

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

VARIETIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN LEXICAL, GRAMMATICAL AND SPELLING DOMAIN IN BOSNIAN HIGHSCHOOL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Classified as a Germanic language and evidently a common language, a lingua franca of the world, after years of development, English has formed a number of varieties differing in many areas, including vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and in some cases, accent. As a result of its widespread, it is crucial to know which variety is used, yet preferred by learners, and observe differences between them. Therefore, the current study aimed to examine the two most commonly used, often mixed, varieties of English, namely American English and British English, in one high school in central Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, we aimed, to see whether students are aware of the significant differences in spelling, vocabulary, and grammatical structure. In doing so, 50 randomly selected high school students were given a test consisting of written differences related to lexical items, spelling, as well as differences visible in grammar. The findings revealed that the majority of participants prefer British English, though they are not totally aware of the differences in the mentioned areas between these two varieties; as a result, they are frequently mixing them. Lacking knowledge about these two primary varieties of English would, undeniably in some cases, lead to misunderstanding; thus, teachers should pay more attention and give more effort to raise the learners' awareness of different varieties and their distinctive aspects.

Keywords: varieties of English, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, differences



MAP EDUCATION
AND HUMANITIES

Volume 1 / Issue 2

ISSN: 2744-2373 / © 2021 The Authors.
Published by MAP - Multidisciplinary
Academic Publishing.

Article Submitted: 03 December 2021
Article Accepted: 22 December 2021
Article Published: 24 December 2021



Publisher's Note: MAP stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

<https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2373.2021.1.2.32>

MAP EDUCATION
AND HUMANITIES
Volume 1 / Issue 2



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Ahmetović E. (2021). **Varieties of English language in Lexical, Grammatical and Spelling Domain in Bosnian Highschool Context**. MAP Education and Humanities, 1(2), 32-42. doi: <https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2373.2021.1.2.32>



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Introduction

As it is known, language is unique to human beings, and most individuals are born with the capability to acquire language naturally and undemandingly, supposing that their environment provides the proper input. Moreover, it is an essential human ability used for “creative expression, face-to-face communication, the scientific inquiry” (Gelderen, 2006, p. 1) and so forth. Languages are distinguished by whether they are mutually comprehensible, though this separation gets out of focus, and numerous linguists regard a language to be “a dialect with an army (or navy)” (Gelderen, 2006, p. 1), meaning that it is a political construct. Even though it is estimated that 6,000 to 7,000 languages are spoken worldwide, yet as a result of globalization, only a few, such as English, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and Hindi, are spoken all over the world. Generally, English, as a number one world language, is considered Germanic in origin, though nearly half of its words come from French and Latin. As a consequence of the political strength of the Roman Empire, Latin was expanded in parts of Britain and the European continent, having a strong impact on Celtic and Germanic languages during its time.

English history dates from the year 450, and it is generally divided into three periods, specifically, Old English (450–1150), Middle English (1150–1500), and Modern English (1500–present) (Qin, 1983). Holding an unprecedentedly strong status worldwide, yet with the rise of the USA at economic, political, technological level, it has gradually become spoken in every country whether as a first, second, or additional language. English’ as a *Lingua Franca*’ (Gnutzmann, 2000; House, 1999; Jenkins, 2007) or ‘as an International Language’ (Jenkins, 2000; Widdowson, 1997) is the most widely used language in education, newspaper and book publishing, scientific publishing, international business, and telecommunications, diplomacy, etc. Also, generally, 85% of the world’s crucial film productions and dealings use English, and 90% of the published educational articles in some academic area, including linguistics, are written in English (Rao, 2019).

According to The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (2019), the high rise in the use of English can be ascribed to educational, economic or rather cultural globalization. Even being a native of the U.S., the U.K., New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, Canada with approximately over 400 million speakers, it is spoken by more

non-English speakers, globally having over one billion more speakers. According to an estimation by Bailey (1991), 15% of the world’s population regularly uses English; nonetheless, Crystal (2003) evaluates that this number has increased to 25%, or 1.5 billion. Moreover, Graddol (2006) argues that as a result of China’s decision to require English as a mandatory elementary school subject, 20 million speakers of English will be added yearly. However, it is not easy to confirm these numbers considering the lack of agreement on how much English a speaker needs to know to be counted (Gelderen, 2006).

While describing the fast spread of English, Kachru (1985) proposed three circles, as follows, 1. The Inner Circle, which covers the speakers of English as their native language, such as citizens living in countries like England, America, Australia, and New Zealand. 2. The Outer Circle including the speakers of English as a second language in countries like India, South Africa, Finland, etc. 3. The Expanding Circle referring to the speakers of English as a Foreign language, which is the case in countries like China, Japan, Russia, Turkey. Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to this circle as well. Currently, there is a great escalation in the numbers of individuals acquiring and using English, but a more detailed investigation of motivators reveals that the increase in learning English is not as stable as it might at first seem. Concerning its extensive coverage all around the world, Graddol (2000) lists the significant international domains of English as follows:

- Working language of international organizations and conferences
- Scientific publication
- International banking, economic affairs, and trade
- Advertising for global brands
- Audio-visual cultural products (e.g., film, T.V., popular music)
- International tourism
- Tertiary education
- International safety (e.g. “Airspeak”, “Seaspeak”)
- International law as a “relay language” in interpretation and translation

- Technology transfer
- Internet communication

As a result of its widespread use, the existence of varieties of English such as British, American, Irish, Scottish, Australian, etc., is rather expectable. Doubtlessly, the most used varieties are American (AmE) and British (BrE), dispersed across all areas (Dubravac, Brdarević-Čeljo, & Bećirović, 2018), with quite a few major differences. Even though it is agreed and insisted that all languages and their varieties are equal (Wardhaugh, 1986), many individuals believe that one variety is more prestigious than others. Some educational systems require teaching British, including the Bosnian educational system, while rejecting American English as less pure. Regardless of the chosen variety, it must be suitable to facilitate communication, and learners should be aware of variations in the target language. Differences in English might occur in different areas, including lexical domain, grammatical structure, phonological, spelling differences, an accent which may be taught/learned in different societies. In order to avoid misunderstanding, it is essential for English learners to observe the use of other languages.

Literature review

According to Stern (1983), language in a social environment is closer to real life, but variations make the teaching-learning task more demanding. It is a universal characteristic of human language that speakers do not speak in the same way if they live in a different country or different territory even though they speak the same language. Crystal (2000, p. 78) states, "To have learned a language is immediately to have rights in it. You may add to it, play with it, create in it, ignore bits of it, as you will". Briefly, language is open to change, and English has changed in many ways. For example, AmE was introduced to America through British colonization in the early 17th century. Over the years, English spoken in the United States and in Britain started diverging from each other, leading to a new dialect. The primary development of AmE is the language people used in Bunyan, Milton, and Shakespeare. The Americans adopted many words from foreign languages and invented a large number of new words, developing their own variety. As Webster (1799, p. 69) wrote in his Dissertations on the English language: "The reasons for AmE being different from English English are simple: As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our

own, in language as well as in government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be our standard". For such a widespread language as English, it is quite normal to have a higher number of variations. The most well-known of these varieties are BrE and AmE which are used all over the world. BrE, or namely Received Pronunciation (R.P.), refers to standard English used in the United Kingdom, whereas AmE is General AmE which is spoken by the great majority of the American people. Countries and regions use those two representative varieties of English as their native language, second language, or one of the foreign languages. The following is a quotation ascribed to George Bernard Shaw (1912): "The England and America are two countries divided by a common language" (1). Likewise, In Oscar Wilde's popular short story *The Canterville Ghost* published in 1887, one of the characters said: "Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language" (p. 36). This further affirms that the issue of this two varieties was popular over a century ago. As a language learner, it is vital to observe the characteristics and differences at both written and oral levels. Crystall (2002) pointed out the plurality of variations by saying, "The only safe statement is that there are far more of them than are usually recognized." (p. 264). One of the most common distinctions shows itself in spelling of the lexical items. Firstly, In AmE words ending with -er have the ending as -re in BrE. For example, in AmE words such as *theather*, *center*, *meter* are spelled as *theatre*, *centre*, *metre* in BrE. Secondly, words ending with -or in American English such as *color*, *labor*, *honor*, have ending -our in BrE, for example, *colour*, *labour*, *honour*. Thirdly, In AmE words having one consonant in BrE have two, for example, *traveller*, *waggon* are spelled as *traveler*, *wagon* in AmE. Fourthly, words ending with -se in AmE have ending -ce in BrE, such as *defence*, *licence*, *offence* whereas these words are spelled as *offense*, *deffense*, *license* in AmE. Next, in AmE words end with -ize or -yze such as *analyze*, *memorize*, *organize* but are spelled as -ise or -yse in BrE: *analyse*, *memorise*, *organise*. Also, there are other differences in spelling. For instance, in AmE words like *ax*, *check*, *draft*, *gray*, *tire* are spelled as *axe*, *cheque*, *draught*, *grey*, *tyre* in BrE.

Spelling difference are followed by different world item to express the same meaning. While BrE covers the use of lexical items like *lift*, *tap*, *flat*, *sweets*, *biscuit*, *petrol*, *film*, *underground*

AmE prefers words like *elevator, faucet, apartment, candy, cracker, gas, movie, truck, subway*. Strevens (1972) devised two contrasting world-lists in his book *British and American English*. With the development of modern telecommunication, technology and with intercommunication between the America and England those words listed above start being used interchangeable. However, it is doubtless that the difference will remain because these two varieties have many sources of word-formation. Thus, there are some word items that have different meaning, which can cause people problems in world understanding. For example, *the first floor* in BrE means the *second floor*, while in AmE it is the *ground floor*.

Besides these difference at the lexical level, there are differences in terms of grammar. Grammatical differences are generally few and insignificant. In AmE collective nouns are always followed by a singular verb (e.g. *The team is playing well*), whereas both plural and singular forms of the verb are acceptable in BrE (e.g. *The team is/are playing well*). Also, there are some preposition differences (e.g., *on the weekend* in AmE and *at the weekend* in BrE). Furthermore, Br and Am English use the phrase: "Do you have..." but with different meanings. In BrE, "Do you have..." means Do you habitually have? For instance, *Have you a Dictionary?* whereas in American English it means Do you possess at this moment at the time (e.g., *Do you have a dictionary?*). In AmE, speakers use *gotten* as its past participles, while in BrE, the verb *get* has its past participle *got*. For instance, *I wish I could have gotten here sooner. (AmE) vs. I wish I could have got here sooner. (BrE)*

Other than those differences, there are some differences related to punctuation, dates, writing letters and e-mails, and so forth. The investigation conducted by Alftberg (2009) on Swedish high school students shows that the students preferred to use AmE than BrE although they receive English classes based on the British variety. He explains this finding with the students' high exposure to the American media. Another study from the Swedish context was carried out by Hansson (2010), who investigated high school students to find out which variety students used and whether they were aware of grammatical differences between BrE and AmE. The results showed that participants were not aware of used variety nor of grammatical differences between BrE and AmE. Furthermore, the research conducted by Di Carlo (2013), who examined 50 participants of native speakers of BrE and 50 participants of AmE through social networking

sites, shows that even native speakers were not totally aware of the lexical differences between the two varieties. Also, many studies have been conducted to find out whether accents have an influence on listeners' attitudes towards speakers or not. Accent can be defined as a certain form of language spoken by a subgroup of speakers of the language by phonological features. (Homles, 1992, p. 142.). According to Ryan and Bulik (1982), variations in the accent with which a language is spoken tend to be viewed primarily vs. regional (e.g., South American vs. North American), social class (e.g., upper vs. middle vs. working class), or ethnic (e.g., Black English or Spanish-accented English vs. Standard American) (p.51). As for studies carried out within the Malaysian context, the research by Zainab Thamer (2014) aimed to reveal whether Malaysian students of University were familiar with English accents and what attitudes they had toward native and non-native English accents. The sample included 120 Malaysian University students, and they were immersed in several speech accent situations to elicit feedback on their perceptions. The Malaysian students were seen to be able to distinguish between native and non-native accents, although there was much confusion between American and British accents. Furthermore, Khatib (2018) had compered the attitudes of 260 English teachers from India and Iran as members of Outer and Expanding Circles, respectively. Using a questionnaire, this study measured cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes of teachers toward their own English accent. The results showed that teachers in the Outer Circle, compared to those in Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1992), were in favor of endonormativity, highly favor their local forms of English, while they were in favor of BrE. Iranian teachers had an exonormative orientation favoring native-speaker and mostly American English pronunciation. The researcher Yaman (2015) at Ondokuz Mayıs University analyzed students' awareness of the major spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation differences between Am and Br English, which constitute the most commonly used varieties of English. Forty-two randomly selected undergraduate ELT students were examined. The findings yielded by this study suggested that the participants were not totally aware of the differences in spelling, word choices, and pronunciation levels between different varieties of English.

Considering the issue of learners' and teachers' awareness of differences between different varieties of English, this study focuses on an important topic and aims to investigate the extent to which high school students are aware of the dif-

ference between American and British varieties of English. The research questions of the study are:

1. To what extent are highschool students aware of the major differences between British and American varieties of English such as word choice, spelling, and grammar structure?
2. Which variety, British or American is used more frequently?

Methodology

Participants

The investigation sample comprised 50 randomly selected participants from a high school in central Bosnia and Herzegovina. A stratified random sampling method was employed, and participants were chosen from different grade levels. There were 30 female and 20 male students. The age of selected participants ranged from 17 to 18, and all of them had been studying English for nine years.

Instruments and Procedures

After gaining permission from the school's administration and the participants themselves, the questionnaire was constructed and administered by the authors of the current study. The participation was anonymous and voluntary, and the participants were given proper clarification whenever needed. To complete the questionnaire items, the participants were politely asked to read the questionnaire carefully and to respond to all the statements without leaving any out. 30 minutes were needed to fill in the questionnaire.

The participants needed to select the preferred version of the given items, i.e. the option common to either British or American variety, which reflected their preference for one of the two most common English language varieties. They were firstly asked which version of English they preferred during writing and speaking activities to see if they were familiar with different English varieties. The first part of the questionnaire also contained some basic sociodemographic questions, including gender, age, average English language grade; years of studying English, taking private English language classes; listening to English music, and so on. Furthermore, they were also asked different questions related to whether they focused most on grammar, writing, reading, speaking or listening in their English language classes or whether the teacher insisted

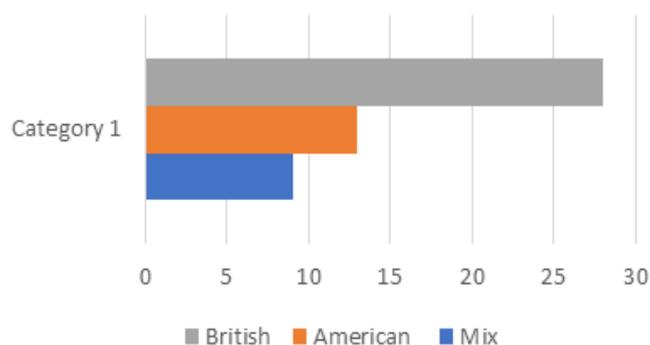
on using specifically one of these varieties (AmE or BrE). The second part of the questionnaire consisted of three subparts, the first subpart included questions related to lexical differences, the second one to spelling and the third one to variations in grammatical structures. The participants were thus asked to tick the words or sentences they used most frequently. Two versions of these words or sentences were provided, one common to BrE and the other one specific to AmE. The data collected from both parts of the questionnaire were analysed numerically through Microsoft Excel.

Results

Descriptive results

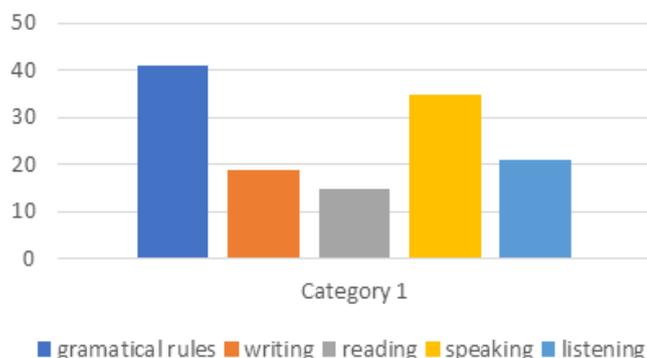
The descriptive results point to some rather interesting facts. Thus, the majority of the participants ($n=28$) stated that they preferred BrE, which is rather surprising since it is commonly believed that AmE is more represented among young people in Bosnia as they are exposed to it rather frequently, particularly in non-educational settings. Furthermore, only 13 out of 50 participants showed interest for AmE, while 9 of them reported mixing these two varieties (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Most commonly used varieties of English among the current study participants



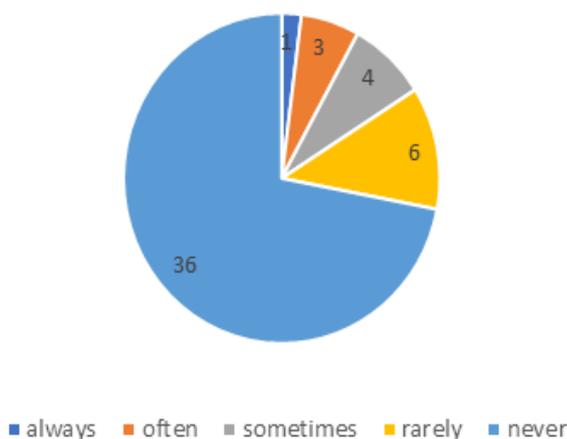
The results also point to the fact that grammar rules are frequently taught in the classes as majority of the participants reported ($41/50$), followed by speaking ($35/50$). The attention is less paid to other skills, namely listening ($21/50$), writing ($19/50$), with the reading ($15/50$) as the least frequently taught language skill (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Representation of grammatical rules and four language skills in English language classes



For the purpose of showing whether teachers insisted on the participants' use of one or another variety, the pie chart was utilized. The majority of participants, (n=36, 72%), reported that teachers did not request the use of only one variety in the class. However, there were a few participants who said that teachers often (6%) or sometimes (8%) insisted on using one variety rather than another, while 6 participants (12%) reported that they did insist but not so frequently (Figure 3).

Figure 3.
The teacher's insistence on the usage of strictly one English language variety, British or American



Vocabulary-based differences

As far as vocabulary differences are concerned, it is not surprising that the majority of learners seemed to be more familiar with American vocabulary as the American variant was preferred in 8 and the British variant in 6 out of 14 cases. The most

frequent usage of the British variant was observed in the case of three words, namely *football*, *holiday* and *CV*, which were respectively selected by 40, 35 and 31 participants as the preferred variant. Likewise, three American variants were selected as the most frequently used by the current study participants, i.e. *pharmacy* by 38 participants, *candy* by 37 and *trash can* by 34 participants. The American variant *trunk* was also very common among the current study participants, as 31 participants selected this option rather than the British synonym *boot*. Rather interestingly, some of the participants reported the use of both variants, with the highest frequency on the side of the American and British variants *apartment/ flat* (n=15), as well as, *resume/ CV* and *sneakers/ trainers* (n=14).

Spelling-based differences

As can be observed from Table 2, the overall usage of American variants seemed to be dominant (Br, n=131; Am, n=279), yet some participants also claimed to be regularly using both spelling variants (the mixed variety, n=90). This demonstrates that both British and American ways of spelling are largely represented in this EFL context. The most frequently used American variant was *connection* (n=45), followed by *encyclopedia* (n=41) and *judgment* (n=21).

Grammar-based differences

When considering differences in grammar structure, participants demonstrated again that they were not aware of these differences since the analysis revealed that they used almost at the same degree both of these varieties and the good number of them showed that they mixed these two varieties (AmE 161; BrE 167; Mix 122). Taking into consideration each of the given sentences, it was revealed that participants would use the American version that is present tense '*I don't have a cat*', as the majority of the participants 43/50 agreed on this statement, while only two of participants reported that they would use '*I haven't got a cat*'. Further, AmE seems to be used more when it comes to prepositions such as '*She studied French in High-school*' though differences were hardly observed. In reverse, many participants, 29/50 reported the use of British participle *got* (*They've got me into trouble again*) rather than American *gotten* (*They've gotten me into trouble again*). Interestingly, a convincing number of the participants confirmed that in some cases they used both versions, as in '*to talk with*' and '*to talk to*' (25/50), and *So, you finally arrived*. (AmE), *So you've finally arrived* (BrE) (20/50).

Table 1.

Participants' preference for American or British variety in the domain of vocabulary

No	Lexical Items	AmE	BrE	Mix	Lexical Items	AmE	BrE	Mix
1	soccer-football	3	40	7	vacation-holiday	10	35	5
2	trunk-boot	31	9	10	apartment-flat	29	6	15
3	pharmacy- chemist's	38	7	5	trash can-bin	34	11	5
4	yard-garden	20	23	7	fall-autumn	27	13	10
5	elevator-lift	18	20	12	candy-sweets	37	8	5
6	garbage-rubbish	25	15	10	mail-post	29	14	7
7	sneakers- trainers	18	22	10	resume-CV	5	31	14
Total AmE: 334		Total BrE: 254			Mix: 122			

Table 2.

Participants' preference for American or British variety in the domain of spelling

No	Lexical Items	AmE	BrE	Mix	Lexical Items	AmE	BrE	Mix
1	tire-tyre	10	30	10	judgment-judgement	21	18	11
2	color-colour	17	20	13	apologize-apologise	11	25	14
3	defense-defence	12	28	10	connection-connexion	45	2	3
4	inquire-enquire	18	20	12	encyclopedia-encyclopaedia	41	5	4
5	insure-ensure	16	30	4	honor-honour	16	25	9
Total AmE: 207		Total BrE: 203			Mix: 90			

Table 3.

Grammar- based differences

No	Grammar structure	AmE	BrE	Mix
1	I don't have a cat. - I haven't got a cat	43	2	5
2	Did you do your homework yet? - Have you done your homework yet?	15	23	12
3	My team is winning the match. - My team are winning the match.	19	21	10
4	The government has made a mistake.-The government have made a mistake	10	23	17
5	So, you finally arrived.- So you've finally arrived.	17	13	20
6	I'll get you home. - I'll take you home.	15	25	10
7	to talk to -to talk with	12	13	25
8	She studied French in Highschool. - She studied French at Highschool	19	18	13
9	They've gotten me into trouble again. -They've got me into trouble again	11	29	10
Total AmE: 161		Total BrE: 167		Mix: 122

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the two most commonly used varieties of English, namely Am and Br, to see if participants are aware of them and which one is more preferable. As this study is about the participants' awareness concerning written differences at the lexical level, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical structure variations must be considered together. The fact that the majority of the participants reported preference for BrE is somewhat expected since the Bosnian educational system is exposed to the use of BrE as a number of books are printed by popular publishing houses like Oxford and Cambridge. On the contrary, Alftberg (2009) found that high school students, even being exposed to English classes based on the BrE, gave preference to AmE, the reason being exposure to American influence via media. He also articulates that possible change in opinion towards AmE and BrE, which was evident in the examination, might be due to the fact that BrE was no longer observed as the greater superior variety. Further, although the communicative method of teaching comes to the fore (Bećirović & Akbarov, 2015; Mašić et al., 2020), it arouses curiosity that it is reported that in classes, participants are mostly focused on grammar which means that teachers still follow the grammar-based method. Similarly, Kovačević, Brdarević-Čeljo, and Bećirović (2018) found that participants were not pleased with the teaching methods and that they would like to place attention more on speaking and reading skills rather than grammar and translation, although some of the participants would like to keep this approach. This might be due to the fact that classes are limited and not all learners' proficiency overlaps; as a result, at least grammar rules have to be memorized. This being so, it raises the question if, in any case, or to what level, the current teaching situation, considering the curriculum, material used in the classroom, suits learners' needs. The noteworthy reason why teachers do not insist on using one or another variety might be facilitating communication since differences are minor and do not cause disruptions; in general, they allow interaction to proceed without misunderstanding. Since learners in the Bosnian context generally have positive attitudes towards learning English (Ahmetović, Bećirović, & Dubravac, 2020; Bećirović, 2017; Brdarević-Čeljo, Ahmetović, & Bajić, 2021; Dubravac & Latić, 2019; Ribo & Dubravac, 2021;) educators should adjust their teaching process and integrate into most beneficial curriculum activities (Ahmetović & Dubravac, 2021) for their learners learning preference, and on the other, and make

them aware of differences in the English language. With respect to the preferred use of vocabulary, it is found that the majority of participants gave preference to AmE, which is understandable as they have been exposed to AmE in everyday life, while British vocabulary they learn only in school. Apparently, this attests that participants are not aware of the differences between these two varieties of English especially considering that the majority of the participants reported BrE as their preference. Not being aware of these differences is acceptable for high school students since, as Di Carlo (2013) in his study pointed out even native speakers are not entirely aware of the lexical differences between the two varieties. Just the opposite, Modiano (1996), in his investigation, found that most observers of English recognize the discrepancies between BrE and AmE to be found in vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Due to these contrasting results, the significant rule undeniably plays English as the dominant language on the internet, which does not appear in the standard form and leads to the advent of a sheer mix of numerous English varieties with Br and Am at the fore. As a result, this exposure experienced by learners brings about real confusion. Under this framework, a particular usage can appear as part of BrE even though you consider it AmE or vice versa. However, the internet was not used previously, so this was not the case at that time, and for English speakers/learners it was easier to recognize the difference between these varieties. Further, the results yielded that American vocabulary is used almost double more than British and that should not be disregarded at this point. Thus, educators should pay attention and teach students American vocabulary every time they encounter a word in the text that is different said in AmE. Nevertheless, the influence of America and its English regions is everywhere; thus, the English learners in BiH, as in the majority of other countries, are brought into contact with American movies, songs, and many other areas in which America leads. Other than vocabulary differences, variations in grammar structure and spelling showed that participants use almost equally both variations; correspondingly, their poor performance in recognizing the differences among these varieties and their mixed usage is not a conscious one but rather a random blend. This further confirmed a general deficiency in the degree of the participants' consciousness of the two major standards in English. This study is in line with Hansson (2010), who found that high school students were not aware of which variety they used and were not conscious of grammatical variations among these two varieties, either.

As far as learners' awareness about AmE and BrE are concerned, the overall analysis shows that they are totally unaware of these varieties. According to Dubravac, Brdarević-Čeljo, and Bećirović, S. (2018), as a result of the difference in their demographic power and the educational support they get, these two varieties do not provide a balanced illustration in the peripheral year. Although most previous studies (Alftberg, 2009; Di Carlo, 2013; Hansson, 2010; Ledin, 2013) supported these results, there are studies (Modiano, 1996) that claimed different so that further investigation will be needed. Generally, it is essential to develop students' awareness of English varieties and knowledge of the differences between Br and AmE, especially when it comes to differences between its vocabulary and misunderstanding. Thus, for instance, students might be confused about some words meaning which are used so often in classes and the teacher should be equipped enough to provide satisfying answers in such circumstances. Modern technology has empowered teachers to study large sections of English differences; for example, the Collins Co-Build Dictionary is a direct tool to offer a variety of lexical items (Dervić & Bećirović, Yaman & Bećirović, 2016).

Conclusion

The current findings should help EFL teachers reflect upon variations in the English language, particularly American and British ones, as central standards, and overall teaching/learning process. In particular, the results obtained here should guide teachers to help students become familiar with English variations and teach them these differences, especially ones that might cause misunderstanding while interacting. Having comprehended the variations in language, other more relevant methods and materials should be selected and implemented to upgrade the current school textbooks with differences of both varieties included.

The investigation of the participants' responses recorded that they, even giving preference to BrE, are not totally aware of the differences between Am and Bri English in spelling, word choice, and grammatical level. Generally, it seems that learners appreciate more British, though American vocabulary is used about double more in most items, whereas only a few British words showed high frequency of use. Using almost equally both varieties in terms of grammar structure and spelling is somewhat difficult to comprehend, considering the learners' exposure to BrE in the classroom. Apparently, like most other studies, the current results

confirmed that learners were likely to lack awareness of differences between varieties of English. However, not knowing differences is, undoubtedly, not life-threatening, and many highly-educated American and British citizens may not have a good mastery of such variations. As the focus of this study was on high school students, not ordinary English language learners, it is not expected from them to know all these differences but rather to be familiar with them. Nevertheless, they are old enough, and probably their proficiency level has reached a certain level to communicate, so they should be aware of the existence of such varieties to avoid some problems in an interaction. Thus, it is part of the English language teacher's responsibility to handle such difficulties encountered by learners. The findings yielded by this study of the significant differences between different varieties of English (British and American, and if it is possible other varieties) suggested that more time should be allocated under courses like Vocabulary, Listening, Pronunciation and Grammar structure in the ELT curriculum adopted by Ministry of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An elective course titled Varieties of English language can be added to the curriculum as well. Also, there is an apparent need to explore the issue from different perspectives, such as learners' awareness of grammatical, lexical, written, or oral differences between Br and Am English. Furthermore, the teaching staff in the ELT programs should take every opportunity during classes to help their students gain awareness concerning the different varieties of English and their distinctions.

Limitation of the present study

The present study is, surely, not without limitations. Consequently, the results yielded by this study conducted with the participation of a limited sampling cannot be generalized for the whole BiH high school students. Further, with an increase in the sample size, the investigation would have been more probable to invoke different results. Secondly, the questionnaire was applied to peers and not to teachers, though teachers' comprehending of these variations play a crucial role as they are the ones who help learners to become familiar with them. As teachers were not included in the current investigation, the obtained results might not be entirely representative of actuality in an EFL classroom, particularly on the subject of teachers' knowledge about these differences.

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