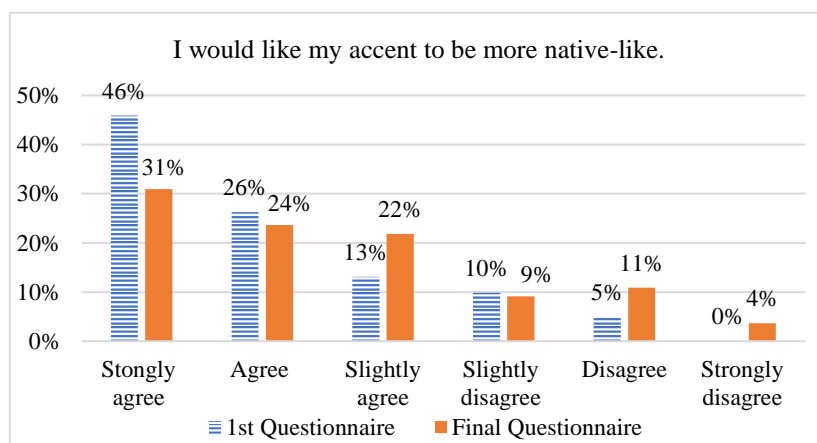


Figure 11: Item 5 from questionnaire.

They also considered that having a British accent was not so important after doing the project (see Figure 12). 60% of the participants disagreed with the affirmation after having researched the different varieties of the English language. In the first questionnaire only 54% of participants disagreed with the statement. Therefore, there was an increase of 6%.

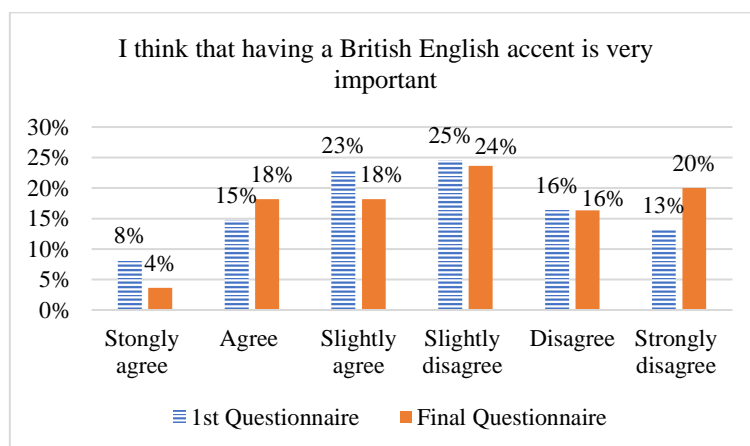


Figure 12: Item 8 from questionnaire.

Furthermore, Figure 13 reaffirms the change in participants' ideas about pronunciation. Before creating the project, 74% of students claim to be deeply concerned with their pronunciation while speaking English. Once the project was conducted, this percentage fell to 58%. This means that 42% of the participants were less concerned about their English pronunciation after the project.

	1st Questionnaire	Final Questionnaire
Agree	45 (74%)	32 (58%)
Disagree	16 (26%)	23 (42%)
Total	61 (100%)	55 (100%)

Table 2: Total number in item 12

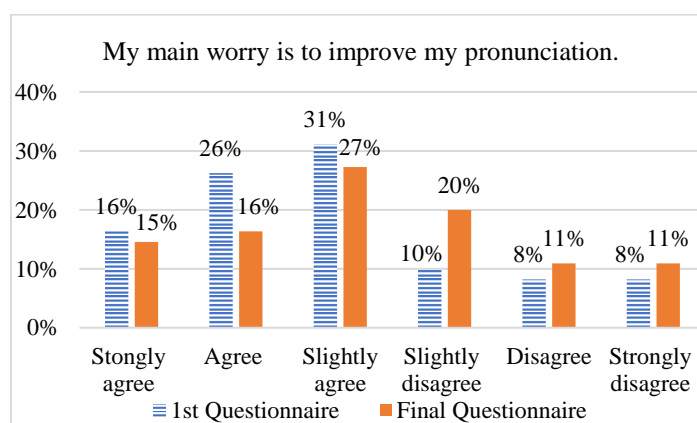


Figure 13: Item 12 from questionnaire

Therefore, Figure 13 confirmed the tendency of students not to worry about their accent or pronunciation in English after the project.

The data collected from the open questions related to varieties of English were collected in two tables so as to clarify the frequency of the responses. These questions were 'What do you

think you learned by doing this project?’ and ‘Has the project changed your ideas about English language? If so, how?’ In the case of the first question, only seven participants did not answer or did not learn anything about varieties of English.

As indicated in Table 3, the most repeated concepts in the first open question throughout participants’ responses were varieties of English (27%) and accents (24%). These were followed by cultures (11%) and dialects (9%). They emphasised that with these projects, they learned different dialects and cultures where English is spoken. It should be mentioned that some students placed more emphasis on the variety they chose for their own project. They stated that what they learned was specially connected to their chosen variety of English.

Concept	Frequency	%
Varieties of English	15	26%
Accents	13	23%
Cultures	6	11%
Dialects	5	9%
Types of English	4	7%
Facts/curiosities	2	4%
History	2	4%
Improve Knowledge	2	4%
British & American	2	4%
Scottish English	2	4%
English expressions	1	2%
Canadian English	1	2%
Jamaican English	1	2%
Irish English	1	2%
Trinidadian English	1	2%

Table 3: Most repeated words in Question 1 from questionnaire

In general, students expressed the idea of having improved their knowledge about varieties of English. Some of their comments to the question ‘*What do you think you learned by doing this project?*’ were the following:

<i>What do you think you learned by doing this project?</i>
S: “I have learned that there are more varieties of English that I did not know”
S: “That there are more types of English I wasn’t concerned of”
S: “I learnt many things; How widespread is English, new accents, many varieties of English and their characteristics, and I believe I have also improved my knowledge and level of English because of this project.”
S: “I learnt that English is more spoken than I thought all over the world. Also, the different accents that are used depending on the country.”

Table 4: Examples of students’ answers

In general, a positive attitude towards the project and its content is visible in their answers to question one from the final questionnaire.

Participants' responses to the question '*Has the project changed your ideas about English language?*' (see Table 6) shows that 51% did not change their opinions. However, in 5 cases their ideas did not change because they did not have previous knowledge on the topic, thus they did not have ideas to change. The project gave them the opportunity to discover different varieties of English. In general, those who changed their ideas expressed that the project helped them to open their minds, to see that there is a wide range of varieties, to see the differences in pronunciation and to be more aware of the English language. These are some answers of the participants:

<i>Has the project changed your ideas about English language?</i>
S: "Yes, the project had made me more conscious about the existence of a lot of English I didn't know before"
S: "Yes, it has. I did not know there were so many and that the differences (especially in pronunciation) were so noticeable."
S: "Yes because we only focus in the typical and I think that variety is something positive."

Table 5: Examples of students' answers

No	27	51%
Yes	22	40%
No prior knowledge	5	9%
Total	55	100%

Table 6: Students' answers to Question 3 from questionnaire

5.1.2. Content from the rubric and blog

This section presents the evidence collected from the rubric and the blog. Data was analysed in relation to varieties of English to observe their awareness of the language after students' projects.

All participants assessed their classmates' work in the blog following the same criteria which were variety, accuracy of information, accuracy of examples, choice of topic and organisation. These criteria were described in the rubric (see appendix 4). In general terms, participants justified their assessments with constructive feedback for their classmates. Some of the participants highlighted that the chosen variety and the content increased their knowledge or curiosity to continue learning more facts about varieties of English. They also stated that the

examples or videos presented helped them to understand the information. On the other hand, other posts were not completely explained or developed. Some of the points these corrections emphasised were the demand for examples or visual materials to support the theory provided by the students such as a real speaker using the language in a real context, or more cultural information and curiosities from the varieties. In other cases, they required more linguistic features to support the analysed examples because in some entries of the blog students did not analyse in depth some aspects, probably due to lack of time for further investigation. Overall, their feedback could mean that participants found the different topics interesting and they were curious to know more information about varieties. Table 7 below shows some of the comments made by the participants in their peer-assessment:

“Work is fine, but we would like to see why they talk like that. The project is quite adequate for the proposed activity, but I think they need to put more content.”
“The presentation is incomplete and there are no examples”
“The entry on the blog has significantly improved my knowledge and interest about the topic. The information provided is highly adequate and related to the topic. However, she needs to put more examples”
“Honestly, we think that their work is very incomplete like the project was meant to be study of a variety of English, but they only made a comparison of two songs with two different accents. I would like to see more information and characteristics about American English, not only an example.”
“It is really good, but we expected more information such as the history of the variety. The examples are very clear. We think that the topic and comparison of varieties are really good”
“I think they have done a pretty good job. In general, they have worked on it and researched. The information is quite good, but there are some spelling mistakes. If they had included more examples and some curiosities the presentation would have been more complete.”

Table 7: Students' comments in the rubrics

The analysis of the information presented by the students in the blog was categorised in Table 8. This table presents the most repeated categories that appear throughout the posts of the blog and the amount of times that the category was mentioned in the entries.

History or origin were repeated fourteen times, which means that fourteen projects included this information. The next category was general information, repeated eleven times, in which they included facts about the country such as location, the flag, currency or the number of inhabitants. Two other repeated categories were pronunciation and phonology (9% each) since they can be easily distinguished among varieties. Other categories important to mention in this analysis are vocabulary or expressions (8%) and sub-varieties or sub-dialects (6%). In

the vocabulary or expressions category, students included terms that are different between varieties and they may find them useful while interacting with others in order to avoid misunderstandings. In some posts, students also mentioned dialects that can be found within certain varieties so as to be more precise with the information provided. One last interesting category to highlight is education which was included in one entry. This groups emphasised the importance of that variety within education to foster integration.

Most repeated categories	Number of times	%
History (Origin)	14	14%
General information	11	11%
Pronunciation	9	9%
Phonology	9	9%
Video example	9	9%
Vocabulary/expressions	8	8%
Sub-varieties/Sub-dialects	6	6%
Accent	5	5%
Song example	4	4%
Grammar	4	4%
Series/films	3	3%

Most repeated categories	Number of times	%
Culture	3	3%
Curiosities	3	3%
Books examples	2	2%
Famous people	2	2%
New Zealand vs British English	1	1%
British vs American English	1	1%
Irish vs British English	1	1%
Irish vs American English	1	1%
Creole	1	1%
Canadian & American English	1	1%
Education	1	1%

Table 8: Most repeated categories in the blog

5.2. Impact of PBL on International Posture

This part shows the results obtained from the first and final questionnaire. This section is focused on analysing students' International Posture in order to answer RQ1 and RQ2 in section 6 of this paper. The items from the questionnaire were set out according to Yashima's (2009) International Posture subcomponents which are intergroup approach tendency, interest in international vocation and activities, and interest in international affairs (p.146).

As in section 5.1, the graphs show a comparison between the first questionnaire, represented in blue, and the final questionnaire, in orange.

5.2.1. Results from questionnaires

Figure 14 and 15 correspond to the subcomponent intergroup approach tendency. It is related to students' willingness to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Slightly more than half of the participants (55%) do not find it difficult to communicate with others using the English language. We can see an increase from 16% to 22% of those students who strongly disagree with the statement. However, the highest percentage, which is 29%, may indicate that students do not feel comfortable using English in international encounters. This could be due to students' shyness or level in the target language. There is not a significant change in participants' opinions between the first and the final questionnaire.

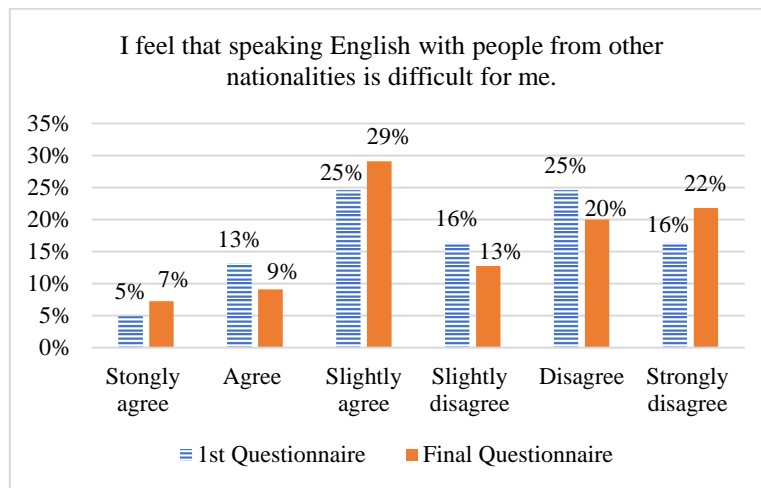


Figure 14: Item 6 from the questionnaire

In figure 15, there is a significant difference between the first and the final questionnaire. In the case of the results from the first questionnaire, 38 participants indicated strongly agree (62%) as regard their desire to use English to communicate. However, the results from the final questionnaire showed a change in participants' responses. Only 12 participants chose the strongly agree category (22%) after their project. Nevertheless, the majority of participants (84%) continued to agree to use English to communicate and interact with others. The change in these values may be explained by the different number of participants between the first and the final questionnaire, which was 61 in the first one and 55 in the final questionnaire.

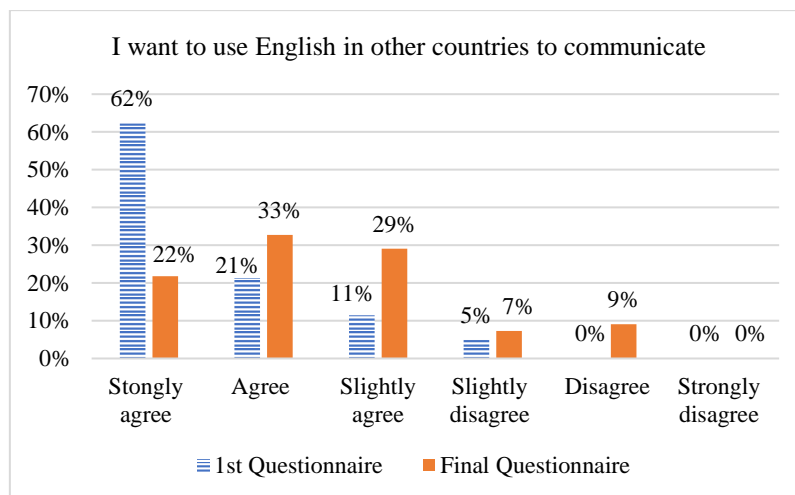


Figure 15: Item 17 from the questionnaire

Figure 16 considers participants' accent in the English language as one factor that may impede their interaction or restrict intergroup approach tendency. As the graph shows, there were not significant changes in participants' ideas. 64% of participants did not believe that their accent may limit their interaction with native speakers of the language. However, we cannot overlook that there was a considerable percentage, 36% of participants, who may not feel comfortable during encounters with native speakers due to their accent.

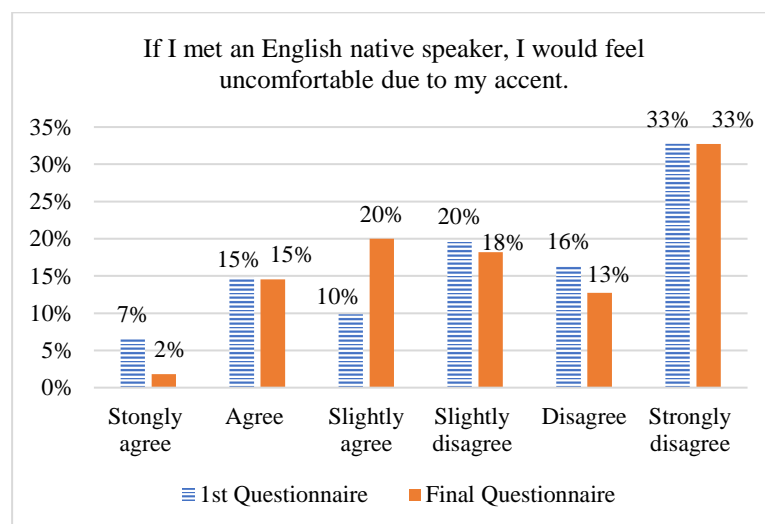


Figure 16: Item 7 from the questionnaire

Analysing students' interest in the international vocation and activities subcomponent, (Figure 17) there was a slight change in students' answers to the statement. In the final questionnaire, 33% of participants agreed, whereas in the first questionnaire, this percentage was found in the category of strongly agree, which was 34%. As can be observed, participants

would like to carry out activities or jobs in more international contexts before and after the project.

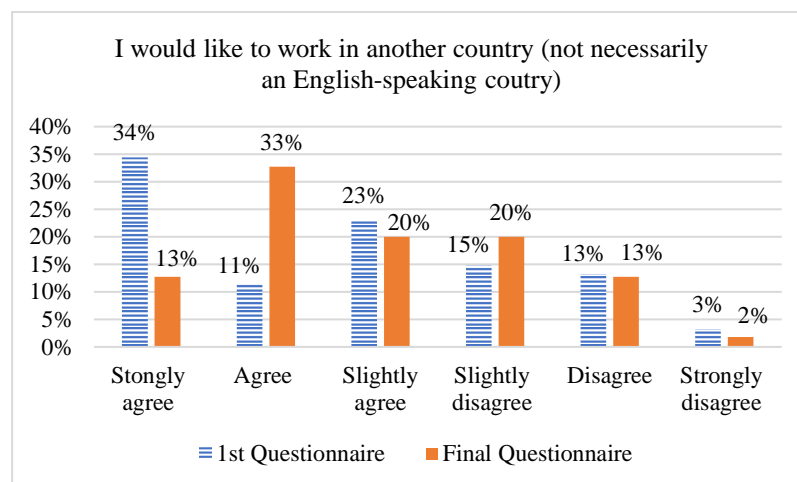


Figure 17: Item 11 from the questionnaire

Other activities that may involve interaction with foreigners such as sharing information about their own culture or traditions were also included in the questionnaires. In Figure 18, more than half of the participants (60%) maintain their idea of using English to participate in meetings where they state facts or information about their own cultural background.

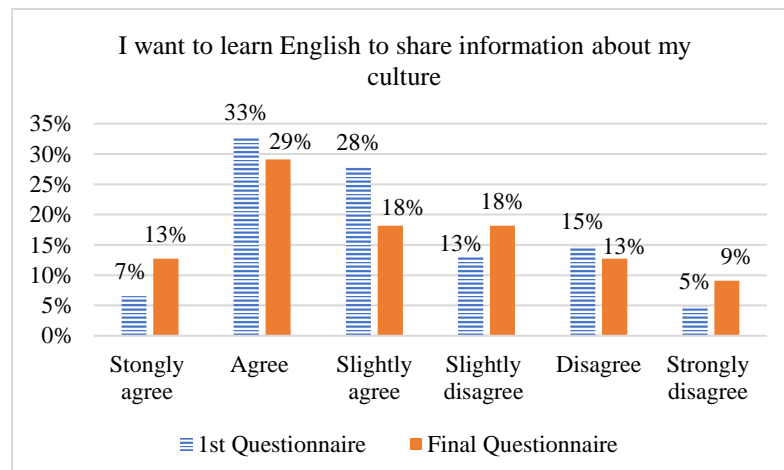


Figure 18: Item 16 from the questionnaire

The last subcomponent of International Posture analysed is participants' interest in international affairs. Figure 19 and 20 express students' interests in cultures, traditions, or events in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, respectively. Although both figures show similar results, participants' interest seems to be higher in international contexts rather than if it is exclusively restricted to English-speaking countries. After the students' project, 80% of participants, in Figure 19, agreed on learning more about international

affairs, while in Figure 20, the percentage was 82%. However, if it is compared to the results from the first questionnaire, the percentages decreased. 87% of participants agreed in Figure 19 and 85% in Figure 20. The difference between the first and the final questionnaire may be explained due to the difference in number of participations in both questionnaires.

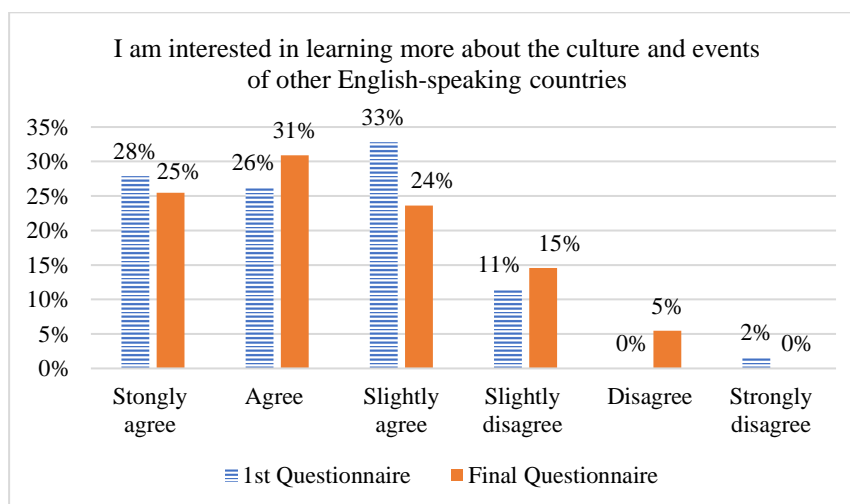


Figure 19: Item 4 from the questionnaire

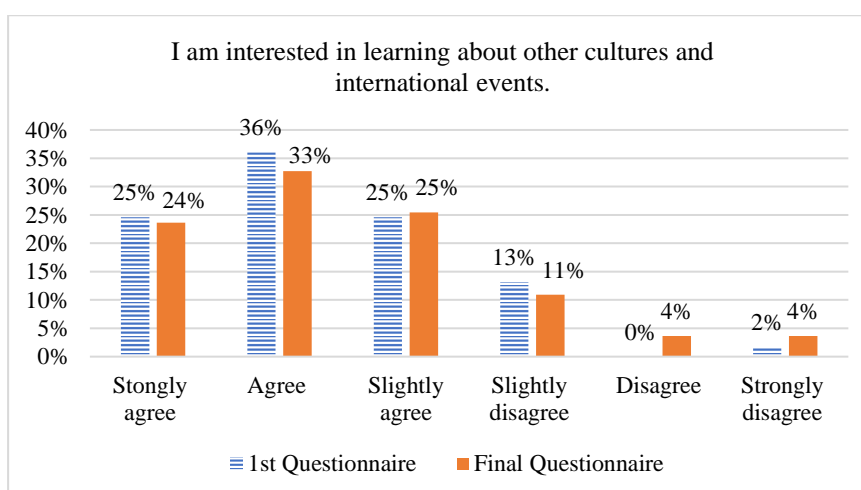


Figure 20: Item 9 from the questionnaire

Tuning to the data collected from open question from the final questionnaire, ‘*Has the project increased your motivation to interact in English with others? If so, how?*’. Table 7 summarises participants’ answers to question two. As it can be seen in the results, half of students were positive about the project and they were willing to interact with others in English after the project. Nevertheless, the other half of the participants did not respond as positively as their other classmates.

Yes	27	49%
No	28	51%
Total	55	100%

Table 9: Students' answers to Question 2 from questionnaire

Table 8 shows, some of the answers and justifications that participants wrote to clarify their reasons why they were motivated or not to interact with others at the end of the project. The reasons behind why they increased their motivation were various such as the opportunity to learn new expressions or curiosities they would take into account in future international encounters, or the increase of self-confidence in terms of pronunciation or understanding. The reasons of those students who did not increase their motivation with their project were diverse as well. Among their reasons, it is important to highlight the shyness to interact in the case of some students or the use of English of other students outside the classroom. In the latter case, this might imply that those students already had a high motivation to use English in a wide range of contexts.

<i>‘Has the project increased your motivation to interact in English with others? If so, how?’</i>
‘Yes, made me feel more comfortable’
‘Yes, because I want to learn more English expressions.’
‘The project has helped me to speak and practice English again’
‘Yes, because I know new words and it can help me to speak English with other people.’
‘Yes could be, I write rock songs in English, so I’m interested on improve my vocabulary and knowledge’
‘This project increases curiosity for other cultures’
‘No it hasn’t because I’m always motivated to speak English with anyone, for example I often speak to my brother in English’
‘As I am quite shy, it has not increased my motivation to interact in English with others.’
‘Not very much, I didn't have difficulties to talk with others in English’

Table 10: Examples of students' answers

5.2.2. Content from rubric and blog

The rubric and the blog were not directly focused on International Posture but on varieties of English. They were used in the project as tools for creation and assessment. On this basis, there is no clear evidence of International Posture in these instruments for data collection. However, within the content of the entries (see Table 8), students’ interest in foreign affairs is present in the following categories: culture, education, books, songs, and curiosities. With this

sort of content, not only did they analyse the variety, but they also showed their interest in other aspects that influenced the development of the variety.

6. Discussion

In this section, the results described in the previous section are discussed in order to answer the research questions formulated for this study. This research aimed to answer several questions so as to clarify the impact that PBL methodology had on participants' knowledge on varieties of English and the impact on International Posture. This investigation combined two concepts, which were varieties of English and International Posture, with the aim of increasing participants' knowledge of the English language while, at the same time, promoting the awareness of these participants within an international community, so that they are motivated to communicate using the English language.

This section is organised around the research questions which are supported by the evidence collected from the quantitative and qualitative study. Thanks to the data compiled from the questionnaires, rubric and blog, it was possible to determine if there was an improvement in participants' International Posture and knowledge on varieties of English. It was also possible to draw conclusions about the extent to which International Posture can be fostered through Project-Based Learning on varieties of English.

Regarding the first research question, *Does Project-Based Learning enhance International Posture and knowledge about varieties of English?*, we can conclude that the results confirm a slight enhancement in some aspects, especially after raising awareness on varieties of English.

Looking at Table 1 and Figure 9, we cannot conclude that participants increased their knowledge after the project because there is a slight difference in the results (89% versus 82% of participants who agreed). However, this might be explained by the difference in the number of participations in the first and final questionnaire. This does not mean that a considerable number of students did not remain convinced that learning varieties of English would be a benefit in their academic knowledge. This confirms Matsuda's (2003) ideas about the benefits of including varieties of English in students' education.

Where an enhancement can be observed is in the aspect of improving their accent and pronunciation in the English language. Typically, this is an aspect of the language that they

want to change because they do not feel confident when speaking. Before the project, 74% (see Table 2) of participants were worried about their pronunciation in English. After the project, they were not so worried about their pronunciation. In fact, the number of students who were worried decreased to 57%. This implies that participants changed their attitude towards having a native-like accent. The fact of knowing and discovering different varieties and dialects of the English language made students realise the rich variety that the language has in terms of accents and different manners of pronunciation. By knowing new varieties and accents, participants might have felt less concerned about improving that aspect of the language. The results of the project provide evidence that students dismiss preconceived ideas about pronunciation, and they are aware of the different possibilities that this new knowledge offers to them (Jenkins, 2006; Peterson, 2019). They understood the wealth of the English language and that people are capable of understanding different accents. Moreover, participants comprehend with their research on varieties of English that the different accents or dialects do not impede communication among speakers.

After having analysed their responses to the open questions, they seemed to have understood that there is neither good nor bad English and that this enriches their knowledge of the language. Their answers to questions one and three of the final questionnaire confirm that the project made them conscious about other expressions, vocabulary, grammar, and accent used by the different varieties. Therefore, this knowledge may help them to avoid misunderstandings in future international encounters, adjust their speech or negotiate meaning whenever is necessary (Farrell & Martin, 2009; Jenkins, 2006).

Although they learnt new varieties of English, 73% of participants still preferred to be taught following British and American English (see Figure 10). Two main reasons could explain this. The first one could be that now they are aware of the different possibilities that varieties of English offer, they see how complex it is to introduce all these varieties into the course contents. The second reason could be that they are used to being taught British and American English and they prefer it to continue learning the contents following these varieties.

Referring to International Posture, initially, participants showed a higher level of International Posture in each of its three subcomponents. This means that before the study was done, they already had a good perception of themselves towards international encounters or activities. If we look at Figure 15, connected to the intergroup approach tendency subcomponent, we can observe that participants' willingness to communicate indicates a high

motivation to use English in international contexts. This was confirmed by those students who answered open question number two from the final questionnaire negatively. They stated that they were used to using English at home with relatives or friends, which means that their use of the English language is not strictly reduced to classroom context. Therefore, it is easier for them to portray their 'English-using selves' interacting with other speakers of the target language (Yashima, 2009).

The first questionnaire also showed high percentages in those items related to interest in international vocation and activities. In the case of Figure 17 and 18, 69% of participants wanted to study abroad and 67% wanted to share information about their culture. Their interest in foreign affairs remained constant in both questionnaires. If we look at Figure 20, at the beginning of the project, 85% of participants were interested in other cultures or international events, while at the end of the project this percentage was 82%. Due to the difference in the number of participations, the results of these items in the second questionnaire were a little lower. But this does not imply that those who answered the questionnaire were less interested in international activities or foreign affairs. Therefore, participants feel connected to other cultures due to their International Posture (Yashima, 2009).

For all these reasons, the results obtained in the second questionnaire do not clarify if there was an enhancement of International Posture. In this sense, we cannot determine that the results are conclusive due to the number of participations and the short period of time in which the study took place.

In regard to the second research question, *How is International Posture promoted through Project-Based Learning on varieties of English?*, PBL offered students the possibility to create their project freely. Participants were free to choose their variety and to guide their project as they considered appropriate. This factor increased their positive feelings about the project because they had control over the content they wished to do research on.

International Posture is promoted by increasing knowledge about the changes that occur among varieties of English. Students are more competent in the target language because they will consider those changes in future foreign encounters so as to prevent misunderstandings. This implies that the more exposure to varieties of English, the more competent and communicative participants will be (Bieswanger, 2008). The project helped them to increase knowledge of the language which affects their willingness to communicate in international encounters. Their International Posture and motivation are increased because participants will

perceive themselves more efficient in foreign encounters. This confirms that participants who are able to portrait themselves using the language with other speakers are motivated to use the English language (Yashima, 2009). For example, if they know beforehand that in South African English they say ‘robot’ meaning ‘traffic light’, they may prevent misunderstandings and they will feel less anxious due to the knowledge of that variety. This suggests that students will be prepared for real encounters (Bieswanger, 2008). By knowing these changes, the perception of themselves is higher which will lead to a higher motivation to use the language because they are more competent or proficient in the target language. This competence will lead to confidence and they will increase their willingness to communicate because they will be aware of those aspects that may affect the flow of conversation. This corroborates the schematic representation, which relates International Posture to L2 proficiency and WTC, presented by Yashima (2009).

Furthermore, the fact of creating a blog as the final product for the project allowed students to delve deeper into the variety. They fostered their critical thinking and the use of HOTS to carry out the project (Ortiz et.al, 2016; Trujillo, 2015). Not only did they research linguistic features, such as grammar or phonology, but they also included historical background, the culture of the country or even education. Introducing these other aspects increases participants’ interest in foreign activities or affairs and improve their connection to other countries and people with whom they can communicate using English. By including these aspects, they avoid biases and ethnocentrism towards those cultures (Bieswanger, 2008; Peterson, 2019; Yashima, 2009).

Finally, the third research question, *If there is an improvement on International Posture, could it be related to studying varieties of English through Project-Based Learning?*, is difficult to observe to what extent this was accomplished. After having analysed the results obtained in relation to International Posture, it is difficult to confirm whether such improvement was achieved.

The results obtained in the first questionnaire showed that students already had a good perception of themselves in international contexts (see Figure 20). Nevertheless, it cannot be confirmed that there was a decline in students’ International Posture because there is not the same number of participations in both questionnaires. At least, it can be stated that the values remain constant after the project. Moreover, it is difficult to attain a significant change in students’ attitude after only six sessions considering the initial level they already possessed.

In general terms, there is no evidence of improvement for all the participants. But there is a slight progress in those students who answered positively to the second open question of the final questionnaire. They expressed their improvement in terms of anxiety and knowledge. Those participants who were willing to use English proved that L2 WTC is a result from the lack of anxiety and the competence in the language (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pietrzykowska, 2011). They felt more confident speaking in English after the project. They also wanted to continue learning new expressions or cultures in relation to varieties of English. Furthermore, the fact that there was not a clear improvement in International Posture does not imply that participants did not develop other aspects such as language competence or digital competence.

It may be that in order to observe an improvement in students' International Posture, it is necessary to implement this project during a longer period of time. The participants became more aware of the English language and its different varieties while, at the same time, other aspects were encouraged such as learners' autonomy or digital competence, since the project was carried out entirely following an online format.

7. Conclusion

This study has researched how varieties of English can be incorporated in class by following Project-Based Learning and how, at the same time, this fostered students' International Posture. However, the results of this study were not as successful as expected because some aspects did not develop as was intended.

The reasons which limited this study are also proposals for further action or investigation. Among these reasons, it is important to highlight the short period of time in which this study took place and the online format. As was mentioned previously, the expected improvement on International Posture was not accomplished. Thus, to obtain better results in this aspect, it would be ideal to extend the project at least one term or even a whole school year.

Moreover, the students' projects require interaction as it is one of the aspects expected to be improved. The emergency situation in which the study was conducted limited the interaction at some point, especially the interaction that occurs while working in groups. Online classes do not allow teachers to perceive this interaction. Originally, the students' project was designed to be done in groups of five in which each member would have had a role so as to promote interaction and Cooperative Learning. However, due to the current situation,

cooperative work had to be adapted. The group members were reduced to a maximum of three members and they were free to choose how many and with whom they did the project. This might be an idea for future study to observe how they would behave in bigger groups in face-to-face classes where the project would be easier to manage.

It is also worth mentioning the unexpected problems that arose using online platforms and resources. These challenges, which affected the progress of the study, would have been avoided if the present study had been implemented in face-to-face classes. Despite all the problems, the employed ICT tools allowed the study to be achieved with some adaptations from the initial idea. Moreover, the project itself is a useful tool for students and its content could even be improved and expanded.

There are other limitations to this format such as the lack of control over group work and its progress. This lack of control affected the number of participations in the final questionnaire. Since questionnaires were completely anonymous and I could not check who completed the questionnaires, I could not request their participation. For that reason, there exists a difference of six participations between the first and final questionnaire. This affected the results and it was not possible to obtain accurate values to determine whether there were changes in the aspects relevant to this study. Another aspect to consider for future research studies is to reduce the six-point Likert scale to a four-point Likert scale. By doing so, the possibilities are reduced, and the participants' choice and analysis of the results are simplified.

This study allowed me to incorporate PBL methodology in an online format while, at the same time, I introduced varieties of English in an EFL class. World Englishes are rarely used in English classes and doing this project with the students offered an opportunity to integrate this content in the syllabus. Additionally, teacher should advocate the implementation of varieties of English in English classes as it enhances students' knowledge of the language, and they become more competent when interacting with speakers of the language in future international encounters.

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9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix 1 (Testimonies activity)



"Last year, I went to Belfast for a month. I wanted to improve my English. Despite my level of English was good enough, I wasn't able to understand anything when I talked to villagers and local people. I felt frustrated because every attempt to speak English ended in disaster" Marie, 16. France

"Due to my Spanish accent in native-speaking English countries, I'm said that I speak and pronounce badly. I've been to Canada, London, Glasgow, Dublin... and every time I speak with a native speaker of English I feel judged because of my accent. However, it's different when I travel around Europe and I use English to communicate. There they don't judge my accent" Fernando, 19. Spain.

Testimonies Activity

Write your opinion about the testimonies.

- What do you think about Maria and Fernando? Do you think that their English is their problem?
- What would you recommend them to do?
- How do you feel when you read it?
- Have you ever experienced something similar?
- Do you think that these situations can be avoided by teaching varieties of english in class?

9.2. Appendix 2 (First questionnaire)

Students' questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning the Varieties of English. This questionnaire is for my TFM. This is not a test so there are no right, or wrong answers and it is completely anonymous. I am interested in your personal opinions so please give your responses sincerely to guarantee the success of the research. Thank you very much for your contribution!

I. In the following section please put an "X" in the box by giving marks from 1 to 6.

Please do not leave out any items.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I am interested in learning about varieties of English spoken in different parts of the world.						
2. Learning other English Varieties increases my knowledge about the English language.						
3. I feel afraid of speaking with others in English.						
4. I am interested in learning more about the culture of other English-speaking countries.						
5. I would like my accent to be more native-like.						
6. I feel that speaking English with people from other nationalities is difficult for me.						
7. If I met an English native speaker, I would feel uncomfortable due to my accent.						
8. I think that having a British English accent is very important.						
9. I am interested in learning about other cultures and international events.						
10. I feel more comfortable speaking with non-native English speakers rather than native English speakers.						
11. I would like to work in another country (not necessarily an English-speaking country).						
12. My main worry is to improve my pronunciation in English.						

13. I want to focus only on British and American English.						
14. I only want to learn English to achieve a proficiency level in the language (or get a certificate).						
15. Studying different varieties of English spoken around the world will help me to improve my proficiency in English.						
16. I want to learn English to share information about my culture.						
17. I want to use English in other countries to communicate.						

9.3. Appendix 3 (Final questionnaire)

Students' questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning the Varieties of English. This questionnaire is for my TFM. This is not a test so there are no right, or wrong answers and it is completely anonymous. I am interested in your personal opinions so please give your responses sincerely to guarantee the success of the research. Thank you very much for your contribution!

II. In the following section please put an "X" in the box by giving marks from 1 to 6.

Please do not leave out any items.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I am interested in learning about varieties of English spoken in different parts of the world.						
2. Learning other English Varieties has increased my knowledge about the English language.						
3. After doing this project, I am still afraid to speak with others in English.						
4. I am interested in learning more about the culture and events of other English-speaking countries.						
5. I am still thinking that I would like my accent to be more native-like.						
6. I feel that speaking English with people from other nationalities is difficult for me.						
7. If I met an English native speaker, I would feel uncomfortable due to my accent.						
8. I am still thinking that having a British English accent is very important.						
9. I am interested in learning about other cultures and international events.						
10. I feel more comfortable speaking with non-native English speakers rather than native English speakers.						
11. After this project, I have reinforced my idea of working in another country (not necessarily an English-speaking country).						

12. My main worry is to improve my pronunciation in English.						
13. I want to focus only on British and American English.						
14. I only want to learn English to achieve a proficiency level in the language (or get a certificate).						
15. Studying different varieties of English spoken around the world will help me to improve my proficiency in English.						
16. I want to learn English to share information about my culture.						
17. After this project, I want to use more English in other countries to communicate.						

III. Open questions: only for the final questionnaire.

1. What do think you learned by doing this project?

2. Has the project changed your ideas about English Varieties? If so, how?

3. Has the project changed your ideas about English Varieties? If so, how?

4. What did you like the most and the least about the project?

5. Rate your level of English:

☐ A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2

6. Select one:

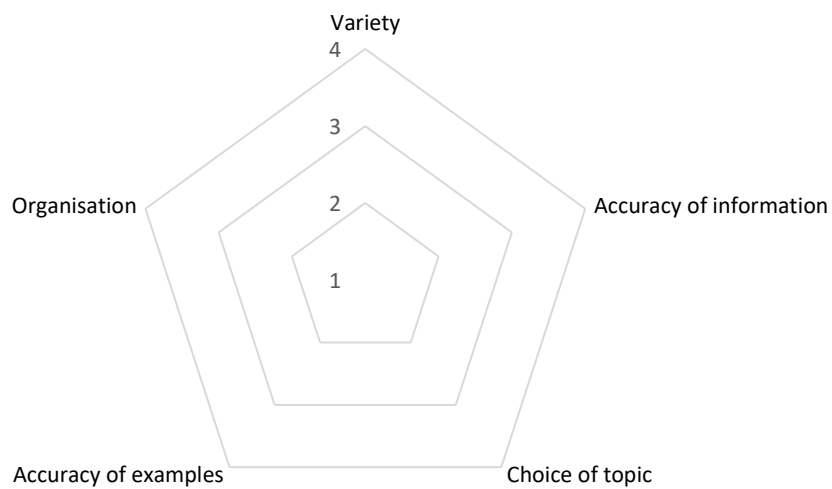
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ No answer

Thank you very much for your honest participation!!

9.4. Appendix 4 (Rubric)

4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Fair	1 – Needs improvement
Variety			
After reading the entry on the blog, I significantly improved my knowledge and interest about the variety/topic.	After reading the entry on the blog, I improved my knowledge and interest about the variety/blog.	After reading the entry on the blog, I improved my knowledge about the variety/topic, but no interest.	After reading the entry on the blog, I did not improve my knowledge about the variety/topic.
Accuracy of information			
The information provided focusses on the topic and is grammatically correct. All the information is covered. The information provided is convincing, highly adequate and related to the topic.	The information provided focusses on the topic and it contains a few mistakes. A few aspects of the information are not covered. The information provided is convincing and adequate.	The information provided is related to the topic and contains some mistakes. Some aspects of the information are not covered. The information provided is adequate but unconvincing.	The information provided is related to the topic but incomplete and contains several mistakes & errors. The information provided is unconvincing and inadequate.
Accuracy of examples			
There are a lot of visual materials which support the information. The group provide well-defined examples.	There are some visual materials which support the information. The group provides some examples.	Little visual materials to support the information. The group includes weak examples.	Lack of visual materials to support information. The group does not include examples
Choice of topic			
I found the choice of topic truly original and surprising. The topic is presented in a unique way.	I found the choice of topic original. The topic is presented in an interesting way.	The choice of topic shows an attempt of originality. The topic is not presented in an interesting way.	The choice of topic shows little attempt of originality. The topic is presented in a boring way.
Organisation			
The information is highly organised and presented utterly clear.	The information is organised and presented clearly.	Information is not clearly organized and presented unclearly.	There is little organisation. It is presented unclearly and makes no sense.

PEER-ASSESSMENT



Justify your answers and add any comment you want to highlight about the blog:

9.5. Appendix 5 (Blog)

<https://sites.google.com/view/varieties-of-english-ideo/p%C3%A1gina-principal>