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The English language needs and priorities of young adults in the European Union: student and teacher perceptions

Graham Hall and Guy Cook



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Abstract

The rapidly changing communicative landscape presents challenges to ELT professionals and students. In the European Union (EU), as elsewhere, increased mobility, migration, and integration, combined with developments in online communication, have led to substantial changes in English language use and practices. Young-adult learners are inevitably most receptive to and arguably most affected by such changes, with potential implications for English language teaching.

This paper reports on the project *The English language needs and priorities of young adults in the EU: student and teacher perceptions*, an investigation into the contemporary English language needs of 18–24 year olds in a context of increasing English language use, emergent forms of English, and increasing use of new technologies for communication. The project involved the collection of both quantitative survey data gathered through a Europe-wide questionnaire for teachers and students, and qualitative interview and focus-group data from three specific EU contexts: Germany (a founder member), Romania (a later acceding member) and Turkey (a candidate member). The body of this report draws mainly upon the qualitative data, using it to exemplify and add depth to the quantitative findings, which are presented in the appendices.

The findings offer clear evidence that young-adult students and their teachers in the three contexts share generally similar attitudes towards English. They accept both different native English language varieties and non-native English as a lingua franca for communication; they recognise the need for English language proficiency for employment and study; and they emphasise the importance of English in online communication – perhaps the most notable use of English in young adults' current non-academic and personal lives – while also noting evident differences between 'classroom English' and 'online' or social English.

Consequently, young adults and their teachers identify a tension between learning English for real-life use, and teaching/learning English to pass a test, for further study or for future employment. Two possible resolutions to this tension were suggested by participants. In contexts in which students had fewer opportunities for communication in English outside the classroom, whether face-to-face or online, the preferred solution was to focus more on communication than form in class. However, in those contexts where young adults often communicate in English outside class (for example, online) and may be more familiar with emergent and non-standard aspects of the language, the best use of classroom time may be to provide more formal language instruction in areas where young-adult students are less competent than their teachers, to reduce attempts to reproduce contemporary, informal communication in materials and activities and instead to draw on students' own knowledge of these aspects of English language use. In this way, the ELT classroom would become a two-way exchange in which students and teachers bring together complementary sources of English language knowledge.

1

Introduction

Changes in the contemporary communicative landscape present challenges to ELT professionals and students. In the EU, as elsewhere, increased mobility, migration and integration, combined with rapid growth in the use and capabilities of electronic communication, have led to radical changes in English language use and practices, potentially making ELT approaches and materials date quickly.

Consequently, a gap, possibly generational, may develop, in which the practices of teachers, testers and curriculum designers no longer match the needs and wants of students – especially young-adult learners, who are inevitably most receptive to change. This demographic group is most likely to move into new communicative environments, speak new forms and varieties of English (Seidlhofer, 2011; Cogo and Dewey, 2012; Seargeant, 2012), engage in multiple language use (Kramsch, 2009; Canagarajah, 2012) and make heaviest use of new technologies and the new forms of communication they enable (Baron, 2008; Crystal, 2011; Tagg, 2015).

However, in order to avoid imposing top-down ideas about English in the EU, it is important to understand how teachers and young-adult learners themselves perceive the role of English in Europe, uncovering what forms and varieties of English students actually want and need, and when and how they use English. In this project, therefore, we sought the views of both teachers and students, aiming to uncover their perceptions of the contemporary English language needs of EU citizens, and the implications this may have for ELT in Europe.

2

English in the European Union: contexts and debates

Many languages are spoken within the European Union. At the time of writing (2015), there are 24 official and working languages within the EU (see Appendix 1), more than 60 indigenous minority languages and a wide range of non-indigenous languages spoken by migrant communities (European Commission, 2012:2). The EU has a stated commitment to maintaining this linguistic diversity, emphasising a strategy for multilingualism that sees a role for languages and multilingualism in support of the European economy, aims to encourage European citizens to learn more languages in order to foster mutual understanding, and enables citizens to understand and participate fully in the democratic institutions, procedures and legislation of the EU (Council of Europe, 2005).

However, within this multilingual strategy, the European Union is ‘increasingly endeavouring to operate in the three core languages of the European Union – English, French and German – while developing responsive language policies to serve the remaining 21 official language groups’ (European Commission, 2015). Meanwhile, the tension between a plurilingual Europe and the spread of English as a global language (Crystal, 2012) or the emergence of English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011) was recognised as long ago as 2002–03 in the European Commission reports ‘Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English’ (Truchot, 2002) and ‘Key aspects in the use of English in Europe’ (Breibach, 2003). No other European language has been the focus of such discussion, debate, and, indeed, concern.

2.1 The spread of English in Europe

The recent spread of English in Europe is part of a wider trend of English use and learning around the world (Phillipson, 2007). Most contemporary accounts of this spread note the links between English and globalisation (e.g. Graddol, 2006; Pennycook, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011), a continuing process in which there is a ‘widening, deepening and speeding up’ (Held et al., 1999: 2) of worldwide interconnectedness in the social, cultural, economic and political realms of present-day life. Such interconnectedness is realised through ‘flows’

and ‘networks’ (*ibid.*: 16) of goods and money, of people (as migrants and tourists) and of information (through online technologies). And implicit in these flows is English, in its role as a global lingua franca, consequently making the language ‘like no other in its current role internationally due to the extent of its geographical spread, the enormous cultural diversity of its users, and for the huge range of domains in which it is deployed’ (Dewey, 2007: 333).

Additionally, within the EU itself, English features prominently in the twin processes of integration and closer union (Phillipson, 2007) in both formal and institutional domains, and also in social and informal realms of communication. Berns (2009), for example, documents how English fulfils four broad purposes for its users:

- innovative, e.g. creative English language use in advertising, but also in popular music, films and games, and online blogs and chat, or messaging
- interpersonal, e.g. travelling, socialising; using English might also be seen as prestigious, apparently demonstrating educational achievement
- instrumental, e.g. in the development of an English medium education to attract students from both within and beyond Europe to EU universities
- institutional (or administrative), e.g. as a designated official language of the EU (see above), and as the default language in inter-governmental, private and third-sector meetings.

Clearly, therefore, English use in Europe entails more than face-to-face contact, also involving mass communication and media (Berns, *ibid.*). Indeed, the extent to which English is spoken (and written) in EU citizens’ public, professional and private lives has prompted Phillipson (2007: 125) to ask whether English is ‘no longer a foreign language in Europe’ (Phillipson, *ibid.*). He makes clear his concern, however, that the learning and use of English in Europe should be an ‘additive’ process, ‘one which increases the competence of individuals and the society’ in a multilingual world, rather than ‘subtractive’, whereby English ‘threatens’ other languages (*ibid.*: 126) or hinders multilingualism in Europe.

2.2 Who speaks English in the EU?

It is notoriously difficult to estimate the number of English speakers in the world, or within a world region. What level of proficiency is necessary to be considered an ‘English speaker’? Should speakers of all varieties of English be considered, including, for example, pidgins or creoles, or, for that matter, UK varieties such as Doric, the mid-northern Scots dialect? And how can comprehensive data be gathered when, in some contexts, estimates are not available (Crystal, 2012), and the growth in the number of English speakers in the world, and in the EU, is so rapid?

However, in a recent representative survey of 27,500 people aged 15 and over (European Commission, 2012), 33 per cent of EU citizens who do not speak English as their mother tongue reported that they can speak English well enough to hold a conversation (compared to 12 per cent for French and 11 per cent for German). This figure hides some variation within the EU, of course, with respondents in the Netherlands (90 per cent Malta) (89 per cent), Denmark and Sweden (86 per cent) particularly likely to speak English as a foreign language, followed by those in Cyprus and Austria (73 per cent in each) and Finland (70 per cent). Meanwhile, English is the most widely used second or foreign language, with 25 per cent of respondents saying that they can follow radio or television news in English (compared to seven per cent for French and for German), and a similar proportion suggesting they can read a newspaper or magazine in English (compared to seven per cent for French, six per cent for German), and can use English online (five per cent for French and for German). Interestingly, approximately 41 per cent of younger people (aged 15–34) in Europe speak English in addition to their mother tongue, this figure dropping to 25 per cent for respondents aged 55 and above (European Commission, 2012).

Given the status of English in Europe, these figures are perhaps unsurprising, and yet they raise a series of interesting questions concerning European citizens’ attitudes to English, and to other languages. In the same 2012 European Commission survey, 67 per cent of participants considered English to be one of the two most useful languages for themselves (apart from their own language); this compares with 17 per cent for German, 16 per cent for French, 14 per cent for Spanish and six per cent for Chinese. Meanwhile, 79 per cent of Europeans considered English as one of the most useful languages for the future of their children (compared to 20 per cent each for French and German, 16 per cent for Spanish, and 14 per cent for Chinese). Thus, English is the language people ‘need’, and is seen as the ‘language of opportunity’.

Yet central to the discussion surrounding English in the EU (and indeed in the world more generally) is the extent to which students need or are compelled to learn the language. In his exploration of the role of English in the EU and China, Johnson (2009: 132–133) comments on the view of his participants that ‘English is the language of the world; we must learn it to succeed’:

Where these respondents differed was in whether they said it with a hopeful smile on their face or with hints of resentment in their eyes.

Thus, while Graddol (2006) suggests that English is the de facto lingua franca of Europe, it is possible, as Phillipson (2003) claims, that the dominance of English may cause resentment among some individuals, organisations and institutions. Additionally, in this changing landscape of English in Europe, non-native speakers may need to navigate between notions of ‘need’ and/or ‘opportunity’ (via English) and identity (expressed through their L1/own-language, and indeed, also through English) (Graddol, 1996; Norton, 1997).

2.3 ELT in the EU: issues and dilemmas

The trends outlined above, of globalisation, widespread English language use in the EU, and the increasing recognition that non-native speakers of English have long outnumbered native speakers both globally and in Europe (Crystal, 2012), have led to increasing discussion of the potential misalignment between upholding ‘standard’ native-speaker English as a goal for English language teaching and learning, and the realities of non-native speaker use of English as a lingua franca (Kohn, 2011; De Houwer and Wilton, 2011). Here, English as a lingua franca (ELF) can be defined as ‘any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). ELF communication may differ from native-speaker norms, but facilitates successful communication while accommodating English language variation and the manifestation of speakers’ linguistic and cultural identities.

Dewey (2007) suggests that ‘mainstream ELT’ continues to teach English according to native-speaker norms, perceiving no need for significant change despite the changing patterns and trends of English use among learners and non-English L1 speakers. Modiano (2009: 59), however, suggests that, as ELT practitioners within the EU struggle to come to terms with the internationalisation of language teaching and learning, there is a recognition that the goal of ELT is cross-cultural communicative competence (Zhu Hua, 2014), and that learners are no longer learning English

primarily to speak with native speakers. Yet while there is an understanding that English is now 'a heterogeneous entity',

few practitioners have as yet been able to devise methods and curricula that can act as a basis for teaching with such an understanding as a guiding principle. There is a lack of consensus as to how English should be taught and learned, and certainly less agreement over which educational norm is best suited to represent English in the new era. (Modiano, 2009: 59).

Modiano (*ibid.*) argues strongly that both EU policy towards English and European ELT should be developed within an ELF framework that develops cross-cultural communicative competence and the expression of speaker identity within English, which he sees as appropriate for Europe and, indeed, the globalised world.

Meanwhile, as part of the EU's multilingual strategy, and with particular relevance to debates surrounding the teaching and learning of English, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) aims to provide a common basis for the development of language syllabuses, assessment and materials within the EU by outlining the skills and knowledge learners need in order to be able to 'act effectively' on a 'life-long basis' (2001: 1). Indeed, although in place for only 13 years, the influence of the CEFR has extended beyond Europe and may become a global benchmark for the description of language teaching objectives, content and methods (Valax, 2011). While the CEFR applies to the teaching and learning of all languages, the status and reach of English within Europe make the relationship between the CEFR and English particularly interesting and, indeed, potentially problematic. As Leung (2013) points out, it is difficult for a single framework to accommodate the psychological and pedagogical challenges posed by the spread of English in the early 21st century as well as the accompanying changes to the language – a point also recognised by the CEFR document itself. Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of learners' priorities and needs in this changing context, students can be conceptualised as social agents, i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action (CEFR, 2001; Norton Pierce, 1995).

Consequently, a number of related questions can be identified. What are the implications of the developments outlined above for ELT, in particular, the relationship between classroom practices and young-adult students' perceived English language needs and priorities in the changing context of EU language use. To what extent, for example, can and should the ELT classroom be a multilingual speech community (Blyth, 1995; Edstrom, 2006) that might replicate the way English language learners use English and other languages beyond the classroom? What might this mean for English language syllabi, materials and classroom pedagogy, including the accommodation of new forms of English and the use of learners' own language(s) in class (Cook, 2010; Hall and Cook, 2012; 2013)? And what might the consequences of increasingly rapid change beyond the ELT classroom be for ELT practitioners and other stakeholders within the EU?

2.4 Justification for the study

To summarise, therefore, a gap, possibly generational, may have developed in which the practices of teachers, testers and curriculum designers no longer matches the needs and wants of students – especially young-adult learners, who are inevitably most receptive to the changing linguistic context of the EU. This demographic group is the most likely to move into new communicative environments, speak new forms and varieties of English, engage in multiple language use and make heaviest use of new technologies and the new forms of communication they enable. What, therefore, are the perceived English language needs and priorities of young adults in the EU?

3

Research methodology

3.1 Aims and research questions

The project aimed to investigate teachers' and young-adult learners' perceptions of the contemporary English language needs of young-adult EU citizens in a context of increasing English language use in Europe, emergent forms of English, multiple language use and increasing use of new technologies and new forms of communication. The study aimed to consider the implications of these perceptions for approaches to English language teaching and learning in the EU.

Consequently, the study addressed the following research questions (RQs):

1. How do 18–24-year-old ELT students and their teachers in the EU perceive young adults' English language needs and priorities, in particular in relation to:
 - a. appropriate models of English
 - b. online communication
 - c. cultural and linguistic identity?
2. Is there a gap between students and teachers with regard to these perceived needs and priorities?
3. Do students' and teachers' perceptions of English language needs and priorities differ in founder, recently acceding and candidate EU members?
4. What are the implications of RQs 1–3 for ELT professionals in the EU?

3.2 Research design

The project explored EU-based English language teachers' and students' own perspectives on how young adults use English, the varieties of English they need, and what they need English for, both now and in their future lives. Pursuing a multi-method strategy (Borg, 2009; Hall and Cook, 2013), we collected and analysed first quantitative data collected through two questionnaires (circulated to English language teachers and to young-adult learners respectively, across both the EU and non-EU member countries in Europe), then qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews (with teachers) and focus-groups (with young-adult learners) in three case-study countries – one EU founder member (Germany), one later accession country (Romania) and one candidate member (Turkey). These countries were selected in order to explore the extent to which perceived English language needs and priorities are associated with EU membership status.

The generation of the three kinds of data went some way towards mitigating objections to the limitations associated with questionnaires (Oppenheim, 1992), interviews (Talmy and Richards, 2011) and focus groups (Bloor et al., 2001) when any of these are conducted in isolation: we could verify findings from three perspectives, and add depth to and illustrate broad trends from the questionnaire data via the interview and focus-group responses, as we sought to explore in more detail why specific survey questions had been answered in particular ways.

a. Teacher and student questionnaires

Questionnaires have numerous strengths but also some limitations, as outlined by, for example, Dörnyei (2003; 2007), Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) and Hall and Cook (2013). They can be administered across large and geographically varied samples, generating data that is relatively straightforward to analyse. However, they require careful design to ensure their reliability and validity, and to avoid collecting superficial responses from unmotivated participants.

Consequently, when designing our own questionnaires, one for teachers and another for young-adult students (aged 18–24), it was important to ensure that individual items were well-constructed and clear for participants, and that the surveys as a whole were ‘relevant, interesting, professional-looking and easy to complete’ (Borg and Busaidi, 2012: 221).

Thus, our two questionnaires were developed in parallel over a three-month period, first by identifying key issues in the literature surrounding English in the EU (see Section 2), and then developing questions that were relevant to the project’s aims and research questions. In effect, therefore, both questionnaires addressed the same debates surrounding English, although questions were framed to correspond to each group of participants. Key issues that were investigated included:

- young adults’ perceived English language needs
- young adults’ reasons for learning English, and the ways in which they use English outside the English language classroom
- the relationship between using English and young adults’ sense of identity
- the relationship between young adults’ English language needs and ELT materials and methodologies.

Relevant biographical data was also required in order to understand participants’ professional (for teachers) or learning (for students) contexts, including their location, type of school or institution, and professional qualifications and experience (for teachers) or time spent studying English (for students).

Questions were constructed to avoid ambiguity and redundancy while drawing upon a range of easy-to-complete formats. Closed questions, for example, took the form of Likert rating scales, rank ordering configurations and checklists, while open-ended questions enabled participants to provide written qualitative comments in addition to the quantitative closed-question data (see Dörnyei 2003 for further discussion). Both questionnaires were piloted, with 13 teachers working in ten European countries and with six students living in four countries (teachers who participated in the pilot were known to the researchers through their professional contacts; students were contacted via participating teachers). Consequently, revisions were undertaken, in particular to the wording and format of two specific questions, with minor changes made to the surveys’ length and structure.

Organised in six main subsections, the final version of both questionnaires therefore constituted five multi-part Likert scale items, two rank ordering questions and one checklist item, with four ‘additional comment’ questions enabling participants to add further detail to their closed-question responses. Thirteen shorter questions established participants’ biographical and contextual data, while a final question asked participants whether they would like to receive a copy of the study’s final report. The average time for completion of both surveys (based around pilot-study feedback) was 15–20 minutes. (See Appendices 3 and 4 for each questionnaire).

When administering the questionnaire for teachers, the only criterion for participation was that respondents were: (1) practising English language teachers (this deliberately broad criterion includes those who both teach language and train teachers, who teach and manage, who teach only English or who teach English via content-based approaches etc.); and (2) working in Europe, whether within the EU’s 28 full member countries, its candidate or potential candidate Countries (five and three countries respectively) or in other European, but non-EU countries; for a full listing of all 36 EU-aligned countries, see Appendix 2. This enabled us to explore the extent to which perceived English language needs and priorities are associated with EU membership status (Research Question 3, see above). Data was collected via non-probability opportunity sampling, teachers being contacted

with the co-operation of the British Council and national and regional teachers' associations, and via the researchers' own professional network of contacts across the EU and associated countries. The survey was mainly administered via the SurveyMonkey online platform, although it was also available to participants via email and hard-copy versions in order that teachers with more limited online access could participate.

For young-adult students, the criterion for participation was that respondents were English language learners (either in an institutional setting and/or less formally, through self-study and English language use beyond the classroom) between the ages of 18–24 years old, living in the EU's member, candidate or potential candidate countries or in other European, but non-EU, countries. Student participants were contacted via non-probability opportunity sampling, drawing on those contacts deployed when gathering teacher data and, indeed, enabling participating teachers to disseminate the survey among their own students.

The questionnaires were administered between January and April 2014, with a total of 628 teachers and 280 young-adult learners in Europe participating and completing the relevant survey. For further details of the respondents' profile by country, see Appendices 5 and 7.

b. Teacher interviews and student focus groups

As noted, the project then explored three case-study contexts – in Germany, Romania and Turkey – in order to investigate in more detail the thinking behind teachers' and students' answers to questionnaire responses. The case-study investigations also provided insights into whether the perceived English language needs of young adults in Europe might vary with EU membership status.

Institutions were approached through the researchers' professional networks or via local contacts. At each institutional site, both the teachers and learners who took part were provided with information (in written form) about the aims, methodology and potential outcomes of the project so that they could make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. All institutions and individuals were assured anonymity to encourage participation, and consent forms were obtained from all participants.

The interviews with individual teachers in each location were semi-structured. They followed the general themes and topics covered by the questionnaire, that is: the perceived English language needs of young adults in Europe; reasons for learning and the ways in which English is used by 18–24 year olds, including their use of English when online; the relationship between using English and young adults' sense of identity; and the relationship between young adults' English language needs and ELT materials and methodologies. However, the interviews were flexible enough to allow for the detailed exploration of relevant issues and ideas that emerged during the discussion. Each interview lasted approximately 25–30 minutes and was audio-recorded to facilitate subsequent transcription.

Student focus groups in each institution consisted of five to ten students between the ages of 18–24. Each group included five to ten students, with roughly equal numbers of females and males. Focus-group discussions explored the same general themes as the questionnaires and teacher interviews, again with a flexible format to allow in-depth discussion of particularly relevant or interesting points. Each meeting lasted approximately 30–40 minutes, and, like the interviews, the discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed.

The case-study institutions and participants were as follows:

- Germany (EU founder-member): seven teachers (four male, three female), and four student focus groups (approximately 35 students, aged 18–19, at CEFR C1 level), drawn from two state secondary schools in the Lower Saxony region.
- Romania (recent EU accession country): nine teachers (two male, seven female) from one private language school and one state secondary school, and four student focus groups (27 students, aged 18–24, at CEFR level C1), drawn from one state secondary school and one university in the Moldavia region of Romania.
- Turkey (EU candidate member): ten teachers (one male, nine female) and two student focus groups (approximately 18 students, aged 18–19, at CEFR B2 level), drawn from two university language centres in the Central Anatolia region.

These interviews and focus groups provided a snapshot of current teacher and young-adult student perspectives on our topic. Although explored with a relatively limited number of participants in only one locality in each country, the views expressed did noticeably echo those of the larger number of participants in the survey. Consequently, they complement and add depth to the survey data, providing additional insights.

c. Analysing and reflecting on the data

When analysing the closed questionnaire data, descriptive statistics were calculated for all questions (i.e. mean averages and frequencies) while inferential statistics were calculated to establish relationships between variables where appropriate (e.g. is there a relationship between the country where a participant lives or works and perceived reasons for learning English or perception of the most appropriate variety of English?). The responses to open survey questions provided an additional source of participant perspectives, which, together with the interview and focus-group data were thematically categorised to find commonalities and contrasts between participants and groups of participants.

Overall, the data provided us with a broad snapshot of ‘insider’ perspectives (i.e. those of teachers and learners) on the English language needs of young-adult learners in the EU. We should recognise, however, that both the questionnaire and interview/focus-group participants constitute a small sample of the wider population of English language teachers and learners in Europe – and possibly those who are more inclined to use online technologies (in the case of the questionnaire) or who are linked to or are active in local or national Teacher Associations. Consequently, our data are illustrative rather than generalisable. However, throughout our data collection and subsequent analysis, we have attempted to ‘interrogate the contexts’ that we investigated, in order that our analysis is ‘dependable’ (Wardman, 2013: 136; see also, Guba and Lincoln, 1985: 13). Similarly, the data that we report upon suggests a high level of critical awareness on the part of the interviewees and focus-group participants, suggesting similar levels of critical reflection by teachers and young-adult learners of English across the EU.

In our discussion of Results (Section 4, below), we present the qualitative data from the teacher interviews and student focus groups in three case-study contexts; these data illustrate and illuminate trends revealed in the wider surveys. Consequently, the results of the teacher and young-adult English language learner questionnaire surveys are provided in Appendices 6 (teachers) and 8 (students) below, in the form of the descriptive statistics for all closed survey questions. Interested readers can refer to this data for corroborating insights into our discussion.

d. Research ethics

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Northumbria University’s Institutional Ethics Committee prior to the collection of data. Participation in the project was voluntary, and participants were provided with relevant information in advance of the project (also available on the project website) in order to make a fully informed decision about whether to contribute to the research. Interviewee and focus-group participant identities are anonymised to protect respondents’ confidentiality. Furthermore, all participants who expressed an interest will receive an e-copy of the final project report in order to develop a more balanced and potentially reciprocal relationship between researchers and participants.

4

Results

We turn now to the qualitative data collected via teacher interviews (T) and student focus groups (FG) which, as observed in Section 3.2, adds depth to and illustrates trends revealed by the survey data.

As noted, this case-study data provides a snapshot of current teacher and young-adult student perspectives on the English language needs of 18–24 year-olds in three very specific contexts: educational institutions in Germany, Romania and Turkey. The findings presented here are therefore introductory and illuminating, rather than conclusive and generalisable. A number of key themes emerge from the data, and, as will be evident from the discussion below, there was a considerable degree of consensus between teachers and students, and little evidence of a generation gap in attitudes and perceptions, even if the kind of English used by the two groups differs considerably. There were, however, some significant differences between the three countries regarding the impact of English on their own languages and cultures.

4.1 Which English?

While recognising differences between varieties of English, particularly with regard to pronunciation and in terms of accent, students in all three countries generally felt that an ability to communicate in any English was more important than studying or speaking a particular variety. This was particularly true of the choice between British and American English. For example, students noted that:

Why it is important if you are speaking in British, or American or Australian English? It doesn't matter because you always communicate in English, and you can understand it, all of them [the varieties]. It doesn't matter. (Turkey FG1)

It's a universal language, so we have to learn it to communicate to all the people. (Romania FG2)

I think, first it's most important that people understand what you're telling them. So it doesn't matter if it's British English or American English or whatever. In the end, I think it doesn't really matter ... whatever suits you best. (Germany FG4)

Teachers tended to agree:

... as long as they make themselves understood that's what matters. (Romania T1)

Interestingly, such discussions tended to look beyond the traditional (and stereotypical) dichotomy of British or American English, and acknowledge English varieties from contexts such as India and Africa. A German student, for example, noted the potential complexity this adds to the concept of a native speaker of English, while a German teacher advocated the importance of:

learning about English via speakers from different countries, and the inclusion of Indian, South African accents. (Germany T4)

That said, individuals had their own preferences and rationale for focusing on one particular variety or trying to speak with a particular accent. Both teachers and students identified predominantly British English examples in their teaching materials, largely as a result of tradition and examination syllabuses, while acknowledging the prevalence of American media beyond the classroom, for example:

From top down yes, or the principals, the administration let's say. So they seem to favour British more for example. But when I look at students, because of maybe films and that, they favour American accent at the same time. (Turkey T9)

It was also observed that the two varieties are converging, making the question of a choice between them somewhat dated:

sometimes we are not very sure that the one that we use is purely British, because they tend to come with so many Americanisms and we hear them every day. And they are exposed to so many American movies first of all. (Romania T1)

Yet apart from demands of examinations for British English, teachers in all three countries had no particular penchant for one or the other. However, when student preferences were identified, these were based around notions of what was ‘cool’ or ‘easier’ to learn, usually, it was reported, American English:

But generally speaking I would say the kids love American English because they think it's easier, although actually it isn't... there are lots of students coming back from the US, and then of course the other students, yeah well my best friend speaks like this and then, and they copy their way of speaking. (Germany T1)

In some cases, again depending on their own experiences they might have a preference for American English. So we basically accept that. (Romania T2)

Generally, therefore, while classrooms in all three contexts tended to draw more upon standard British English norms (while introducing students to other varieties and accents), students perhaps identified (and identified with) other English norms outside the class. Thus, in many ways, our qualitative data sustains the claim that the use of English as a lingua franca is changing attitudes and spoken norms, with the heterogeneity of English being increasingly recognised, while ELT classrooms arguably lag behind this in terms of the language models presented to learners.

4.2 Current and future uses of English

Unsurprisingly, participants in all three countries confirmed how important knowing and speaking English was to them. English was clearly seen as a necessary requirement of current and future academic study, for example:

...they are aware that they have to be proficient for postgraduation, and for their Master's degree or PhD studies. (Turkey T1)

When you study something, English is getting bigger in every subject, and you have to read texts in English. For example psychology, it's mainly in English, also in Germany. And I think for studies it's really important nowadays, that you have good English. (Germany FG3)

The role of English in students' future employment was also highlighted, for work outside their home countries, especially for Romanians, but also for employment at home. Particularly in the Turkish

context, it seemed to many teachers and students self-evident that in order to find professional-level employment within their home country, English would be a significant if not essential attribute:

Thinking about my friends who work in Istanbul, and their bosses are usually foreigners, so they have these meetings in English, they go abroad and so on. But that's just one section of the society. But my sister for example, has a car rental company, and they want to hire drivers, and they also need to know English, at least some English, so that when they go to the airport and take somebody to another country, they need to communicate. So, almost every part of society now needs to learn it. (Turkey T5)

When talking about future employment, the potential effect of Turkey's candidacy for EU membership became apparent:

But if we become part of the EU, people who have finished university or even those who couldn't go to university will want to go abroad, especially to work. So many more people will want to learn English then. (Turkey T10)

Here ‘abroad’ is not specifically the UK, but potentially any EU country, reflecting the view that English, more than any other language in Europe, is essential to work and travel, no matter what the destination. The importance of English for non-work related travel and study was also commented on by teachers and students alike in all three contexts:

But I think you can't live without it, because when you travel to Italy for example, you can't speak this language, or I don't know Spain for example, and you use English to survive in this country. (Germany FG3)

Romanian participants also commented on the need for Italian by the many migrant Romanians who go to work in Italy. For Romanians, moreover, accession to the EU was seen as a less important factor in the growth of English than the 1989 anti-communist revolution. This view was expressed by both teachers and students, though the latter were born after that event. As ten of the 12 countries that have joined the EU since 2004 are former communist states or Soviet republics, the same may be true in those countries too. If so, this means that – with regard to our RQ3 – membership of the EU, though important, is not such a major factor in the linguistic landscape of eastern Europe as the changes that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union.

4.3 Online English

The essential role of English for online communication was also highlighted by teachers and students, both in terms of the extent to which English is necessary simply to participate in many online activities, and the way in which such activities, and, implicitly, English, develop and sustain new, globalised social networks:

Well first of all English is the language of the internet and of technology. And I think everybody should know English who uses this. (Romania FG3)

Internet sites, platforms and activities mentioned across the three countries where our student participants use English included: Facebook, Google, Amazon, Skype, Wikipedia, YouTube, gaming communities, English language movies without subtitles and Japanese animes with English subtitles. Texting and messaging on Whatsapp were also mentioned as tending to involve English as well as the students' own languages:

I don't know if you checked my texts with [NAME], there's half English half Romanian there. (Romania FG4)

Unsurprisingly perhaps, there was recognition that the English that students used online was somewhat different to the English taught in class or encountered in more formal settings, with a particular emphasis on lexical expressions:

There are some words that you can learn from online games. Well for instance, one of my teachers didn't know that word, she said I never heard that. And she was an English teacher. (Turkey FG1)

I think it's certain word ranges in a way, usually [students] know expressions I wouldn't know, to be honest... we always notice that we have a section [in class] where we deal with modern ways of communication, and they all know the special terms, without us teaching them, so it's quite amazing. (Germany T1)

I once used 'my bad', as in my mistake, and I was corrected for that. And that's, that's only example, but it's the most prevalent (...) Yes. I mixed a term from online English, or maybe not online, informal English, with a term from formal English. And that shouldn't happen. (Romania FG3)

Yet there was also a general sense, among both students and teachers, that taught English classes did not need to deal with or include emergent, online forms of English; indeed, that online English was separate from the English of the classroom, for example:

Of course not. Because it's just daily English. It doesn't help us to improve our English. Right? (Turkey FG2)

(The student speaking here also, of course, reveals complex attitudes towards 'communication' and 'correctness' in English that we shall return to below.)

In all three countries, participants agreed that classroom learning should be more concerned with accuracy, with formal varieties, and involve such activities as the study of grammar, literature and translation; online communication was seen as more to do with fluency, new and fashionable forms, and international English. As with the issue of international varieties, this was not a matter of disagreement between teachers and students, who saw the two kinds of English as different rather than in conflict, and with each age group recognising that the other had knowledge and skills in English that complemented their own.

However, the students from Germany and Turkey saw English as having only a limited role in their offline and local daily lives. While reasonably prevalent in their surroundings, for example, in advertising, pop music, films and television, English had not yet permeated their local context to the extent that they felt they needed to communicate with their peers, or beyond, in English face-to-face outside of class:

For me it's only that you can understand words on Facebook, movies, music. But outside of these points I don't use English very often. (Germany FG1)

I prefer to watch English TV series, instead of watching Turkish TV series. Therefore I use English while I am watching TV series. But actually in our daily lives ... we cannot find lots of opportunity to use English in our daily lives. (Turkey FG1)

In contrast, the Romanian focus-group participants claimed to make much greater use of English on a daily basis, even with other Romanians:

Student: We communicate in English between, er,

Interviewer: Between yourselves

Student: between ourselves, yeah, more, whatever.

Interviewer: Between Romanians?

Student: Yeah between Romanians, yeah.

Interviewer: Why?

Student: Er, I find it easier to concentrate and think in English than in Romanian. It's easier to express myself and express the things I wouldn't normally express in Romanian. (Romania FG3)

4.4 The spread of English: identity, culture and other languages

As might be expected from participants who either taught or were learning and using the language at a CEFR B2/C1 level, attitudes towards English were generally positive. As the discussion above indicates, English was seen as having an important role in both their current and future professional and personal lives. However, it was important to investigate the ways in which young-adult learners navigated the issue of 'opportunity' and 'need' in English, i.e. the extent to which they felt they had a genuine choice about learning and using English, and the effects of the spread of English on their own first language and home culture.

Throughout the interviews with teachers and students in all three countries, English was portrayed as a necessity. As one teacher in Turkey put it:

[students] know that without English, they can't survive, in their job, in their even family. (Turkey T3)

And, despite the acknowledgement, noted above, that English was important for the development of online social networks and non-professional or academic activities, there was a clear sense among students in both contexts that knowing English provided them with obvious advantages, such as:

English makes you go a step further.
(Turkey FG1)

It's just an advantage of our modern world, because it's the universal language.
(Germany FG1)

English is the path that will take you to a better life, better life standards. (Turkey T2)

Consequently, for one German student, whilst English was seen as 'not necessarily unstoppable', it was also 'a train that's easy to jump on. (Germany FG4)

While Romanian participants viewed English mostly as a practical necessity, teachers in Germany and Turkey additionally expressed the view that the ability to speak English was viewed as a signifier of academic success, while not knowing the language was seen as not only reducing future academic and professional opportunities but also as indicating a lack of success in life more generally:

I know that English is the most popular and significant one [language]. Even you are not going to use it for career, you're expected to know in order to be regarded as educated ... You are not even regarded as successful if you do not know English. (Turkey T1)

I think it has a good image. People who know English always are looked in a better way I think, it is a plus, not just in academic sense, not just related to their work. But also I think it's seen as something, which also ... makes people maybe more intellectual. (Turkey T8)

It is interesting to note that young-adult students themselves did not express these views quite as strongly during the focus groups.

On occasion, it was suggested in all three contexts that English words might be replacing lexis in their own languages. Some participants suggested that this was not necessarily a problem as language change and mixing was inevitable (Germany FG4, Turkey T4). However, attitudes in Turkey were more mixed when discussing whether English was a potential threat to participants' home language and culture, with teachers and students in particular commenting on possible difficulties created by the spread of English. Both groups acknowledged concerns about 'the increasing penetration of Turkish by English' (Turkey T5), commenting that:

It's a threat to native language because when you see someone speaking Turkish, you see they are not talking correct Turkish. They use lots of English words, and it is a threat to our native language. Because, older people say something, sometimes these young adults don't understand. Some of the words disappear from the language. (Turkey T10)
Yes, it is a problem, because ... if you are putting some English words in your own language, after ten or 20 years, you might forget literally forget your own language. Then ... the whole language is gone. (Turkey FG1)

In marked contrast, all our Romanian and German participants unanimously dismissed questions about a potential threat from English to their own language or identity as insubstantial. Both Romanian teachers and students reported the regular use of English lexis (e.g. 'cool', 'fabulous', 'hi, man', 'really', 'sorry', 'suitable', 'weekend') in Romanian discourse, but for both groups this was described as interesting or amusing rather than threatening. Teachers, with the benefit of greater linguistic insight, also reported English-influenced changes to Romanian grammar and intonation, but again this was not seen as a negative development. In a similar way, on the topic of national identity, both teachers and students dismissed any danger of nationalism and isolationism in Romanian politics of the kind now growing in many European countries. Clearly the reasons for this difference between member states are complex

and beyond the scope of this research, but the views expressed by our participants do suggest, with regard to our RQ3, that such political differences between EU states may be a more important factor than EU membership in itself.

A parallel difference was that in Germany and Turkey but not in Romania, participants felt that older people were less engaged with English and found its spread more threatening, both to their language but also more generally to culture and identity. A similar point was made about potential urban/rural differences in attitudes to English, and public discussion of the relationship between Turkish and German, and English, was noted:

Our culture and language is forgotten to people, and this is a big problem to us ... this is very important for our identity. (Turkey FG2)

I think it's a problem because of the cultures. Because culture means not just the way of living, it's just because of the language and all that. And I think every culture is unique, and if you start mixing them up... (Germany FG4)

Clearly, the spread of English may affect individuals' attitudes to learning other foreign languages, and the data in this investigation suggested this was the case. At times, some young adults suggested that learning other foreign languages was something of a chore or 'just' a curricular requirement that would have little benefit in the future:

Because, for me, I know I don't use it. If I go to France I will speak English, because it's easier. (Germany FG3)

Meanwhile, for others, learning languages other than English was a hobby that lacked the urgency and importance of being able to speak English:

[Students] say if I am to learn a foreign language, first I need to be done with English, and then learn other languages as a hobby maybe. So they do it as something extra. So their way of looking at it I think is different, from English. English is a need for them, but other languages they do it just for fun maybe, just for their development. (Turkey T9)

Interestingly, however, although English, with all its attendant advantages, dominated their perspectives, its continuing dominance was not universally seen as inevitable:

Is really English still the number one language, because there are so many more Spanish speakers? ... I think Spanish will be big. (Germany FG4)

Overall, therefore, attitudes expressed towards the spread of English varied between the three contexts, with the greatest concern about the ways in which English might affect both language and culture being expressed in Turkey and the least – in fact none – in Romania.

4.5 Implications for English language teaching

At the heart of all the discussions within our data was the unresolved dilemma of why English was being taught, or, from the students' perspective, their interpersonal, instrumental and institutional reasons for learning English. The most obvious realisation of these tensions could be found in participants' discussions of teaching/learning English to pass a test, for further study, and for future employment, compared to learning English for real-life use. These concerns are by no means unique to these case-study contexts, and need to be balanced within most ELT institutions.

Unsurprisingly, throughout the discussions with both teachers and learners, there was an emphasis on the need for communication and speaking in English, and how this could be realised in the classroom. For some students, this meant less interest in correct grammar and, indeed, less interest in grammar per se, and a relaxed attitude to accuracy in spoken language for actual communication:

[on grammar] It's important, but when you speak to someone, it's not that important that you use the perfect grammar. (Germany FG1)

We focused too much on the grammar, we talked too ... too little. And that's not good enough. (Romania FG2)

We should learn from our teachers English, by practising and learning, understanding, everything, but not for exams... It's not just for exams. Our learning is not just for exams. If we just focus on exams, we can't speak fluent with foreign People. (Turkey FG2)

There was a sense that some students felt a slight lack of connection between classroom English and the English that they encountered outside the classroom, and a sense of grievance if they were corrected for using English that they had encountered elsewhere. There was agreement between teachers and students that this disconnection needs to be addressed. One possible direction for ELT in the light of these comments would be to relax the focus on accuracy and form at least in so far as the demands of testing and examination allow.

There were, however, two opposite currents of opinion on how to reconcile real life with classroom English, and some divergence between the views of Turkish participants and those of Germans and Romanians. For the Turks, the preferred solution was a greater focus on communication than on form: they expressed the view that classroom English should reflect, incorporate and attempt to emulate the real, fluent and contemporary English students would encounter outside the classroom. This familiar argument – a long-standing one in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) – was justified by the facts that Turkish students appeared less confident in their English, less immersed in online culture and had fewer opportunities for interaction and communication in English outside the classroom.

Although similar views were expressed by some participants in Germany and Romania, with some teachers and students saying that classroom English should place a greater emphasis on spoken and online fluency, a contrary perspective suggested that the division between these two kinds of English could be handled in a different and radical way. That is, given the ready availability of communication opportunities in English (for example, through popular culture, social media and travel) and the fact that aspects of the English used in such communication are often better known by the students than their teachers, then attempts to reproduce authentic communication, of the kind familiar in CLT and TBLT (Task-based Language Teaching) are no longer so urgently needed, or likely to be successful, in the classroom. From this perspective, the best use of classroom time and of teachers' expertise would be to provide more formal language instruction in areas where students were less competent than their teachers, thus enhancing their chances of success in examinations, higher education and employment, while also providing a foundation for real-life communication outside. Such a view was, for example, effectively summarised by a group of Germans students in a comment that clearly echoes our earlier discussion of online English (above):

The school has to kind of lay the foundations, so that you can basically, take your English outside of school and do with it whatever you want, that you can talk to people, travel people, can talk slang maybe, or that you just can learn it, that you

have the foundation to learn that or you have the foundation to learn business English. Because we don't learn real technical terms, I mean just a little bit, but I couldn't understand a science paper in English I don't think, maybe, with a dictionary. But that's not what the school has to do ... the school has to lay the foundation. (Germany FG4)

Given this, in those EU contexts where English is widely used outside the classroom, an effective strategy for teaching English to young adults might be to abandon or at least reduce attempts to reproduce actual contemporary communication in materials and activities. Instead, teachers could draw upon students themselves as a source of examples and knowledge of certain areas of English language use. The classroom would thus address the dichotomy between fluent informal English and more formal varieties by making ELT a more two-way affair in which students and teachers bring together two complementary sources of knowledge. Interestingly, the Romanian and German teachers themselves generally endorsed such an approach.

5

Summary of findings

The findings reported here provide valuable insights into the contemporary English language needs and priorities of young-adult learners in the EU, and the implications of this for ELT professionals and other stakeholders. The study has focused upon the demographic group who are most likely to use new forms of English in new, often online, communicative environments, and has sought to avoid imposing top-down ideas about the current and future use of English in the EU by uncovering the perceptions of young adults and their teachers themselves.

To summarise the key findings from this research:

RQ 1a: Appropriate models of English

While there is a focus on British English in class, largely to meet the demands of the syllabus and examinations, both teachers and students recognise and accept the greater prevalence of US English in many non-educational contexts. They are also tolerant of varieties of English, and following native-speaker norms of correctness or accuracy in ELF communication is not seen as a priority. Overall, therefore, participants regard successful communication as far more important than conformity to any particular variety, while tending themselves to lean towards British or US English norms.

RQ 1b: Online communication

For many young adults, the current value of English is its facilitative role in online communication and their participation in international social networks. Although both students and teachers across all contexts clearly acknowledge the importance of English for young adults' future employment and future study, most students' current communication in English outside lessons takes place online. Both teachers and students recognise the differences between classroom English and online English and generally see the two as complementary rather than in conflict.

RQ 1c: Cultural and linguistic identity

Unsurprisingly, English is seen as necessary, while also offering opportunities. While young adults in the case studies are said to have no choice in learning English, this is not portrayed as being problematic for the individuals concerned. We can perhaps draw parallels here with Graddol's (2006) notion of English becoming a basic skill alongside L1 literacy and numeracy – a skill so desirable that notions of choice or no choice are no longer easily applicable. We should recognise, however, that participants in all three case-study contexts were successful learners or users of English, and positive attitudes towards the language are therefore likely.

However, looking beyond the individual to consider the relationship between English and wider societal, cultural and linguistic concerns, differences between the three contexts emerge, with Turkish participants expressing some concern about the effects of English on their Turkish language and culture, Romanians being unconcerned, and Germans being between these two perspectives. In the case of Turkey and Germany, differences between differing groups in society were noted. Differences were identified between older and younger generations, and, to a lesser extent, between urban and rural populations, in attitudes towards English and in the possible limits on future opportunities caused by not knowing the language.

RQ 2: Is there a gap between students and teachers with regard to the perceived English language needs and priorities of young adults?

There is generally a consensus between teachers and students throughout the study. Attitudes towards English language varieties are similar throughout, although there is a slightly more noticeable preoccupation among teachers with British English in the classroom, seemingly led by examination and assessment requirements. That said, teachers acknowledge the varied non-classroom influences on students' English language (e.g. US films and television), generally finding these influences unproblematic. Each group also acknowledged the specific expertise of the other; for example, teachers respected student knowledge of online English use, and students recognised that classroom focus on accuracy, grammar and conformity to a particular variety was useful to them, especially for study and employment.

RQ 3: Do students and teachers perceptions of English language needs and priorities differ in founder, recently acceding and candidate EU members?

Generally, EU membership status seems to make little difference to perceptions of young adults' needs and priorities – there was a consistency of perspectives across all contexts. The only significant difference was in attitude to the impact of English on the home language and culture (see RQ 1c above). The reasons for this appear to relate to factors other than EU membership, such as the rural/urban balance of a country; differences in access to new technologies, the internet and online communication; and other political factors. Also noticeable is the extent to which participants referred to English as a global language, and to their future employment in a global context. While the EU provided one context for the discussion, it was evident that both teachers and students saw the future in global rather than European terms.

RQ 4: What are the implications of RQs 1–3 for ELT professionals in the EU?

One of the most encouraging findings of the study for ELT professionals is that teachers and young-adult students seem to share common understandings, both of the changing communicative environment in which English is used, and of the implications of this for classroom practice in their own particular context.

What is perhaps of particular interest for the future development of English language syllabuses, materials and assessment is the extent to which

young adults now learn English primarily for reasons of employment and for communication with their peers in an international and often online setting. There is little sense that learners are particularly interested in UK or US culture, at least beyond accessing English language media for their own entertainment; nor is particular priority given to speaking with native speakers or always following native-speaker English language norms. It seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that future ELT resources will need to recognise even more clearly than at present the international perspective that learners hold, broadening their focus to recognise that English is an international and an internationally varied language.

Teachers participating in this study aim to acknowledge and accommodate such variation in, and varieties of, English in their classrooms; this is appreciated by their students. However, there are also constraints on their classroom activities due to national syllabus and assessment norms, which seem to lag behind changes in English and the ways in which young adults in particular use English. Additionally, the changing communicative environment beyond the classroom differs between contexts within the EU; in this study, for example, the use of English in the Turkish context differed from those explored in Germany and Romania, with potential implications for the development of varied and locally appropriate approaches to ELT.

In the Turkish case study, where students had fewer opportunities for communication in English outside class, there was a preference for communication in class, rather than a focus on grammar and form. However, Germany and Romania, where young adults tended to communicate often in English outside class (for example, online) and thus may be more familiar with emergent elements of the language, the best use of classroom time may be to provide more formal language instruction in areas where young-adult students are less competent than their teachers, and draw on students' own knowledge of less formal aspects of English language use.

Although the primary focus of our study has been Europe and the EU, the issues raised within the research are likely to be relevant to most, if not all, ELT contexts around the world. How are societal changes involving increased bi- and multilingualism, English language change, and the development and use of online technologies to be accommodated and mediated within the ELT classroom in ways that meet students' needs (both in terms of facilitating their possible mobility and integration, and also in terms of maintaining their identities)? Further investigations into these key questions are necessary.

6

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Appendix 1: The official and working languages of the EU

Bulgarian	French	Maltese
Croatian	German	Polish
Czech	Greek	Portuguese
Danish	Hungarian	Romanian
Dutch	Irish	Slovak
English	Italian	Slovene
Estonian	Latvian	Spanish
Finnish	Lithuanian	Swedish

(Source: European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/official_languages_en.htm)

Appendix 2: Full, candidate and potential candidate countries of the EU

a. EU member states (and EU entry dates)		
Austria (1995)	Germany (1952)	Poland (2004)
Belgium (1952)	Greece (1981)	Portugal (1986)
Bulgaria (2007)	Hungary (2004)	Romania (2007)
Croatia (2013)	Ireland (1973)	Slovakia (2004)
Cyprus (2004)	Italy (1952)	Slovenia (2004)
Czech Republic (2004)	Latvia (2004)	Spain (1986)
Denmark (1973)	Lithuania (2004)	Sweden (1995)
Estonia (2004)	Luxembourg (1952)	United Kingdom (1973)
Finland (1995)	Malta (2004)	
France (1952)	Netherlands (1952)	

b. EU candidate countries		
Albania	Montenegro	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Iceland	Serbia	Turkey

c. EU potential candidate countries	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo

(Source: European Commission http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm)

Appendix 3: Online questionnaire for English language teachers

The English language needs and priorities of English language teachers in Europe

Introduction

What are the English language needs and priorities of young adults in Europe? What kinds of English do 18–24 year-olds want to speak, and why? Has the development of new technologies and online communication affected the ways in which young adults use English, and if so, how? Has the emergence of English as an international lingua franca affected people's sense of their own identity? And what might this mean for English language teaching and learning?

Northumbria University and King's College London (both UK), in conjunction with the British Council, are carrying out a survey into student and teacher perceptions of the English language needs of young adults in Europe, and the implications of this for English language teaching. We are interested in finding out your views about how and why young adults learn and use English, the kinds of English they want to speak, and what this might mean for English language teaching. In this survey, the term young adult refers to 18–24 year olds.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and your answers are confidential – no individual's answers can be identified.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your interest in contributing, and you can find out more about this project at: www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sass/about/humanities/linguistics/linguisticsstaff/g_hall/englishlanguageneeds/

Note: This survey is open to all English language teachers working in Europe. Although the focus is on young-adult learners, aged between 18–24 years old, teachers working with learners of all ages are welcome to participate.

A. About your professional context

1. Country in Europe where you work:

--

2. Type of school/institution you teach English in most often: (tick ONE)

Private	
State	
Other (please specify)	

3. If you work in more than one type of institution (see Question 2, above), what other types of school/institution do you teach in? (You may select more than one option, if appropriate)

Private	
State	
Self-employed	
Not applicable	

4. Age of learners you teach most often: (tick ONE)

0–5		18–23	
6–11		24+	
12–17			

5. If you teach more than one age group (see Question 4 above), what **other** age groups do you teach? (You may select more than one option, if appropriate)

0–5		18–23	
6–11		24+	
12–17		Not applicable	

6. English language level of the learners you teach most often: (tick ONE)

Beginner to Pre-intermediate	
Intermediate to Advanced	
Not applicable – I regularly teach both higher and lower-level students	

7. How would you describe the curriculum in your institution? (tick ONE)

Learners study only English	
Learners study English and other academic subjects	

8. How would you describe your work as an English language teacher? (tick ONE)

I teach English	
I use English to teach other academic subjects	
Other (please specify)	

9. How would you describe the classes you teach? (tick ONE)

Learners share a common first language	
Learners do not share a common first language	

10. If learners in your classes share a common own language, how well can you speak their own language (in your opinion)? (tick ONE)

Beginner	
Elementary	
Intermediate	
Upper-intermediate	
Advanced	
Expert or native speaker	
Not applicable	

B. Young adults' English language needs

The following section of the questionnaire is concerned with your views about young adults' English language needs.

11. Here is a list of statements about young adults' English language knowledge and skills. Tick ONE box for each statement to summarise your views.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Have native-like pronunciation					
Use native-like grammar					
Be familiar with native-speaker idiomatic language					
Use native-speaker idiomatic language					
Know about British, US or other English-speaking cultures					
Know about the way other non-native English speakers use English (e.g. their accent, grammar and vocabulary)					
Be able to use English in online written communication (e.g. email, texting, tweeting and messaging)					
Be able to use English in online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or FaceTime)					
Be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken English					
Be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English (e.g. LOL, PAW)					
Be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English (e.g. LOL, PAW)					
Further comments (optional)					

12. Which variety of English do you think young adults from your country need to learn or speak? Tick the relevant items (you may tick as many as appropriate).

British English	
American English	
European English	
International English	
English for online communication	
A non-standard regional variety of English (e.g. New York English)	
English related to a specific job or career (e.g. English for business, for tourism, for engineering)	
Other (please specify)	

13. Please give a brief reason for your answer(s) to Question 12 above.

14. In your opinion, where will young adults use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most likely and 3 the least likely. You can use each number only once.

Learners will use English most often in other non-English speaking countries	
Learners will use English most often in their home country	
Learners will use English most often visiting or living in an English-speaking country	

15. If you have any further comments about your answers to Question 14 (above), please add them here: (optional)

16. In your opinion, through what mode of communication will young adults use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order, 1 to 4, with 1 being the most frequent and 4 being the least frequent. You can use each number only once.

Online written communication (e.g. texting, email, written chat and messaging)	
Online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype)	
Reading and writing on paper	
Face-to-face communication	

17. If you have any further comments about your answers to Question 16 (above), please add them here: (optional)

C. Young adults' reasons for learning English

This section of the questionnaire focuses on your views about why young adults learn English and the ways they use English outside the English language classroom.

18. Here is a list of possible reasons why young adults might want to learn English. How important do you think each reason is for young adults in your country?

	Very important	←				→	Not at all important
To help them communicate with native speakers							
To communicate with other non-native speakers who speak English							
To understand English language films, music and television							
To participate in online social networks (e.g. Bebo, Facebook, Myspace or Ning)							
To participate in online games							
To travel to the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries							
To help them find work in their home country							
To help them find work in countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people							
To help them understand UK, US or other English-speaking cultures							
To appear more knowledgeable or sophisticated							
To help them get good grades at school, college or university							
For their future career							
To pass IELTS or a similar international English language qualification							
To be more respected by their own age group							
For study purposes in their own country							
For study purposes in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people							
Other (please specify)							

D. Language and identity

This section of the questionnaire focuses on the ways in which using English might (or might not) affect young adults' sense of identity.

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning English changes the way people feel about their own country					
The English language is a threat to national or local languages					
The English language is a threat to national or local cultures					
In the future, knowing English will be as important as knowing my country's first language					
In my country, people who speak English have a more international outlook than people who do not					
Further comments (optional)					

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Young adults are more positive about English than older age groups					
Young adults use English more than older age groups					
Young adults have a more positive attitude towards English than towards their own first language					
Young adults see English as something they must know to be successful					
People who have learned English to an advanced level are more positive about travel and living abroad					
People who have learned English to an advanced level are less positive about their home country					
Further comments (optional)					

E. English language teaching and learning

21. For each statement, give your opinion about ELT and young adults' English language needs (tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Contemporary published (including online) ELT materials meet the needs of young adult learners					
Contemporary published (including online) ELT materials recognise international forms of English					
Contemporary English language testing and assessment meet the needs of young adult learners					
Contemporary English language syllabuses meet the needs of young adult learners					
Further comments (optional)					

F. Further comment

22. If you have any further comments about the English language needs and priorities of young adults in Europe, please add them here: (optional)

G. About you

23. Years of experience as an English language teacher:

0–4		15–19	
5–9		20–24	
10–14		25+	

Use of the learners' own language in the English language classroom.

24. What is your first language?

--

25. What variety of English do you speak? (tick ONE)

American English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian English	<input type="checkbox"/>
British English	<input type="checkbox"/>
European English	<input type="checkbox"/>
International English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. As a regular part of your job, do you:

	Yes	No
Teach English language classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare your own lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose your own course book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop course syllabuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead teacher training/development sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. If you would like to receive an e-copy of the final report on this project, add your contact details here:

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Thank you for completing the questionnaire; your help is invaluable. We hope to publish our findings with the British Council in Spring 2015.

Appendix 4: Online questionnaire for young-adult English language learners

The English language needs and priorities of young adults in Europe

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in our survey!

What are the English language needs and priorities of young adults in Europe? What kinds of English do 18–24 year-olds want to speak, and why? Has the development of new technologies and online communication affected the ways in which young adults use English, and if so, how? Has the way English is often used as an international language affected people’s sense of their own identity? And what might this mean for English language teaching and learning?

Northumbria University and King’s College London (both UK), in conjunction with the British Council, are carrying out a survey into student and teacher perceptions of the English language needs of young adults in Europe, and the implications of this for English language teaching. We are interested in finding out your views about how and why young adults learn and use English, the kinds of English they want to speak, and what this might mean for English language teaching. In this survey, the term young adult refers to 18–24 year olds.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and your answers are confidential – no individual’s answers can be identified.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your interest in contributing, and you can find out more about this project at: www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sass/about/humanities/linguistics/linguisticsstaff/g_hall/englishlanguageneeds/

Note: this survey is open to all young adult (18–24 years old) English language learners in Europe and/or young adults in Europe who use English as a second, additional or foreign language, or as an international lingua franca.

A. You and your context

1. Country in Europe where you live:

--

2. How old were you when you started learning English (either at school or in other English language classes, or informally in other ways)?: (tick ONE)

0–4	<input type="checkbox"/>	15–19	<input type="checkbox"/>
5–9	<input type="checkbox"/>	20+	<input type="checkbox"/>
10–14	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Where do you study English? (tick ONE)

As part of my regular school/college/university studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
In extra classes outside my school/college/university	<input type="checkbox"/>
As part of my school/college/university classes AND in extra classes outside my school/college/university	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don’t study English in lessons or classes; I only study English by myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don’t study English at all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How would you describe your curriculum at school, college or university? (tick ONE)

I study only English	<input type="checkbox"/>
I study English and other academic subjects	<input type="checkbox"/>
I study other academic subjects in English (but don’t study English itself as a subject)	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don’t study English or in English at school, college or university	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How would you describe how English is taught at your school, college or university? (You may select more than one answer if appropriate)

English is taught as a separate subject	<input type="checkbox"/>
English is used to teach other academic subjects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. When and how you use English

The following section of the questionnaire is concerned with your views about when you need to use English, and the kind of English you need to learn

6. Here is a list of statements about the kind of English language knowledge and skills you need. Tick ONE box for each statement to summarise your views.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I need to have native-like pronunciation					
I need to use native-like grammar					
I need to be familiar with native-speaker idiomatic language					
I need to use native-speaker idiomatic language					
I need to know about British, US or other English-speaking cultures					
I need to know about the way other non-native English speakers use English (e.g. their accent, grammar and vocabulary)					
I need to be able to use English in online written communication (e.g. email, texting, tweeting and messaging)					
I need to be able to use English in online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or FaceTime)					
I need to be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken English					
I need to be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English (e.g. LOL, PAW)					
I need to be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English (e.g. LOL, PAW)					
Further comments (optional)					

7. English is spoken or used in different ways in different contexts (for example, British English differs from American English). Which variety of English do you need to learn or speak? Tick the relevant items (you may tick as many as appropriate).

British English	
American English	
European English	
International English	
English for online communication	
A non-standard regional variety of English (e.g. New York English)	
English related to a specific job or career (e.g. English for business, for tourism, for engineering)	
Other (please specify)	

8. Please give a brief reason for your answer(s) to Question 7 above.

9. In your opinion, where will you use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most likely and 3 the least likely. You can use each number only once.

I will use English most often in other non-English speaking countries	
I will use English most often in their home country	
I will use English most often visiting or living in an English-speaking country	

10. If you have any further comments about your answers to Question 9 (above), please add them here: (optional)

11. Like all languages, English can be used for different purposes, e.g. for speaking or writing, online or face-to-face. Which of the following ways of communicating in English will you use most often?

Rank the possibilities below in order, 1 to 4, with 1 being the most frequent and 4 being the least frequent. You can use each number only once.

Online written communication (e.g. texting, email, written chat and messaging)	
Online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or Facetime)	
Reading and writing on paper	
Face-to-face communication	

12. If you have any further comments about your answers to Question 11 (above), please add them here: (optional)

C. Your reasons for learning English

This section of the questionnaire focuses on why you have learnt English, and ways you use English outside the English language classroom.

13. Here is a list of possible reasons why young adults might want to learn English. How important is each reason to you? (Select ONE box for each reason to summarise your views)

	Very important	←					→	Not at all important
To help them communicate with native speakers								
To communicate with other non-native speakers who speak English								
To understand English language films, music and television								
To participate in online social networks (e.g. Bebo, Facebook, Myspace or Ning)								
To participate in online games								
To travel to the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries								
To help them find work in their home country								
To help them find work in countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people								
To help them understand UK, US or other English-speaking cultures								
To appear more knowledgeable or sophisticated								
To help them get good grades at school, college or university								
For their future career								
To pass IELTS or a similar international English language qualification								
To be more respected by their own age group								
For study purposes in their own country								
For study purposes in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people								
Other (please specify)								

D. Language and identity

This section of the questionnaire focuses on the ways in which using English might (or might not) affect learners' sense of identity.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning English changes the way people feel about their own country					
The English language is a threat to national or local languages					
The English language is a threat to national or local cultures					
In the future, knowing English will be as important as knowing my country's first language					
In my country, people who speak English have a more international outlook than people who do not					
Further comments (optional)					

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Young adults are more positive about English than older age groups					
Young adults use English more than older age groups					
Young adults have a more positive attitude towards English than towards their own first language					
Young adults see English as something they must know to be successful					
People who have learned English to an advanced level are more positive about travel and living abroad					
People who have learned English to an advanced level are less positive about their home country					
Further comments (optional)					

E. English language teaching and learning

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(tick ONE box for each statement)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to pass English language exams					
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with people from other countries for work					
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with people from other countries for leisure (e.g. travel and tourism)					
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English recognise international forms of English					
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people through speech					
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people in writing					
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people online					
Further comments (optional)					

F. Further comment

17. If you have any further comments about your English language needs and priorities, please add them here: (optional)

--

G. About you

18. How old are you? (tick ONE)

18	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

19. What is your first language?

--

20. How long have you been learning English? (tick ONE)

1–4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5–9 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
10–14 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
15–19 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
20+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. Your English language level: (tick ONE)

Beginner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upper-intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. If you know your CEFR English language level (e.g. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), please add it here: (optional)

--

Note: CEFR is an abbreviation for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

23. If you would like to receive an e-copy of the final report on this project, add your contact details here:

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Thank you for completing the questionnaire; your help is invaluable. We hope to publish our findings with the British Council in Spring 2015.

Appendix 5: Teacher questionnaire participants, by country

Country where you work	Response percentage	Response (N)
Albania	0.80	5
Andorra	0.16	1
Austria	0.32	2
Azerbaijan	0.32	2
Belarus	0.16	1
Belgium	1.11	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.48	3
Bulgaria	2.87	18
Croatia	1.43	9
Cyprus	0.32	2
Czech Republic	2.71	17
Estonia	0.64	4
Finland	0.16	1
France	3.82	24
Germany	4.46	28
Greece	5.10	32
Hungary	3.50	22
Iceland	2.39	15
Italy	4.14	26
Kazakhstan	0.32	2
Latvia	2.23	14

Country where you work	Response percentage	Response (N)
Lithuania	2.55	16
Macedonia	0.32	2
Malta	4.14	26
Netherlands	0.80	5
Norway	0.16	1
Poland	1.75	11
Portugal	21.82	137
Romania	4.14	26
Russia	1.75	11
Serbia	2.71	17
Slovakia	6.85	43
Slovenia	0.80	5
Spain	6.21	39
Sweden	0.32	2
Switzerland	0.32	2
Turkey	1.75	11
Ukraine	1.59	10
United Kingdom	4.14	26
(Other)	0.48	3
Total		628

Note: There were no survey participants from those European countries not listed above

Appendix 6: Descriptive statistics for Sections B–E (questions 11–21) of the teacher questionnaire (all survey responses)

Question 11: Here is a list of statements about the kind of English language knowledge and skills you need. Tick ONE box for each statement to summarise your views.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Have native-like pronunciation	7.26%	36.46%	27.26%	24.96%	4.07%
Use native-like grammar	9.29%	55.36%	21.43%	12.68%	1.25%
Be familiar with native-speaker idiomatic language	16.19%	59.53%	15.83%	7.19%	1.26%
Use native-speaker idiomatic language	6.19%	40.44%	31.69%	19.67%	2.00%
Know about British, US or other English-speaking cultures	27.57%	48.47%	14.95%	8.29%	0.72%
Know about the way other non-native English speakers use English (e.g. their accent, grammar and vocabulary)	14.08%	41.16%	27.44%	15.70%	1.62%
Be able to use English in online written communication (e.g. email, texting, tweeting and messaging)	48.39%	45.54%	4.29%	1.61%	0.18%
Be able to use English in online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or FaceTime)	36.49%	50.27%	10.38%	2.68%	0.18%
Be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English	29.95%	58.11%	9.45%	2.50%	0.00%
Be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English	25.89%	55.18%	15.18%	3.75%	0.00%
Be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in online English (e.g. LOL, PAW)	18.53%	54.86%	20.68%	5.22%	0.72%
Be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in online English (e.g. LOL, PAW)	14.96%	46.17%	30.84%	7.48%	0.55%

Question 12: Which variety of English do you think young adults from your country need to learn or speak? Tick the relevant items (you may tick as many as appropriate).

British English	68.27%
American English	44.21%
European English	23.35%
International English	57.40%
English for online communication	32.80%
A non-standard regional variety of English (e.g. New York English)	1.60%
English related to a specific job or career (e.g. English for business, for tourism, for engineering)	54.55%

Question 14: In your opinion, where will young adults use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most likely and 3 the least likely. You can use each number only once.

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Mean ranking
Learners will use English most often in other non-English speaking countries	44.23%	39.70%	16.07%	2.28
Learners will use English most often in their home country	22.83%	27.92%	49.25%	1.74
Learners will use English most often visiting or living in an English-speaking country	33.02%	32.45%	34.53%	1.98

Question 16: In your opinion, through what mode of communication will young adults use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order, 1 to 4, with 1 being the most frequent and 4 being the least frequent. You can use each number only once.

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Ranked 4	Mean ranking
Online written communication (e.g. texting, email, written chat and messaging)	47.43%	30.67%	18.29%	3.62%	3.22
Online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype)	10.67%	31.81%	32.57%	24.95%	2.28
Reading and writing on paper	13.14%	18.29%	24.38%	44.19%	2.00
Face-to-face spoken communication	28.76%	19.24%	24.76%	27.24%	2.50

Question 18: Here is a list of possible reasons why young adults might want to learn English. How important do you think each reason is for young adults in your country? (Select ONE box for each reason to summarise your views)

	Very important	←	←	→	→	→	Not at all important
To help them communicate with native speakers	33.33%	28.94%	18.16%	10.18%	4.39%	4.19%	0.80%
To communicate with other non-native speakers who speak English	51.38%	29.53%	12.01%	4.92%	1.18%	0.39%	0.59%
To understand English language films, music and television	32.94%	33.33%	20.12%	9.07%	3.16%	0.99%	0.39%
To participate in online social networks (e.g. Bebo, Facebook, Myspace or Ning)	25.20%	34.13%	18.65%	13.10%	4.96%	2.58%	1.39%
To participate in online games	18.40%	22.60%	23.40%	16.60%	7.40%	7.40%	4.20%
To travel to the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries	31.61%	33.80%	17.50%	11.13%	3.58%	1.79%	0.60%
To help them find work in their home country	51.87%	28.40%	9.27%	5.13%	2.76%	1.58%	0.99%
To help them understand UK, US or other English-speaking cultures	43.25%	23.02%	15.28%	10.91%	4.56%	2.18%	0.79%
To help them find work in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people	27.44%	34.79%	17.89%	11.33%	5.57%	2.19%	0.80%
To help them understand UK, US or other English-speaking cultures	15.64%	24.55%	24.55%	15.25%	9.70%	7.52%	2.77%
To appear more knowledgeable or sophisticated	7.57%	18.13%	22.31%	22.91%	12.15%	10.16%	6.77%
To help them get good grades at school, college or university	32.80%	31.40%	16.60%	11.60%	4.80%	2.00%	0.80%
For their future career	65.34%	24.50%	6.57%	2.59%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%
To pass IELTS or a similar international English language qualification	26.00%	28.00%	18.00%	15.00%	5.20%	6.00%	1.80%
To be more respected by their own age group	3.39%	14.97%	22.75%	22.55%	14.37%	11.38%	10.58%
For study purposes in their own country	23.65%	32.06%	19.84%	14.23%	7.01%	2.40%	0.80%
For study purposes in the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries	32.41%	26.44%	15.11%	14.12%	7.16%	3.58%	1.19%
For study purposes in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people	20.32%	25.70%	21.31%	16.73%	8.96%	4.98%	1.99%

Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning English changes the way people feel about their own country	15.37%	35.93%	31.54%	13.77%	3.39%
The English language is a threat to national or local languages	2.83%	10.32%	18.42%	38.46%	29.96%
The English language is a threat to national or local cultures	2.23%	9.51%	16.80%	41.30%	30.16%
In the future, knowing English will be as important as knowing my country's first or national language	31.54%	46.51%	12.38%	7.58%	2.00%
In my country, people who speak English have a more international outlook than people who do not	33.07%	41.24%	16.73%	7.37%	1.59%

Question 20: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Young adults are more positive about English than older age groups	23.66%	43.74%	22.86%	8.95%	0.80%
Young adults use English more than older age groups	36.20%	47.60%	10.60%	5.00%	0.60%
Young adults have a more positive attitude towards English than towards their own first language	7.77%	15.54%	38.05%	31.67%	6.97%
Young adults see English as something they must know to be successful	34.20%	51.80%	11.00%	2.60%	0.40%
People who have learned English to an advanced level are more positive about travel and living abroad	42.40%	38.00%	16.20%	2.60%	0.80%
People who have learned English to an advanced level are less positive about their home country	3.01%	12.45%	29.12%	37.75%	17.67%

Question 21: For each statement, give your opinion about ELT and young adults' English language needs. (Tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Contemporary published (including online) ELT materials meet the needs of young-adult learners	11.04%	55.83%	20.86%	10.63%	1.64%
Contemporary published (including online) ELT materials recognise international forms of English	8.40%	50.61%	27.66%	12.09%	1.23%
Contemporary English language testing and assessment meet the needs of young-adult learners	8.38%	45.19%	29.65%	13.29%	3.48%
Contemporary English language syllabuses meet the needs of young-adult learners	7.17%	41.80%	34.22%	14.34%	2.46%

Appendix 7: Young-adult English language learners questionnaire participants, by country

Country where you live	Response percentage	Response (N)
Austria	0.36%	1
Belgium	8.57%	24
Bulgaria	0.71%	2
Croatia	0.71%	2
Czech Republic	6.79%	19
Denmark	0.71%	2
Estonia	0.36%	1
France	4.64%	13
Germany	2.14%	6
Greece	1.43%	4
Hungary	0.36%	1
Italy	1.07%	3
Latvia	8.93%	25
Lithuania	5.71%	16

Country where you work	Response percentage	Response (N)
Macedonia	0.36%	1
Netherlands	0.36%	1
Poland	12.86%	36
Portugal	6.07%	17
Russia	1.79%	5
Serbia	2.14%	6
Slovakia	17.14%	48
Slovenia	3.93%	11
Spain	7.86%	22
Turkey	1.43%	4
Ukraine	0.36%	1
United Kingdom	0.36%	1
(Other)	2.86%	8
Total		280

Note: There were no survey participants from those European countries not listed above.

Appendix 8: Descriptive statistics for Sections B–E (questions 6–16) of the young-adult English language learner questionnaire (all survey responses)

Question 6: Here is a list of statements about the kind of English language knowledge and skills you need. Tick ONE box for each statement to summarise your views.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I need to have pronunciation like a native-speaker of English	24.82%	45.04%	18.44%	10.99%	0.71%
I need to use grammar like a native-speaker of English	32.03%	48.75%	15.30%	3.56%	0.36%
I need to be familiar with native-speaker idioms and idiomatic language	37.37%	43.77%	13.52%	5.34%	0.00%
I need to use native-speaker idioms and idiomatic language	17.63%	43.53%	23.02%	15.11%	0.72%
I need to know about British, US or other English-speaking cultures	22.50%	45.71%	20.00%	10.00%	1.79%
I need to know about the way other non-native English speakers use English (e.g. their accent, grammar and vocabulary)	12.95%	32.01%	32.73%	17.99%	4.32%
I need to be able to use English in online written communication (e.g. email, texting, tweeting and messaging)	55.40%	34.53%	5.76%	3.60%	0.72%
I need to be able to use English in online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or FaceTime)	49.29%	38.57%	6.79%	3.57%	1.79%
I need to be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English	40.29%	51.08%	6.47%	2.16%	0.00%
I need to be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in spoken and written English	39.86%	47.46%	10.87%	1.45%	0.36%
I need to be familiar with new words, phrases and expressions in online English (e.g. LOL, PAW)	22.94%	44.09%	23.66%	8.24%	1.08%
I need to be able to use new words, phrases and expressions in online English (e.g. LOL, PAW)	19.34%	42.34%	22.63%	13.14%	2.55%

Question 7: English is spoken or used in different ways in different contexts (for example, British English differs from American English). Which variety of English do you need to learn or speak? Tick the relevant items (you may tick as many as appropriate).

British English	78.72%
American English	53.90%
European English	20.79%
International English	44.68%
English for online communication	29.08%
A non-standard regional variety of English (e.g. New York English)	8.16%
English related to a specific job or career (e.g. English for business, for tourism, for engineering)	39.01%

Question 9: In your opinion, where will you use English most often? Rank the possibilities below in order from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most likely and 3 the least likely. You can use each number only once.

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Mean ranking
I will use English most often in my home country	27.07%	18.80%	54.14%	1.73
I will use English most often in other non-English speaking countries	21.43%	54.14%	24.44%	1.97
I will use English most often visiting or living in an English-speaking country	51.50%	27.07%	21.43%	2.30

Question 11: Like all languages, English can be used for different purposes, e.g. for speaking or writing, online or face-to-face. Which of the following ways of communicating in English will you use most often? Rank the possibilities below in order, 1 to 4, with 1 being the most frequent and 4 being the least frequent. You can use each number only once.

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Ranked 4	Mean ranking
Online written communication (e.g. texting, email, written chat and messaging)	32.20%	32.95%	28.03%	6.82%	2.91
Online spoken communication (e.g. via Skype or FaceTime)	7.58%	17.42%	23.48%	51.52%	1.81
Reading and writing on paper	21.59%	29.55%	28.41%	20.45%	2.52
Face-to-face spoken communication	38.64%	20.08%	20.08%	21.21%	2.76

Question 13: Here is a list of possible reasons why young adults might want to learn English. How important is each reason for you? (Select ONE box for each reason to summarise your views)

	Very important	←				→	Not at all important
To help me communicate with native speakers	54.12%	27.45%	14.90%	1.18%	0.78%	1.18%	0.39%
To communicate with other non-native speakers who speak English	56.64%	32.03%	7.03%	3.91%	0.00%	0.39%	0.00%
To understand English language films, music and television	52.96%	26.88%	13.04%	3.56%	1.98%	0.40%	1.19%
To participate in online social networks (e.g. Bebo, Facebook, Myspace or Ning)	18.36%	31.64%	21.48%	13.28%	5.08%	5.08%	5.08%
To participate in online games	10.24%	12.20%	13.78%	10.63%	9.84%	11.81%	31.50%
To travel to the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries	56.47%	27.06%	8.24%	4.31%	1.18%	1.96%	0.78%
To help me find work in my home country	42.52%	25.20%	18.11%	5.12%	4.33%	2.36%	2.36%
To help me find work in the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries	54.12%	16.08%	11.37%	6.27%	3.14%	5.49%	3.53%
To help me find work in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people	34.38%	26.95%	16.02%	9.38%	5.47%	4.69%	3.13%
To help me understand UK, US or other English-speaking cultures	31.76%	32.94%	17.65%	9.02%	5.49%	2.35%	0.78%
To appear more knowledgeable or sophisticated	21.18%	24.71%	17.25%	16.47%	6.67%	5.88%	7.84%
To help me get good grades at school, college or university	33.73%	28.24%	14.51%	10.98%	5.88%	3.14%	3.53%
For my future career	67.72%	22.83%	5.91%	1.97%	0.00%	1.18%	0.39%
To pass IELTS or a similar international English language qualification	27.17%	21.65%	16.54%	18.50%	7.87%	2.36%	5.91%
To be more respected by my own age group	8.73%	17.46%	18.25%	15.08%	11.11%	10.32%	19.05%
For study purposes in my own country	29.48%	23.90%	22.31%	12.75%	5.58%	1.20%	4.78%
For study purposes in the UK, USA or other English-speaking countries	36.61%	18.11%	14.57%	13.39%	6.69%	4.72%	5.91%
For study purposes in other countries where English is not the first language of the majority of people	29.64%	17.79%	17.39%	18.18%	5.53%	5.53%	5.93%

Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning English changes the way people feel about their own country	10.16%	32.93%	34.15%	15.45%	7.32%
The English language is a threat to national or local languages	7.76%	25.31%	22.45%	29.80%	14.69%
The English language is a threat to national or local cultures	6.94%	20.41%	24.08%	31.43%	17.14%
In the future, knowing English will be as important as knowing my country's first or national language	38.02%	38.43%	16.94%	4.96%	1.65%
In my country, people who speak English have a more international outlook than people who do not	32.24%	44.49%	15.10%	6.12%	2.04%

Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Young adults are more positive about English than older age groups	34.43%	46.31%	12.30%	6.56%	0.41%
Young adults use English more than older age groups	43.62%	43.21%	11.11%	1.23%	0.82%
Young adults have a more positive attitude towards English than towards their own first language	14.34%	34.84%	31.97%	16.39%	2.46%
Young adults see English as something they must know to be successful	35.12%	47.52%	11.98%	5.37%	0.00%
People who have learned English to an advanced level are more positive about travel and living abroad	42.39%	37.45%	13.17%	6.58%	0.41%
People who have learned English to an advanced level are less positive about their home country	7.02%	19.01%	32.64%	31.82%	9.50%

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (tick ONE box for each statement).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant to me
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to pass English language exams	20.76%	58.05%	10.17%	8.05%	1.27%	1.69%
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with people from other countries for work	14.89%	48.09%	20.00%	12.34%	1.28%	3.40%
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English provide the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with people from other countries for leisure (e.g. travel and tourism)	20.34%	55.93%	15.68%	4.24%	1.69%	2.12%
The textbooks and materials (including online) I have used to learn English recognise international forms of English	12.82%	38.46%	27.78%	13.25%	3.42%	4.27%
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people through speech	17.52%	47.44%	19.66%	9.83%	3.42%	2.14%
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people in writing	18.45%	58.80%	14.16%	5.15%	1.29%	2.15%
The English language tests and assessments I have taken test the language knowledge and skills I need to communicate in English with other people online	16.17%	36.60%	22.98%	12.77%	6.81%	4.68%

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