Impact of a Thematic Writing and Communication Course on Students’ Perception of World Englishes

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ABSTRACT
A study conducted at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) assessed the impact of a Writing and Communication (WnC) course titled \textit{Genesis of World Englishes} on first-year students' perceptions of World Englishes, specifically focusing on comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness. The sample consisted of 48 students and it examined changes in their attitudes before and after the course to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention, with a particular emphasis on gender differences in perceptions. It delves into the significance of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness, considering accentedness as a hindering factor for Non-Native Speakers (NNS). The findings revealed significant improvements in students' acceptance of diverse English accents following the course, supported by statistical analyses demonstrating positive changes. Initial gender-based disparities in perceptions were also observed to diminish post-intervention, highlighting the course's role in promoting equality. The study suggests that targeted educational interventions can play a crucial role in fostering inclusive attitudes toward linguistic diversity, urging policymakers to consider curriculum reforms that integrate such courses to create more accepting educational environments. These insights advocate for embracing diverse accents, aiming to reduce biases and enhance communication among speakers of different English varieties in academic settings. It also encourages communication among interlocutors of various accents in ESL and EFL academic settings to occur without the perception of reducing students' accentedness to achieve a native like accent. Instead, ESL and EFL students should improve only those segments of their pronunciation which decrease their intelligibility and comprehensibility. The findings emphasize the significance of developing gender-sensitive approaches to ensure equitable learning outcomes. Future studies should expand sample sizes and diversify participants to explore the long-term impacts of these educational strategies further, refining language education policies and teaching pedagogy to better support diversity and inclusivity.

Keywords: Course intervention, Students’ perceptions, World Englishes, Comprehensibility, and Accentedness.

INTRODUCTION:
World Englishes
English serves as a global language, employed either as a first language or for communication in educational, professional, and social contexts (Ishaque, 2018; Suntornswawet, 2019). Its extensive use has led to the emergence of diverse forms shaped by the integration of various languages, cultures, and communities (Passakornkam & Vibulphol, 2020). Kachru's, (1985) pioneering World Englishes (WE) theory conceptualised these variations, illustrating how English adapts and
delves across different regions. The Kachruvian model, featuring inner, outer, and expanding circles, delineates the varied global utilization and purpose of English (Ishaque, 2018; Kang et al., 2020).

The proliferation of WE are a consequence of historical colonisation and practical needs, undergoing continual transformation through interactions. Passakornkam and Vibulphol (2020) observe that Kachru, further refined his theories to capture the evolution of WE from 1992 to 2004. As highlighted by Kang et al. (2020) the global utilisation of English is in a perpetual state of flux, yet the original 1985 model remains the most apt visual representation of how speakers engage with the language on a global scale. Limited exposure poses challenges for listeners from outer or expanding circles in comprehending a foreign World English accent (Hansen Edwards et al., 2019). The desire to emulate native speakers stems from the perception that non-native pronunciation is inferior and indicative of lower competence, particularly among students (Hsueh & Wang, 2016). Consequently, educational institutions often restrict exposure to the inner circle variety, emphasizing native standards (Saito et al., 2019), and students frequently exhibit a preference for native accents (Evans & Imai, 2011; Kang et al., 2019).

Exposure to diverse English varieties fosters positive shifts in students' self-perception and preferences towards greater acceptance (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2019). For instance, students in Thailand exhibited increased acceptance of their unique accents following immersion in a Global Englishes class (Boonsuk et al., 2021). Acknowledging cultural variations in the classroom effectively dispels challenges related to difficulty and proficiency perfectionism.

**Accentedness, Intelligibility, and Comprehensibility**

Perceived difficulty with WE vary among Non-native Speakers (NNS) on an individual basis. Limited exposure to these varieties may adversely impact the mutual understanding among English speakers. Jung, (2010) employs Derwing and Munro’s, (1995) theories of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness to gauge listeners' perceived patterns of understanding. These studies underscore the imperative of exposure to foster mutual understanding and respect.

**Accentedness**

Accentedness refers to the ease with which a listener comprehends a dialect distinguished by its unique speech sound patterns, contrasted with the local variety (Shintani, 2019). Speech properties encompass intonation and phonetic features influenced by speakers' first language traits and social factors (Huang & Hashim, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Pronunciation features exhibit both uniqueness and similarities across WE varieties, influencing how a sound is associated with our identity by both the self and others (Baron-Lucraz & Lee, 2021). Research indicates that NNS accents may be more intelligible to fellow NNS, but they frequently evoke unfavorable impressions from non-native listeners (Hsueh & Wang, 2016). Accentedness is assessed by ratings of speech samples (Shintani, 2019) or through analysis (Wu et al., 2020). In Shintani et al. (2019), listeners evaluated accentedness on a 9-point scale (1 = no accent, 9 = heavily accented). They posit that the challenges posed by accentedness can be alleviated through exposure to a diverse range of WE varieties, especially when there is a shared first language between the listener and the speaker.

In Hsueh and Wang’s study, (2016) participants from China, South Asian countries, and native-speaking countries assessed 16 Chinese speakers whose speech was acoustically analyzed for stress, tone, speech rate, and pauses. The results were then compared to those of British English speakers. While the study did not uncover significant findings regarding listener attitudes toward speaker competence, it revealed that accent did impact the overall intelligibility of the speech. Hansen Edwards et al. (2019) assert that comprehensive understanding may not consistently align with intelligibility or comprehensibility. Drawing from Hsueh & Wang, (2016) it is evident that the level of accentedness significantly impacts judgments of comprehension.

**Intelligibility**

Despite numerous attempts to define intelligibility, a consensus remains elusive. Suntornsawet, (2019) and Li and Hsueh, (2019) posit that intelligibility pertains to how easily a listener can recognise the speech or utterance they encounter. Understanding
the relationship between a NNS accent and intelligibility is crucial for delineating factors contributing to successful communication (Hsueh & Wang, 2016). A learner's intelligibility may be positively influenced by factors such as familiarity (Zhang, 2019) and shared linguistic speech properties (Suntornswat, 2019). The measurement involves transcribing spoken words at an average speed (Hansen Edwards, 2019; Zhang, 2019).

**Comprehensibility**

Li and Hsueh, (2019) conceptualise comprehension as the listener's understanding of a word or utterance within a contextual framework. Comprehensibility, assessed through a provided speech sample (Shintani et al., 2019), involves listeners evaluating the challenge of processing speech using rating scales (Foote & Trofimovich, 2018). For learners of English as an Additional Language (EAL), these judgments of comprehensibility can be positively influenced by factors such as their first language, familiarity with the language (Shintani et al., 2019), and robust intelligibility judgments (Zhang, 2019). A paucity of research endeavors to comprehensively explore the intricate dynamics among intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness within the realm of WE (Hansen Edwards et al., 2019). Existing studies often narrow their focus to specific elements, like comprehensibility alone (Shintani et al., 2019) or the combined facets of intelligibility and comprehensibility (Zhang, 2019), neglecting a holistic examination of their interrelation.

Furthermore, certain scholars delve into additional factors contributing to miscommunication, with considerations extending to cultural background (Al-khresheh, 2020). Within a multilingual classroom setting, the accent emerges as a pivotal determinant influencing the challenges associated with comprehensibility judgments, given the inherent interconnectedness of accentedness and comprehensibility (Hansen Edwards et al., 2019). Zhou & Papi (2023) investigated the impact of English-speaking instruction and motivation on L2 speech development among 83 Chinese college students over a semester. Through t-tests on speech samples, they found significant gains in comprehensibility and reduced accentedness. Hierarchical regression indicated that learners' Ideal L2 Self/Own positively predicted speech comprehensibility, while Ideal L2 Self/Other negatively predicted accentedness. The study suggests that learners' future L2 selves influence their utilization of instructional opportunities for distinct improvements in L2 speech.

**Perceptions**

Perceptions in the context of WE encompass individuals' subjective views and attitudes toward the intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of English spoken by speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds and regions. Kang & Ahn, (2019) explored English variety perceptions among 127 Korean university students over a semester. Using accented English speech samples, they conducted reliability analysis and one-way ANOVA. While no significant difference emerged in comprehension, preferences for Korean and American English were observed. Shifts in attitudes were noted through a perception questionnaire administered twice during the semester, suggesting implications for pedagogy in broadening learners' global perspectives on English language usage. Almsharraf et al. (2024) investigated the impact of High Variability Pronunciation Training (HVPT) on English diphthong pronunciation among 56 Saudi EFL learners. Using statistical methods like t-tests and ANOVA, they found that both HV and LV significantly improved learners' pronunciation, with LV without captions yielding the highest scores. Participants also showed positive perceptions of YouGlish as a multimodal tool. The study provides valuable insights for educators enhancing EFL learners' pronunciation skills.

Chachar et al. (2023) investigated the effects of intensive and extensive reading approaches on the reading attitudes of 220 pre-university English as a foreign language learner in Pakistan. Employing a pre-and post-test group design with a paired sample t-test, the researchers found significant improvements in students' reading attitudes and linguistic competence after participating in classes utilising these reading approaches. Learners perceived themselves as skilled and strategic readers, experiencing reduced reading anxiety and increased comfort with English reading. While intellectual and practical values remained consistent, the study suggests that integrating intensive and extensive reading approaches enhances reading proficiency and attitudes among EFL learners. Integrating insights from seminal works by (Hansen Edwards et al.,
2019; Shintani et al., 2019; Li and Hsueh, 2019), a discernible void emerges, particularly within the Pakistani academic landscape. While studies like Chachar et al. (2023) have made significant contributions by exploring the pedagogical impacts on English language learning attitudes, a nuanced understanding of accentedness, intelligibility, and comprehensibility in Pakistani tertiary education remains largely unexplored. This study, conducted at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in Pakistan, aims to address the identified gaps in the literature by investigating the perceptions of first-year university students regarding comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness in the context of WE. Drawing inspiration from foundational works, this study adopts a quantitative approach to fill this gap. By employing statistical analyses, including paired samples t-tests, independent samples t-tests, and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), the research endeavors to unravel the intricate fabric of students' perceptions at LUMS University.

The introduction of a Writing and Communication thematic course intervention (Genesis of World Englishes) designed to introduce the concept of different World Englishes varieties and the various accents focusing on introducing the inner, outer and expanding circle varieties. The thematic course intervention at the tertiary level is a distinctive feature within the Pakistani educational landscape that underscores the pioneering nature of this research. This intervention serves as a unique platform to explore how perceptions of WE evolve among students in culturally diverse academic settings. By focusing on the specific context of LUMS University and highlighting Pakistan's position within the realm of WE, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on language perception and pedagogy. Considering the gaps in the literature and the significance of understanding perceptions of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness among first-year university students, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Do the first-year students perceive comprehensibility and intelligibility more significant than reducing a speaker's accentedness for communicating before and after the Writing and Communication (WnC) course intervention?
2. Do the first-year university students perceive accentedness in English as a hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for Non-Native Speakers (NNS), and does this perception change after the Writing and Communication (WnC) course intervention?
3. Is there a gender-based disparity in perceptions regarding the intelligibility and comprehensibility of accents among first-year university students, and does this perception shift after the intervention?

These research questions will be investigated using a significance level of 0.05 to determine the statistical significance of the findings within the framework of the following hypothesis:

**METHODOLOGY:**
**Research design**
This study employed a quantitative research method aimed at comprehensively investigating the impact of a Writing and Communications (WnC) course intervention on first-year students' perceptions regarding comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness of WE. The research specifically considered accentedness as a potentially hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for NNS and explores gender disparities in perceptions.

**Participants**
Forty-eight students from both sections of the Writing and Communications course at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in Pakistan were involved in the study. Data collection was facilitated through a pre- and post-intervention questionnaire administered via Google Forms.

**Questionnaire Design**
The questionnaire employed Likert scale responses, ranging from 1 to 5, to gauge students' perceptions of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness. Participants were presented with options such as "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Additionally, background inquiries were included to assess the course intervention's impact on various factors.

**Tools**
Google Forms was utilized for questionnaire administration, facilitating data collection before and
after the intervention. Excel was employed for data preprocessing and transformation, including the conversion of Likert scale responses into numerical values. Subsequently, SPSS version 29 was utilized for statistical analysis, encompassing reliability assessment, descriptive statistics, paired samples t-tests, independent samples t-tests, and MANOVA.

Analysis and Results
This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a Writing and Communications (WnC) thematic course intervention on the perceptions of first-year university students regarding comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness of WE. Data collection involved administering a Google Forms questionnaire to 48 students enrolled in both sections of the Writing and Communications course. The questionnaire, conducted before and after the intervention, utilized Likert scale responses to gauge students’ perceptions, supplemented by background inquiries to assess the intervention’s impact on various variables. Post data collection, Likert scale responses were coded numerically using a 1 to 5 scale in Excel. Subsequently, SPSS version 29 facilitated data preprocessing and analysis. Reliability analysis, specifically Cronbach’s alpha, ensured the internal consistency of Likert scale responses. Subsequently, means of responses for each Likert scale item were computed, labeled as Before_intervention and After_intervention, with normality assumptions confirmed for these variables. Paired samples t-tests were utilised to identify statistically significant differences before and after the WnC course intervention, supported by paired samples effect sizes such as Cohen’s d and Hedges’ correction to assess practical significance. Further analysis explored gender-based differences in perceptions using independent samples t-tests, with effect sizes indicating practical significance. The gender variable, demonstrating normality, enabled the examination of statistically significant gender-based differences in perceptions before and after the intervention.

After identifying significant results for one dependent variable, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Prior to MANOVA, assumptions including normality were confirmed for both pre- and post-intervention variables. This comprehensive analysis in SPSS aimed to explore the combined effect of the course intervention on students' perceptions, considering both pre- and post-intervention variables. The following are the results obtained from this comprehensive quantitative analysis (using Google forms questionnaire data presented in appendices) providing understanding of the intervention’s effects.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of paired samples t-test for perceptions before and after the course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention</td>
<td>3.2833</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.36211</td>
<td>.05227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After_intervention</td>
<td>3.7192</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.30669</td>
<td>.04427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 provides the mean scores, sample sizes, standard deviations, and standard error of the mean for perceptions students that comprehensibility and intelligibility are more significant than reducing a speaker's accentedness for communicating, and accentedness in English perceived as a hindering factor for NNS before and after the course intervention. On average, students' perceptions showed an improvement after the WnC course intervention, and the reduction in standard deviation suggests increased consistency in after-intervention perceptions markers among the students.

Table 2: Paired samples t-test correlations of before and after the course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Two-Sided p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention &amp; After_intervention</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 The paired samples correlations ($r = 0.025$, $p = 0.864$) as seen in Table 2 reveal a minimal and non-significant linear relationship between students' perceptions. This suggests a distinct shift in students' perceptions regarding valuing comprehensibility, intelligibility over reducing accentedness, emphasising the intervention's effectiveness in influencing and altering their perspectives.
Table 3: Paired samples t-test significance results for impact of course intervention on perceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention- After_intervention</td>
<td>-.43583</td>
<td>46853</td>
<td>06763</td>
<td>-.57188 - .29979</td>
<td>-6.445</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals paired samples t-test results showing a highly statistically significant difference in students’ perceptions before and after the intervention, with a negative t-value of -6.445 (Mean Difference = -0.43583, Std. Deviation = 0.46853, Std. Error Mean = 0.06763) indicating a decrease in perceptions after the course intervention about valuing native-like accent over accents of non-native WE varieties. Table 3 indicates before the Writing and Communication (WnC) course, students often perceived native English accents as impacting comprehension. However, post-course, this perception diminished, along with decreased expectations for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) to modify their speech with diverse accents. Additionally, pre-course, students felt embarrassed about their own accents, affecting comprehensibility, but this self-consciousness reduced post-course, positively affecting their confidence.

Table 4: Paired samples t-test effect sizes for perceptions on course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Effect Sizes</th>
<th>Standardizer</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention- After_intervention</td>
<td>Cohen's d</td>
<td>.46853</td>
<td>- .930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedges' correction</td>
<td>.47618</td>
<td>- .915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 The effect sizes, measured by Cohen's d and Hedges' correction, were employed to assess the practical significance of changes observed before and after the WnC course intervention. For Cohen's d, the point estimate was -0.930, while Hedges' correction yielded a point estimate of -0.915. The negative signs in both cases indicate a decrease in perceptions after the WnC course intervention. The 95% confidence interval for Cohen's d ranged from -1.266 to -0.587, and for Hedges' correction, it ranged from -1.246 to -0.578. Table 4 shows negative signs for both measures indicating a decrease in perceptions about achieving and valuing native-like accent after the WnC course intervention. This large effect size underscores the considerable impact of the course intervention on the measured perceptions.

Table 5: Gender group statistics for independent samples t-test before course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.3800</td>
<td>.33157</td>
<td>.05861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.0900</td>
<td>.35191</td>
<td>.08798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 The group statistics reveal interesting insights into the perceptions before the intervention, categorized by gender (obtained from the google forms questionnaire data included in the appendices). On average, male participants demonstrated higher perceptions (Mean = 3.3800) compared to their female counterparts (Mean = 3.0900). This difference in mean scores suggests potential variations in how male and female students perceived certain aspects related to the intervention. Table 5 findings suggest that, before the intervention, there are gender-based disparity in how students perceived the course impact, with males showing more consistent perceptions than females regarding reduction of accentedness versus increasing intelligibility and comprehension. Additionally, the smaller standard deviation in the male group (0.33157) implies a more consistent perception pattern among males, while females exhibited slightly higher variability (0.35191). The larger
standard error of the mean for females (0.08798) indicates a less precise estimate of the mean compared to males (0.05861). These findings suggest that, before the intervention, there are gender-based disparity in how students perceived the course impact, with males showing more consistent perceptions than females regarding reduction of accentedness versus increasing intelligibility and comprehension.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test gender significance perceptions result before course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.743</td>
<td>28.549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 highlight a significant difference in perceptions between male and female students before intervention (p = 0.007). Despite no variance difference (p = 0.815), the mean difference of 0.29000 underscores gender's impact on accentedness versus comprehensibility and intelligibility perceptions. In simpler terms, the findings indicate that gender plays a significant role in shaping perceptions about accentedness versus comprehensibility and intelligibility before the intervention, with females and males holding divergent perceptions.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test gender effect sizes for perceptions before course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Samples Effect Sizes</th>
<th>Standardizera</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before_intervention</td>
<td>Cohen's d</td>
<td>.33833</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedges' correction</td>
<td>.34398</td>
<td>.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass's delta</td>
<td>.35191</td>
<td>.824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 The effect sizes were determined for comparing perceptions before the intervention among male and female students using Cohen's d, Hedges' correction, and Glass's delta. The respective point estimates for these measures are 0.857, 0.843, and 0.824, indicating large effect sizes. This suggests a substantial and practically significant difference in perceptions between male and female students. The 95% confidence intervals further support the statistical significance of these differences, with ranges from 0.228 to 1.478 for Cohen's d, 0.224 to 1.454 for Hedges' correction, and 0.146 to 1.481 for Glass's delta. Effect sizes for pre-intervention perceptions among male and female students were notably large signifying substantial differences in perceptions. The 95% confidence intervals ranging for each measure reinforce the statistical significance of these disparities.

Table 8: Gender group statistics for independent samples t-test after course intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After_intervention</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.6663</td>
<td>.29527</td>
<td>.05220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.8250</td>
<td>.31083</td>
<td>.07771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the intervention, some gender-based disparities emerged in students’ perceptions, indicating that females tended to have slightly higher mean perception scores compared to their male counterparts. These distinctions prompt further investigation into potential factors contributing to gender-related variations in post-intervention perceptions.

**Table 9: Independent samples t-test gender significance perceptions result after course intervention.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>-1.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.696</td>
<td>28.757</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically insignificant difference in post-intervention perceptions between genders (p = 0.091), with males showing slightly lower mean perceptions (-0.15875). Although not significant, this outcome indicates the intervention’s leveling effect across gender groups differences in male and female students’ perception of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness of WE.

**Table 10: Independent samples t-test gender effect sizes for perceptions before course intervention.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standardizera</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standardizera</td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Intervention</td>
<td>Cohen’s d</td>
<td>-.528</td>
<td>-.1.135 to .084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedges' correction</td>
<td>-.520</td>
<td>-1.117 to .083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass's delta</td>
<td>-.511</td>
<td>-1.130 to .124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect sizes for the comparison of perceptions after the intervention between male and female students were assessed using the above three measures. The point estimates for these measures are -0.528, -0.520, and -0.511, respectively. These values indicate a moderate effect size, suggesting a noticeable difference in perceptions after the intervention between male and female groups. The 95% confidence intervals, ranging from -1.135 to 0.084 for Cohen's d, -1.117 to 0.083 for Hedges' correction, and -1.130 to 0.124 for Glass's delta, encompass zero, suggesting some uncertainty about the true magnitude of the effect.

**Table 11: Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) gender-based test results.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>6.028b</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>6.028b</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>6.028b</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>6.028b</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilks' Lambda (Λ) reports a value of 0.789 for the variable "Gender," indicating a moderately limited effect on perceptions before and after the intervention. The significant p-value of
0.005 suggests a statistically significant difference in perceptions between gender groups, highlighting gender's relevance in understanding the course intervention's impact.

**Table 12: MANOVA gender-based between-subjects effects analysis.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<td>Before_intervention</td>
<td>.897^a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td>7.837</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After_intervention</td>
<td>.269^b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>2.978</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.061</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>446.516</td>
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<tr>
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<td>After_intervention</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.897</td>
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<td></td>
<td>After_intervention</td>
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<td>.061</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>.114</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4.152</td>
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Table 12 reveals pre-intervention, gender significantly influenced perceptions (F = 7.837, p = 0.007, \( \eta^2 = 0.146 \)), with 14.6% of variance attributed to gender differences. Post-intervention, the results reveal statistically insignificant gender differences (p = 0.091) with a small-to-moderate effect size (\( \eta^2 = 0.061 \)), suggesting 6.1% of variance attributed to gender. Overall, the intervention reduced gender-based perception variations.

**DISCUSSION:**

The findings underscore the significant impact of the Writing and Communication thematic course – *Genesis of World Englishes* intervention on first-year university students' perceptions of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness of WE. Post-intervention, there was a notable improvement in mean perception scores, indicating a shift towards prioritising intelligibility and comprehension over accent reduction. Furthermore, there was a shift in the students’ attitudes and improvement in their confidence levels regarding their own accentedness as they perceived it less hindering in their communication. The students post course intervention no longer perceive a native like accent to be the objective of ESL or EFL speakers. The paired samples t-test demonstrated a significant decrease in perceptions about reduction of accentedness post-intervention, supported by effect sizes such as Cohen's d and Hedges' correction. These findings align with prior research by (Kang & Ahn, 2019; Hansen Edwards et al., 2019; Shintani et al., 2019; Li and Hsueh, 2019; Chachar et al., 2023) highlighting the efficacy of communication courses in enhancing language perceptions and abilities.

Notably, gender-based analysis revealed statistically significant differences in perceptions pre-intervention between male and female students. However, post-intervention, these differences diminished, suggesting the intervention's leveling effect across gender groups. This shift underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in language education interventions. Moreover, the analysis reveals significant shifts in students' perceptions across various dimensions. Before the intervention, students often perceived non-native English accents as hindrances to comprehension. However, post-intervention, this perception diminished, along with reduced expectations for NNS to modify their speech. Attitudinal shifts were also evident, with decreased self-consciousness about accents and a greater emphasis on improving intelligibility over accent reduction among students. Additionally, post-intervention, students reported increased intelligibility of various accents of WE, fostering a more inclusive perspective and diminishing judgments based on accents. These findings highlight the multifaceted impact of the intervention on students' perceptions and attitudes toward language diversity.
CONCLUSION:
The study confirms the vital impact of the Writing and Communication thematic course - *Genesis of World Englishes* in reshaping student perceptions, enhancing understanding of language variation, and communication dynamics. The significant findings, along with substantial effect sizes, underscore the importance of tailored interventions to address language perceptions and foster linguistic diversity in education. Implications extend to educators, policymakers, and researchers, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve language perceptions and promote diversity. To ensure effective communication among speakers belonging to the three circles of Kachru, it is crucial to improve the intelligibility and comprehensibility of different varieties of World Englishes. Moreover, recognizing gender-based differences highlights the importance of gender-sensitive strategies for fair learning outcomes. However, limitations, such as sample size and short-term effects, call for further research to explore long-term impacts and address perception disparities. Future studies should focus on diverse samples and longitudinal research to monitor intervention sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:
This work was supported by the Proposals & Grants committee at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

Authors Contribution
Farhana Shahzad is the corresponding author who was responsible for the conception of the research, research design, tools selection and questionnaires design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation. Iqra Qayyum was responsible for data collection, statistical analysis and manuscript preparation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:
There was no conflict of interest.

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11) Ishaque, R. K. M. (2018). Empowering English speakers through diversification and
promotion of World Englishes. Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 9(6), 93-100. https://doi.org/10.7575/iall.v9n6p93


Appendices:
Following is the complete questionnaire that was used to collect data through google forms:

Socio-demographic details
Name
Email
Roll no.
Gender

UniversePG | www.universepg.com
What is your native city/village?
Did you do FSc./FA/ICS or O/A levels?

**Likert scale 50 statements for before and after course intervention**

The likert scale (1 to 5) where 1 meant “Strongly Disagree,” 2 meant “Disagree,” 3 meant “Neutral,” 4 meant “Agree,” and 5 meant “Strongly Agree.”

1. Before taking the WnC course, I was of the point of view that communicating with someone (NS/NNS) having a native like English accent could potentially affect my ability to comprehend what they are saying.

2. After taking the WnC course, I am now less likely to have this point of view that communicating with someone (NS/NNS) having a native like English accent could potentially affect my ability to comprehend what they are saying.

3. Before taking this WnC course, I used to expect that a Non-Native Speaker (NNS) should speak more slowly or use simpler vocabulary to help me understand them better.

4. After taking the WnC course, I am less likely to expect that a Non-Native Speaker (NNS) should speak more slowly or use simpler vocabulary to help me understand them better.

5. Before taking this WnC course, I used to find it frustrating when I could not understand what someone was saying or when someone had a native English accent.

6. After taking the WnC course, I find it less frustrating when I cannot understand what someone is saying or when someone has a native English accent.

7. Before taking this WnC course, I used to think that clear and accurate speech is more important than accent for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) when communicating with others.

8. After taking this WnC course, I still think that clear and accurate speech is more important than accent for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) when communicating with others.

9. Before taking the WnC course, I used to feel embarrassed or self-conscious about my own accent, impacting my comprehensibility in English.

10. After taking the WnC course, I feel less embarrassed or self-conscious about my own accent, positively impacting my comprehensibility in English.

11. Before taking this WnC course, I believed that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) who focus on improving their pronunciation and clarity are easier to understand than those who focus on accent reduction.

12. After taking this WnC course, I still believe that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) who focus on improving their pronunciation and clarity are easier to understand than those who focus on accent reduction.

13. Before taking this WnC course, I used to think that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) should prioritise improving their intelligibility and comprehensibility over reducing their accents.

14. After taking this WnC course, I still think that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) should prioritise improving their intelligibility and comprehensibility over reducing their accents.

15. Before taking this WnC course, I used to feel distant from my friends and classmates because of being judged for my accent while conversing in English with them in LUMS.

16. After taking this WnC course, I no longer feel distant from my friends and classmates because of being judged for my accent while conversing in English with them in LUMS.

17. Before taking this WnC course, I was of the point of view that it is the responsibility of the Non-Native Speaker (NNS) to possess a comprehensible English accent?

18. After taking this WnC course, I am still of the point of view that it is the responsibility of the Non-Native Speaker (NNS) to possess a comprehensible English accent?

19. Before taking this WnC course, I was of the point of view that it is the responsibility of the Native Speaker (NS) to gain familiarity/intelligibility of the accents of World Englishes?

20. After taking this WnC course, I am still of the point of view that it is the responsibility of the Native Speaker (NS) to gain familiarity/intelligibility of the accents of World Englishes?
21. Before taking this WnC course, I was of the point of view that English non-native speaking countries (ESL/EFL) are suitable for living and studying considering it requires less effort for intelligibility of accents and comprehensibility as compared to English native speaking countries (NS)?

22. After taking this WnC course, I am still of the point of view that English non-native speaking countries (ESL/EFL) are suitable for living and studying considering it requires less effort for intelligibility of accents and comprehensibility as compared to English native speaking countries (NS)?

23. Before taking this WnC course, I was of the point of view that English native speaking countries (NS) are suitable for living and studying considering it requires less effort for intelligibility of accents and comprehensibility as compared to English non-native speaking countries (ESL/EFL)?

24. After taking this WnC course, I am still of the point of view that English native speaking countries (NS) are suitable for living and studying considering it requires less effort for intelligibility of accents and comprehensibility as compared to English non-native speaking countries (ESL/EFL)?

25. Before taking this WnC course, I was of the point of view that I already possessed the intelligibility of different accents of World Englishes.

26. After taking this WnC course, I now realize an increased level of intelligibility with various accents of World Englishes.

27. Before taking the WnC course, I tended to judge people based on their accents rather than focusing on the intelligibility of their speech.

28. After taking the WnC course, I am less likely to judge people based on their accents and now focus more on the intelligibility of their speech.

29. Before taking the WnC course, I believed that my accent limited my opportunities in academic and professional settings, affecting my overall comprehensibility.

30. After taking the WnC course, I believe that my accent has less impact on my opportunities in academic and professional settings, positively affecting my overall comprehensibility.

31. Before taking the WnC course, I found it challenging to understand individuals with diverse English accents, impacting my overall intelligibility.

32. After taking the WnC course, I find it less challenging to understand individuals with diverse English accents, positively impacting my overall intelligibility.

33. Before taking the WnC course, I expected Non-Native Speakers (NNS) to prioritise accent reduction over enhancing their intelligibility and comprehensibility in those parts of their speech that resulted in incorrect pronunciation and were unintelligible.

34. After taking the WnC course, I no longer expect Non-Native Speakers (NNS) to prioritise accent reduction. Instead, I now value enhancing their intelligibility and comprehensibility, focusing on those parts of their speech that may result in incorrect pronunciation and be unintelligible.

35. Before taking the WnC course, I relied more on resources that focused on accent reduction rather than improving my overall intelligibility and comprehensibility.

36. After taking the WnC course, I now rely more on resources that focus on improving overall intelligibility and comprehensibility rather than accent reduction.

37. Before taking the WnC course, I believed that having a clear accent was more important for effective communication than having a unique accent, emphasising overall intelligibility.

38. After taking the WnC course, I now believe that having a clear accent is still more important for effective communication, I also value having a unique accent, emphasising overall intelligibility.

39. Before taking the WnC course, I had a positive attitude toward individuals with accented speech, valuing their efforts to enhance intelligibility and comprehensibility of World Englishes.

40. After taking the WnC course, I maintain a positive attitude toward individuals with accented speech, valuing their efforts to enhance intelligibility and comprehensibility of World Englishes.

41. Before taking the WnC course, the diverse World English accents encountered on social media platforms were intelligible and comprehensible to me.

42. After taking the WnC course, the diverse English accents encountered on social media platforms seem more intelligible and comprehensible to me now.
43. Before taking the WnC course, I found it challenging to understand speakers with accents different from my own when watching content in English.

44. After taking the WnC course, I find it less challenging to understand speakers with accents different from my own when watching content in English.

45. Before taking the WnC course, I believed that understanding different English accents was crucial for effective communication and comprehension?

46. After taking the WnC course, I still believe that understanding different English accents is crucial for effective communication and comprehension?

47. Before taking the WnC course, I believed that accentedness in the English language is a hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) in academic settings.

48. After taking the WnC course, I am less likely to believe that accentedness in the English language is a hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) in academic settings.

49. Before taking the WnC course, I believed that accentedness in the English language is a hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) in professional settings.

50. After taking the WnC course, I am less likely to believe that accentedness in the English language is a hindering factor (a significant obstacle or difficulty) for Non-Native Speakers (NNS) in professional settings.

https://doi.org/10.34104/bjah.02402290242