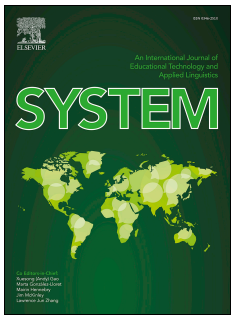

Developing Awareness of Global Englishes: Moving away from 'native standards' for Thai university ELT

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To my System Co-Editors:

Through EMURAS, the two lead authors and I have worked together in response to reviewer comments. We hope this manuscript successfully addresses reviewer concerns.

I will continue to be the 'handling' author for this submission, while Eric should be listed as the 'corresponding author' for publication.

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Thank you very much for your consideration,
Jim

Developing Awareness of Global Englishes: Moving away from 'native standards' for Thai university ELT

Abstract

Despite the continued growth of linguistic diversification and widespread utilization of English by multilingual and multicultural speakers, EFL-oriented pedagogies and native speakerism still profoundly dominate Thailand. To educationally maneuver away from this conceptualization, a new compulsory course called Global Englishes (GEs) was introduced at a Thai university. Using semi-structured interviews and weekly reflective journals for data collection, this qualitative study investigated the perceptions of 20 EFL university students before and after the course. The qualitative content-based analysis revealed an overwhelmingly positive shift in the students' attitudes towards GEs. Before the course, the students reported that they regarded American or British as the only internationally acceptable English varieties; meanwhile intolerance, dissatisfaction, and depreciation were associated with non-native English varieties. After the course, the students had increased tolerance for English diversity and understood the ways that other English varieties are realistically hybridized or dehegemonized across countries. The findings also illustrated that the students appreciated the value of 'Thai English', as they no longer viewed it as a communicative barrier. Implications point toward the need for enhancing students' awareness of English pluricentricity to push Thailand's English language teaching towards a more practical track, consistent with today's use of English in the real world.

Keywords: Global Englishes, World Englishes, English as a lingua franca, GE-oriented pedagogy, EFL-oriented pedagogy, English language teaching

1. Introduction

English as a tool for intercultural communication is used more frequently among users from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds than native speakers; however, EFL students may still feel that "English belongs to native speakers," unable to identify themselves as empowered English users (Norton, 2017, p. 13). Once 'owned' by specific groups of speakers, the global spread of English has gradually transferred the ownership of English to the global community. The new roles of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and World Englishes (WEs) (see definitions of ELF and WEs in the next section) have created significant impacts on the English language teaching (ELT) industry (Galloway & Rose, 2015, 2018; Jenkins, 2009, 2011; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011). While ELF views English as "a language of communication used by speakers of different first languages and in situations where these speakers need a common language for communication" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 143), WEs is a paradigm that values the wealth of English diversity/variation and prioritises the pluricenticity of English created by a global majority of non-native English speakers (Davies et al., 2003). With this understanding, some ELT practitioners hold that the ELT targets should be reconceptualized (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose, Syrbe, Montakantiwong & Funada, 2020). More precisely, the goals of ELT, its strategy, curricula, teaching contents and instructional and training materials should not be exclusively focused on EFL principles which regard native English (British or American English) as the standard of ELT. More suitable English language pedagogies are needed for these learners and users so that the teaching reflects ELF, real-world utilization, and new linguistic landscapes (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Jenkins, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Researchers like Rose and Galloway (2019) argue that the traditional framework of ELT that incorporates English as a foreign language (EFL) now appears to be impracticable since it does not reflect the pluralistic reality of English as a lingua franca. However, EFL lessons in many contexts, including Thailand, focus students' acquisition on native-speaker (NS) proficiency and production of English outputs that resemble native English speakers (NES)[1]. From these EFL perspectives, there are claims that NES are the only group of speakers who speak standard English and have the rightful authority to control the directions of ELT, as it is the case with Thailand, for example (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020; Buripakdi, 2012; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011; Methitham, 2011).

Although English ownership has been challenged by GEs, ELT practices seem to be resistant to this paradigm shift. The ideologies of native speakerism persist in ELT markets, particularly in the expanding circle countries

[1] In this study, the Thai students' understanding of a NES is not a reductionist 'British or American'-only one, but they do view a NES as non-Thai. While an essentialist, simplistic idealisation of a NES might make it harder for students to make the distinction between models and goals, this was not the case in the present study.

where English is used as a foreign language (Cogo, 2012; Fang, 2016; Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2015, 2018; Ren, 2014; Rose & Galloway, 2019). In Thailand where this study was conducted, non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) are believed to be inferior and second class (Boriboon, 2011; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012). English is a requisite foreign language in Thai educational system, considered as a compulsory course from primary to university level (Akkakoson, 2019; Jindapitak, 2019). According to Boonsuk and Ambele (2019) and Kitjaroonchai (2012), the Thai government is committed to strengthening the English skills of Thais. In examining ELT in the Thai context, the employed pedagogies are exceedingly conventional. Basically, ELT learners are encouraged to follow the native English speaker path (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020; Methitham 2009; Waelateh et al., 2019). Most teaching approaches, such as audio-lingual method, functional-communicative approaches, and communicative language teaching (CLT) (Methitham, 2009) revolve around western-based theories and NES pedagogical materials. Consequently, many policymakers, educators, and local teachers in Thailand approve of teaching approaches that iconize NES. This is troubling for many reasons, but particularly because the number of non-native English speakers (NNES) is significantly higher than NES with the trajectory to rise even higher in the future (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011). This phenomenon is inevitably increasing the chances of more English encounters (e.g., interlocutors and communicative contexts) with or among non-native speakers who are from diverse backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2011). Consequently, it is imperative to raise the awareness of such sociolinguistic transformations among teachers and students. It has been suggested that GEs-oriented pedagogies should be implemented or integrated into English language teaching and learning practices in repsonse to the changing sociolinguistic landscape of English use today.

There are increasing calls for more studies that investigate GEs integrations in ELT contexts (see Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2020 for a review). In response to this call, the researchers designed and implemented a new compulsory 'Global Englishes' course at a Thai university. The contents mainly exposed students to different English-usage domains as well as the global position and roles of English. To enhance the practicality of GEs in ELT, this study aimed to investigate undergraduate EFL students' perceptions of GEs before and after being exposed to a Global Englishes course, in response to calls for more longitudinal research designs (see Rose et al., 2020). The focus on perception here concerns people's feelings about their own language or about other people's language; this mainly involves the analysis of the reasons for their favorability or lack thereof to determine language status within a society (Baker, 1992; Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003). Therefore, an understanding of the perception that students (as it relates to Thai learners' Global Englishes attitudes) have of their own English (and their perception towards their own Thai accent) and others' could lead to changes in how it feels using it (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006; Garrett, 2010; Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003). Moreover, the study of students' perceptions can help language learners to understand their own attitudes about their language in terms of language policy and language learning. By extension, educators and policymakers can also benefit by responding to the needs of learners (Bartram, 2010; Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003; Friedrich, 2000).

Based on the aims in this study, two research questions were established:

1. What Global Englishes-oriented attitudes do Thai EFL university students have while taking a Global Englishes course, and why?
2. How do Thai EFL university students in a Global Englishes course perceive their own Thai English accent?

2. Defining Global Englishes

GEs has previously been defined, as: "the spread and use of diverse forms of English within processes of globalization" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 5, as cited in Rose & Galloway, 2019). Rose and Galloway (2019, p. 4) define GEs "as an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and English users in a globalized world." The GEs paradigm is characterized by the following features: (1) the majority of English speakers are NNESs who are not considered as 'eternal learners' or 'failed native speakers. Rather, they are considered to be good communicators / users in their own rights; (2) Linguistic heterogeneity and divergent language use in interaction are not seen as a problem; (3) NESs as the target language model are not given any special emphasis; the main focus is on gaining effective intercultural communication skills; (4) NES English ownership is being promoted in global ownership (Galloway, 2013; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Such features underpin guidance in improving ELT practices.

GEs has also been described as an umbrella term and a larger conceptual classification that include WEs (World Englishes) and ELF ideologies (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). It is a sociolinguistic paradigm established to simultaneously diminish geographic and linguistic boundaries of English, reduce its diversity gaps, and acknowledge its diversity and dynamics (Galloway & Rose, 2018). Similarly, World Englishes (WEs), which predates GEs, is a paradigm that does not give priority to a monocentric native English, but pluricentric Englishes generated by non-native speakers of English (NNES). Consequently, WEs also adopts the view that the use of English should not be exclusively tied to the concept of nativeness (e.g., British or American English), but other English varieties produced in different communities also deserve recognition.

ELF views English as "a contact language used amongst speakers with different first languages. ELF is used in contexts where speakers of different first languages need a common language to communicate with one another" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 143). It is similar to WEs in the sense that both concepts are beyond the traditional native norms and national exclusivity. In ELF environments, English becomes more dynamic and adaptive as it is constantly adjusted to suit communicative circumstances (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011). Having been extensively altered to serve diverse social purposes, Seidlhofer's (2011) ELF study reported that ELF involves 'multiculturalism, multilingualism, polymodels, and pluricentrism' which contrast traditional ideologies where English is only about 'monoculturalism, monolingualism, monomodels, and monocentrism' (p. 134).

Finally, GEs does not perceive English as an additional language users as external learners or substandard speakers, but as successful communicators in an English pattern of their choice (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Moreover, GEs values the importance of existing linguistic contexts and strategies that form English diversity. The concept does not perceive such differences as problematic in communication and NES are no longer the ideal models in English learning. On the contrary, it prioritizes communication and meaning negotiation skills that contribute to the success of real-life conversations in multilingual and multicultural situations. Regarding English ownership, GEs holds that the language is not exclusive to a specific user or group, but it belongs to the world and with this global ownership, anyone who uses English is rightfully entitled to the ownership claim (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2019; Jenkins, 2009; Matsuda, 2003; Widdowson, 2003).

3. Global Englishes and English Language Teaching and relevant GELT research

The Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) framework was originally established by Galloway (2011) to provide a usable conceptual framework and to inform the development of English language curricula. In addition to previous comparisons of Canagarajah (2005) and Seilhofer (2004), the original model is informed by similar comparisons such as Jenkins' (2006) EFL vs. ELF conceptualization (McKinley, 2018). GELT was designed to raise students' awareness of English diversity and challenge native-speaker oriented ELT. It simultaneously conceptualizes all English users as target interlocutors and English owners where English learning is fluidly organized with diverse target cultures and English norms. Within this framework, English is taught with no strict attachments to native cultures, norms, or standards. Therefore, GELT is designed to deliver more practical ELT experiences because it can suitably accommodate the current English dynamics that occur across the three circles (i.e., inner, outer, and expanding). We note, however, that GELT is not intended to be a method of teaching. Rather, it questions the English stereotypes which infiltrate teaching practices, saturate teaching materials and permeate the learners' ideologies. This needs only a reassessment of current practice in view of the changing social language uses (Rose & Galloway, 2019). GELT therefore gives new perspectives on language perception, question norms and monolingual ideology, and promotes a level playing field between practitioners and curriculum planners and monolingual ideologies. It recognizes the importance of the entire linguistic repertoire and the semiotic process of bi- /multilingual speakers and is aimed at emancipating them from strict native regulations. This therefore offers a learning opportunity for educators to encourage their students to draw on their various languages for interaction; to understand and improve the use of different languages (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Among the few studies on GEs pedagogical integration and implementation (Fang, 2016; Galloway, 2011, 2013, 2017; Galloway & Rose, 2014, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2017; Sifakis, 2017; Sung, 2014, 2018), Galloway and Rose (2018) have made an outstanding attempt to investigate perceptions of university students in Japan towards GELT. The study tasked the sample to select and present an English variety of interest. The students were asked to present and discuss the chosen varieties of English with their peers. They found that the students displayed positive viewpoints on non-standard English varieties through their engagement with the activity. Furthermore,

the findings revealed that the study not only enhanced the students' comprehension of phonology, grammar, lexical and pragmatical diversity among English varieties, but also "reflected … the linguistic history of a nation in order to understand the process that helped shape the English spoken there" (Galloway and Rose, 2018, p. 10). Similarly, in Galloway's studies (2011, 2013, 2017), she implemented a Global Englishes course at a Japanese university to examine changes in attitudes of Japanese students on GEs. Different GEs issues including ELF, English variation, and standard English ideology were included as the main contents of discussion. The findings showed that after completing the course, the students showed positive attitudes toward GELT, and this could raise the confidence of the students towards their self-identity as English users. In Sung's (2014) study of Hong Kong students' incorporation of GEs into ELT, the students were assigned to do tasks which included a discussion on standard language ideology, and an accent identification task by listening to different English accents. These activities increased the awareness of the students towards the diversity of English. This finding was congruent with Sung's (2018) study in which students were asked to engage in ELF communication outside the classroom.

In Thailand, GEs pedagogies have not been commonly practiced and native-speakerism EFL methods continue to dominate its ELT industry. Indeed, one contrastive study of GEs innovations in Japanese and Thai university contexts, highlighted greater structural and ideological barriers to change in Thailand compared to Japan (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018). This educational phenomenon is primarily caused by two determinants: the educational stakeholders in Thai society still value NES as ideal learning targets and most teachers do not know much about GEs and associated pedagogies (Buripakdi, 2012; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011, Methitham, 2011). Nevertheless, today's ELT practitioners in Thailand are becoming increasingly aware of the GEs concept and are interested in trying new approaches (Baker, 2012; Prabjandee, 2020).

Similarly, Jindapitak and Teo (2012) ran an activity in a Thai university adapted from Munro, Derwing, and Sato (2006) which comprised three chronological steps. The students were to 1) gather and prepare the speech samples from different non-native sources; 2) evaluate the audio samples based on certain criteria and present the evaluation results; and 3) conclude the evaluation and discussed with the class about the task outcomes. After the activity, it was discovered that the students showed increased interests and demonstrated positive attitudes towards diverse English use. Also, the students became aware that there are many nationally and internationally recognized English varieties being used in diverse communicative contexts and that the mainstream ones such as British and American English are just two. Galloway and Rose (2015), McKenzie (2010), and Sewell (2013) illustrated that in ELT, promoting the students' awareness of globally existing English varieties are more beneficial than strictly limiting them to some indigenous Englishes.

4. Research methodology

4.1 The new Global Englishes course

A "Global Englishes" course was designed to enhance the students' awareness of different English varieties, and to present English facts, evolution, statuses, attitudes, and ideologies. Specifically, the content was organized based on the following themes: English in the global context, the early spread of English around the world, standard English ideology, English as a lingua franca, linguistics imperialism, the creation of inequalities by the global spread of English, linguistics discrimination towards varieties of English, the ownership of English, the question of intelligibility in World Englishes, and the future of English. This elective course was administered to 30 students in a 17-week semester, and repeated with a new group of 30 students the following semester. The main course books were *Introducing Global Englishes* by Galloway and Rose (2015) and *Global Englishes* by Jenkins (2015). Extra instructional media including research articles, academic papers, and relevant online contents (e.g., video interviews of scholars) were also incorporated into the course. As required by the course, by the end of the semester, the students were tasked to submit mini-research reports using the course-relevant topics that the groups selected, presented to the class; and discussed the findings with classmates and the lecturer.

4.2 Participants and research instruments

The participants of this study were 20 fourth-year undergraduates from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education, with those from Education being trained to become English teachers in the future. 10 out of 30 enrolled students were selected for the study from each semester. To include participants who could provide the most informative data in response to the research questions, a purposive sampling strategy was used known as 'critical case sampling': identifying those "who are likely able to provide the most

information on a given phenomenon" (Rose, McKinley & Briggs Baffoe-Djan, 2020, p. 161). Therefore, the 20 participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) the participants had been exposed to and taught by native and non-native English speaking teachers at the university; and (2) the participants had joined English-medium activities (e.g., International Food Festival in Thailand; International Exchange Program abroad) within and outside of Thailand with international interlocutors from other Southeast and East Asian countries. By implementing these criteria, the participants were found suitable in achieving the overall objective of this study.

Following Galloway and Rose (2014, 2018), based on cycles of a GEs action research project in Japan in which data were collected via journals and interviews, for the current study, the same two data collection methods were employed. The participating students were asked to keep a weekly reflective journal to be submitted to the researchers at the end of the semester, following a set of prompts (see Appendix C) about the learning they acquired through the course along with course-related satisfactory and dissatisfactory matters. Such data collection is highly effective for qualitative research, as journals are "a powerful research method to gain insight into learner practices and thoughts" and "can provide a valuable and systematic vehicle for reflection and learner introspection in autonomous learning" (Rose, McKinley & Briggs Baffoe-Djan, 2020, p. 134). In addition to the journal, the students were also asked to be part of a semi-structured interview (see Appendix B) at the end of each semester which sought to explore their course-related learning, and their attitudes towards GEs and their personal English varieties before and after the course. This was also a chance for the researchers to explore ideas from the students' journals. Both the reflective journals and interviews were conducted in Thai. The researchers subsequently translated the contents into English and analyzed the data using qualitative content analysis (Selvi, 2020). For ethical reasons, the researchers informed the students that participating in the study would not have any effect on their grades in any way and that they could opt-out from the research project at any time.

4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis involves the systematic assignment of content to categories through subjective interpretation, taking into consideration the frequency of categorical content (Selvi, 2020). Qualitative content analysis was used to evaluate and interpret the information gathered from the weekly reflective journal and interview. The interviews were audio-recorded, then closely transcribed in Thai, and finally translated into English. The journals and interview transcriptions amounted to a total of 41,940 words (15,360 words for the journal data and 26,580 words for the interview transcripts).

The researchers read through the transcriptions repeatedly to inductively identify salient patterns from the interview and journal data. To increase trustworthiness, first, intercoder reliability was negotiated via researchers independently coding the data and comparing categories, and later, 'member checks' were conducted in which possible categories for coding were sent to each participant to crosscheck for accuracy (Selvi, 2020). The students' replies confirmed that they were satisfied with the researchers' coding. After receiving the confirmation from the participants, the coding frame was established, and the coding process was initiated. Coding was implemented so as to describe, structure, and interpret the data, which were coded through segmentation of the interview and journal transcripts into sections of similar contents, and the themes were then induced from each section in the data. Next, the researchers consolidated the data into two overarching themes appropriate to the study objective. The emerging themes are discussed in following section.

5. Findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses the emerging themes obtained from the data analysis. The salient themes discussed in this section include attitudes of the students towards Global Englishes (see 5.1) and their perceptions of their Thai accent when speaking English (see 5.2). The semi-structured interviews and reflective journals provided data of similar contents, and those relevant to our research objectives are integrated in the presentation of the findings below. Excerpts from the data are identified as either from the interviews (I) or journals (J), followed by the participant's number (e.g., J-14).

5.1 Student attitudes towards Global Englishes

In response to RQ1, the data revealed that all 20 students did not recall being familiar with the GEs concept before being enrolled in the "Global Englishes" course. They reported to have neither heard of GEs (I-1) nor, to have ever heard of varieties other than British or American (J-8); or vaguely heard of the term but did not

explore it any further (I-13). One student used the word 'prestigious' referring to British and American Englishes:

> I had not known of other varieties of English until recently. My exposure had always been native varieties as we have been told by our teachers that these are the only two prestigious varieties (J-14).

From such responses, it seems that introducing students to various English varieties may be an entirely new idea—one that better represents most of the world's use of English. It also suggests that switching from inner circle contents to more familiar regional and local cultural contents may be more appropriate in teaching English since the language has now become a global language (Baker, 2012; Galloway & Rose, 2018). Many students agreed that this course allowed them to investigate English through a new lens that showed them the new reality they never thought existed (I-4, 7, 11), some adding that their "perception of English started changing beyond traditional native-oriented pedagogy" (J-15). Previously, they usually employed native English norms as the criteria to judge people's verbal and nonverbal performances in English activities and daily usage. Through taking the Global Englishes course, they came to comprehend that there are many English varieties in the world, and hence, "it is not that necessary to attempt to speak like NES", as one student reflected:

> This course has introduced me to different varieties of English and I think that other varieties are as important as British and American varieties as well. This awareness gives me a positive attitude towards other varieties or speakers of these varieties (J-20).

The findings indicated that at the end of taking the course, the students developed positive attitudes and became significantly more open-minded to accept non-native English varieties. They recognized that, in addition to the British and American varieties, 'there are diverse English varieties across geographical boundaries around the globe that deserve attention'. Furthermore, although the ways that NNES use English might be different from the way NES do, their deviations should not be neglected or treated as substandard as these differences shape new norms for different English varieties in today's English conversations.

According to two participants, the EFL or native-oriented teaching approaches is a "myth" (I-5; J-15) given the current roles of English nowadays. In addition, four participants (I-11, 16; J-5, 18) felt the idea of still relying on native norms or models is a result of the "lack of awareness" of the new changing roles of English. To clarify, the native models have failed to address the current sociolinguistic landscapes of English. This supports the arguments made by some researchers (Fang & Ren, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019) that English teachers, as the main influencers in the classes, should take the impracticality seriously and begin to accept and teach their learners that modern English is fluid and multifaceted in nature. To be more practical in ELT, as proposed by Fang and Ren (2018) and Rose and Galloway (2019), native norms should not be the aim of teaching and learning English. As such, GELT is a practical alternative English teaching and learning model to cope with new sociolinguistic landscapes of English.

Some students also proposed that "the concept of GEs should become more integrated into ELT practices" (I-3, 7; J-16). The students compared GEs and EFL pedagogies and discussed that the GEs ELT is more appealing than an EFL pedagogy. The reason is that GEs addresses the current English reality which is no longer closely attached with nativeness, monocentric norms, or any specific English-speaking nations such as the USA and the UK (the idea that the EFL concept is so fond of). GEs perceives English as a universally diverse and fluid language that can be contextually adjusted across geographies where communicative practicality is the top priority.

In addition, the study showed that there were three students who criticized what Holliday (2006) referred to as native speakerism (i.e., NESTs are best for ELT) as "a misconception that is unresponsive to modern ELT" (I-5, 10). For example:

> With the diverse use of Englishes across the world, consisting of nonnative speakers outnumbering native speakers, the concept of native speakerism needs a thorough revision and reconceptualization. Nowadays, everyone owns English (J-18).

Further, the students suggested that the misconception is rather "serious and leads to problematic ELT practices". In terms of English ownership, 13 out of 20 students reported that before they took the course, they strongly believed that NES are only those with inner circle origins (e.g., from the UK and USA). Based on two

students' data, however, their perceptions were altered after the course (I-16; J-18). One opined that "English is diversely used across and beyond geographic boundaries" (I-16). They both expressed the idea that "as most English users are not from inner-circle countries, the concept of English ownership should be reconceptualised". What the participants demonstrated here corroborates with Jenkins (2015) and Fang (2016) who illustrated that English is now a global language with global ownership.

To this issue, some students openly expressed that "when English is vastly shared by many in the world, it cannot exclusively belong to anyone or any ethnicity" (I-5, 11; J-18). Rather, it becomes a language with global ownership where every English user can enjoy being the one who owns it. On this account, Blair (2015, p. 99) insisted that the concepts of "nativeness, ownership, and idealized pedagogical norms..." should be removed from ELT for one to understand how the current Englishes are being employed, a notion reflected specifically by some students (I-10, 11; J-15). In other words, EFL pedagogies which grant NES excessive controls and decision power to determine the rights and wrongs should no longer be the primary ELT option and hence, modern ELT requires a thorough re-examination and reconsideration (Dewey, 2013; McKay, 2006).

5.2 Student perceptions towards a Thai Accent

In response to RQ2, we refer to reflections on their perceptions before the course, in which 14 students (I-1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; J-5, 8, 11, 15, 18, 20) were negative about their own English (Thai English in this case), especially their accent. The participants expressed feelings of being discriminated against when they engaged in English conversations with those unaccustomed to a Thai accent or reprimanded by some of their Thai teachers and friends in class when they speak English using their Thai accent. A salient case is when one of the interview participants described his embarrassment using English:

> Some of us looked down on our own Thai English accent as 'bad English' or a variety with less prestige and confidence. We still hold strong beliefs and prestige in the native English accent against our own Thai English accent. This lack of confidence makes us to feel like people don't understand us when we speak (I-9).

From the participants' perspective, the EFL-oriented pedagogy where native English accents are considered more prestigious than non-native English accents, needs to be reconceptualized and the concept of linguistic correctness should be reconstructed to suit today's sociolinguistic realities (Fang & Ren, 2018). As previously discussed, most students did not enjoy learning English when their teachers compared them or evaluated their spoken English based on NES linguistic benchmarks. It was evident that the teachers focused on the NS model as the ideal pedagogical model for their students to learn English without realistically considering the learners' learning goals and how to practically achieve them. Such conduct tended to diminish the students' confidence and learning motivation (I-17). One student reflected on the need to defend an identity associated with Thai English against discrimination.

> Thai English is our identity; it's who we are; it's what defines us. Discrimination against our own accents or the prejudice of it is unfair and biased because it is denying us of our language identity (J-11).

This kind of perceived prejudice against English users with Thai accent causes the students to shy away from English communication activities, especially when they are not confident about their English competence. Hence, instead of forcing the students to imitate NES accents and produce English with grammatical precision, the teachers should pay more attention to the comprehensibility and intelligibility of communication (Cogo, 2015).

For some participants, their perception regarding how other people, especially their teachers, treat them based on their Thai accent emerges from their direct experiences in secondary schools (I-12). These students described an experience in which every time their teachers tasked them to read aloud or raise opinions in their English classes, they would receive negative peer-feedback on a regular basis (e.g., teasing, making fun of, and laughing at them). Even worse, the teachers also verbally penalized them for misreading the contents or reading with stronger accents and forced them to try to sound 'native-like'. For example:

> I do not only get teased from my peers but also from my teachers who would try to always correct my English in class. It seems like every time I speak there is always a mistake with my English (I-13).

Additionally, several students indicated that some university lecturers from other disciplines, students from other majors, and university support staffs also pointed out that their English outputs are nowhere close to that of the NES, even saying that they sounded "dumb" (I-6), "unnatural" (I-9), and "unpleasant" (I-17) . To avoid embarrassment, some students (I-3, 9) attempted to imitate the native accents from their lecturers, movies, music, and TV programs. Among all the inner circle accents, British and American Englishes were the top two most preferred English accents that the students opted to imitate. This finding suggested that the students chose to devalue and marginalize their Thai accent and perceived that of the native speakers as more desirable. To "sound classy" and be "socially recognized", as Participant 3 observed, the students were compelled to rely on the seemingly superior NES accents.

> I will take upon myself the challenge to improve my English and sound native in order to compete with my friends and avoid being bullied by them. I spend most hours of the day watching English movies from America or Britain and also, listening to music from these countries (I-3).

Nonetheless, after completing the course, an interesting paradigm shift occurred. The students consistently agreed that each English variety has its unique identity and that speaking English with a Thai accent is not something to be "ashamed of" (I-1; J-12, 13, 16). Contrarily, they eventually perceived that speaking with the familiar Thai accent could be perceived as "charming" as it reflects and symbolizes their collective identity (I-1; J-13, 16). Even though some had previously believed that correct English speaking should resemble NES, after taking this course, they felt otherwise (i.e., the notion is not necessarily the case). In the same vein, some students (I-1; J-16) expressed that in communication, what ultimately matters is not the use of accent but rather the communicative strategies that would get the message across to the interlocutors. As one participant proposed, speaking English with a Thai accent is not to be viewed as "strange" or "failed" English.

> I think a course like this is useful for everyone to take, especially in Thailand because some Thai people still think that speaking English using Thai accent is a taboo and bad English. Now I feel happy and confident about my Thai English accent because this course has taught me that it is just one of the different varieties of Englishes that exist today (J-12).

Additionally, the students believed that before the course, they were concerned about correct English speaking which they perceived would require the speakers to conform to NES-based standards, and because of that, they felt reluctant to speak English with a Thai accent. However, they indicated that after this course, the deeply rooted linguistic fear diminished (I-1; J-13, 16). They consistently reported that this course helped to reduce their linguistic anxiety and to boost their confidence in using English with their Thai accent. As long as their accent does not result in any communication breakdown, the students considered grammatical mistakes of less importance. Moreover, some students reported that they felt more comfortable and relieved when speaking English with a Thai accent as they felt less pressured to be compared to native standards (I-1). This notion indicates that students became aware of their accent as acceptable today. Modern English perceptions and practices need to be reconceptualized to match the practical evolution of English usage which is diversely pluricentric in nature, as described by one participant:

> I have just realized that nothing about my Thai English is embarrassing that I need to be ashamed of. The roles of English have change and people, including myself, now use it variably to achieve their different communicative goals. As long as my Thai English fulfils this goal, then, I have communicated effectively (I-7).

6. Implications for ELT in Thailand and beyond

The current study has shown that after taking the Global Englishes course, the students had increased tolerance for English diversity and understood the ways that other English varieties are realistically hybridized or dehegemonized across countries. The findings provide evidence that the learners had improved awareness and adopted positive values towards English diversity and varieties across contexts. Furthermore, the learners indicated that the emergence of these unfamiliar varieties did not obstruct English language learning and real-life communication. It also showed that they appreciated the value of 'Thai English,' as they no longer viewed it as a communicative barrier. The students' positive perceptions towards different varieties of English including their own English calls for the transformation of GELT concepts in ELT practices in Thailand which seems to challenge what Norton and Toohey (2004) described as the deeply rooted 'standard' language ideology that many teachers, students, and other educational stakeholders have.

The evolution of English, based on its extensive use, has produced many more varieties, and today, English is no longer a monocentric language with a single accepted variety. In fact, it has been gradually developed into multiple varieties based on the users and all are entitled to 'own' English. Since the majority of English speakers are now NNES, a significant question is being asked in the ELT markets: which English or whose English should be taught, learned, and used? The GEs perspective advocates for the use of English that is detached from formerly standard linguistic norms since it is no longer a monocentric language. GEs users have long been hybridizing, adapting, and switching between English varieties in communication within multi-linguacultural environments. Hence, it is time for ELT to progress away from unrealistic preferences for "monolingual native speakers, homogeneous national cultures, pure standard national languages, instrumental goals of education, functional criteria of success" (Kramsch 2009, p. 190) and recognize the position of English as a globalized and intercultural lingua franca in real-world communication where the majority of English users are non-native interlocutors. Hence, this paradigm shift questions the legitimacy of pro-native-English pedagogies in responding to the practical use of English in changing linguistic landscapes, especially in expanding circle nations.

As key influencers, while it may not be feasible in all contexts due to barriers to change, English teachers could seek to cultivate positive attitudes towards GEs pedagogies and adopt GEs frameworks. This cultivation could be supported by introducing teacher education policy that requires completion of a GE course. Arguably, such a change could then affect social attitudes about so-called native English. GEs approaches seem best positioned to allow students to learn authentic international English, acknowledge English diversity, understand different linguistic varieties, and apply the linguistic practices that are suitable with each communicative context. Importantly, encouragement for switching to GEs pedagogies does not suggest that linguistic accuracy should be abandoned. What is needed are GEs approaches that prioritize "mutual intelligibility" where communication is enhanced through meaning negotiation (Fang & Ren, 2018). To elaborate further, when it comes to ASEAN, e.g., Thailand and member nations, incorporating local and familiar cultural content could facilitate language learning and promote usability through the enrichment of local English vocabulary repertoires (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020). To address English diversity in ELT, educators must not avoid introducing real-world, practical, and up-to-date content in English classrooms. As a global lingua franca, English has become diversified, and its norms dynamically evolving based on different sociocultural contexts. Hence, ELT stakeholders must understand its pluricentricity and fluidity, meaning that teaching Western culture could be a plus but not a GELT requirement (Baker 2011). Moreover, it is equally vital for English language teachers to inform their students that the global spread of English causes the emergence of more than one accepted set of linguistic conventions, which are also known as English varieties, and each of them has taken an entirely separate path of an evolutionary journey across the globe (Rose & Galloway 2017).

For more practical international ELT, as presented in the findings of this study, we strongly recommend that curriculum designers and policymakers should integrate the GEs concept when they redesign ELT curriculums and policies (Galloway & Rose 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2014). Since GEs pedagogies differ from those of native-oriented EFL, modern ELT contents and policies should account for local and other English varieties. In multicultural and non-English-native contexts such as Thailand and other ASEAN countries, ELT materials should be selected to help learners explore, compare, and reflect on English intercultural features, which are shaped by local surrounding and distant influences. Rose and Galloway (2019) proposed glocal (global-local) as a term for this category of blended materials. In integrating cultural diversity through English learning materials, educators can utilize alternative pedagogies with higher responsiveness for today's interculturality of English, which are no longer about inner-circle conventions and cultures but rather about effective multi-context communication. All in all, even though the ELT markets have begun using the GEs concept more, the development of local teaching materials or the incorporation of local cultures in most ELT materials and textbooks, especially in the EFL contexts, are still exclusively manufactured by British and American publishers (Dewey, 2015; Gray, 2010; Jenkins, 2007). Based on these limitations, teachers could add supplementary learning activities to increase the students' awareness of the GEs concept.

Studying GEs through the main learning materials that are produced based on traditional EFL conceptualizations may be one of the many challenges pro- GEs teachers face. To provide effective international ELT activities, teachers could encourage students to explore different English varieties, select and present the one they find interesting, share and discuss it in class, as well as analyze and debate over samples produced by ELF users in various situations (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rose et al., 2020). ELT practitioners could expose learners to diverse Englishes spoken by speakers of various linguacultural backgrounds through different activities. For example, activities implemented by the authors were found to be practical in addressing the exposure needs. One activity involved creating mixed groups of Thai and international students (invited from other classes) to discuss and debate topics of Global Englishes, such as standard English, ownership of English,

accents, and the spread of English. Another activity required learners to discuss similar topics after viewing video clips of English conversations between Asian and Western speakers who have different linguacultural backgrounds. Given our current Covid-era restrictions, such an activity could be conducted online. Another noteworthy online activity is discussion and collaborations (either one-to-one or group) with overseas international students (Ishikawa 2020). Such activities are recommended because they encourage learners to explore English diversity and identify distinctions that surfaced across contexts where English is employed today. Furthermore, teachers could help to eradicate the deficit model common in traditional EFL that positions the students' English variety as inferior to native varieties (Baker, 2015; Kohn, 2015). With successful GEs-based learning management and ELT activities, the students can learn to value others' and their own English varieties as well.

Although the suggested approaches were found to have motivated learners to take a Global Englishers lens with multicultural perspectives to view English, a critical factor for their successful implementation lies within teachers' comprehensive understanding of the current status of English and roles when employed in intercultural environments. Additionally, this emerging phenomenon reflects the fact that many ongoing ELT strategies in EFL-oriented pedagogies fail to address changes in English linguistic landscapes and its global ownership. Hence, to respond to the changes, "…teachers and teacher educators need to reframe English language teaching in order to match the new sociolinguistic landscape of the 21st century…" (Rose et al., 2020, p. xi). Giving learners opportunities to examine real-life Englishes in global and local settings can enhance their awareness of English diversity and equip them with essential cross-cultural and global citizenship skills to employ English despite variety mismatches and culture shock.

7. Limitations and Conclusion

As a qualitative exploratory study with a relatively small amount of data collected from a single university, the results cannot be generalized. To provide a more extensive understanding of students' attitudes towards Global Englishes and their English varieties, future research could expand the study to cover more learning disciplines and geographies as well as employ a variety of data collection.

The Global Englishes course developed at this university in Thailand offers the students opportunities to learn English through a more critical perspective with a better understanding of its roles at national, regional, and global scales. And while the findings concluded that the course positively impacted the students' perceptions of GEs and their own English variety, this is not surprising. What is interesting, however, is what appears to be the students' change in perspective, having come to the course from a position that is fairly anti-GEs. Also notable was that these 20 students learned not only to value their Thai English, but also to gain more confidence in using it to communicate with domestic and foreign interlocutors. Concerning the impact of this study on the teacher-researchers who conducted it, it is evident that the experience has made more concrete the significance of including a GEs focus in Thailand higher education ELT curriculum. The experience has also demanded a more nuanced analysis of what is meant by a 'NES', namely that it refers not only to those who developed their knowledge of English from a very young age, but is also distinct in that a NES requires further influence or study to become a proficient EFL-user. This study could be conducted in contexts that do not have a dedicated Global Englishes course to compare findings.

To conclude, in terms of ELT, as international English users are from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, traditional EFL pedagogies with aims to achieve native-like competence are neither responsive to nor consistent with the current profile of English. Consequently, GEs pedagogies, as we have found in this small qualitative study, are more effective as they can help foster positive mindsets to approach and accommodate new global English contexts which involve speakers from different language backgrounds and cultures. Since GEs pedagogies are compatible with the current sociolinguistic landscape of English in Thailand, it seems educators would benefit greatly from incorporating them into ELT classrooms.

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Appendix B: Prompts for the semi-structure interviews

1. How is your past English learning experience? Why would you like to study English?
2. How do you perceive British, American, or Inner-Circle Englishes?
3. Before and after this course, how do you perceive non-Inner-Circle Englishes including your Thai-English and other varieties? For instance, what do you think of the accents and pronunciations?
4. After completing this course, what is your understanding of Global Englishes?
5. What do you think the future status of English as a language will be?
6. How likely do you think Global Englishes will be incorporated into ELT?
7. What did you like about this course? Are there any suggestions to make it better?

Appendix C: Reflective journal guidelines

1. What is your motivation behind selecting this course?

2. What are your opinions about the course before and after the learning?
3. What did you learn after completing each week's lesson? What are the main concepts that you have learned?
4. Elaborate what you like and dislike about the course. What are its strengths and weaknesses? What would be the rooms for improvement?
5. After completing the course, have you noticed any changes to your perceptions, attitudes, and ideologies towards modern English and English diversity?
6. After the course, have you noticed any changes to your perceptions,

attitudes, and ideologies towards English language teaching models?