

Teaching English as an International Language: Variables Affecting Vietnamese EFL Lecturers' Beliefs

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Abstract

Teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their beliefs and are unlikely to change if these influencing factors are not changed (Webster, McNeish, Scott, Maynard & Haywood, 2012). Current roles and functions of English as an international language (EIL) require changes in teachers' perspectives in teaching English for intercultural communication. This paper reports findings from a quantitative study which provides insights into the factors that likely inform the changes of teachers' beliefs. In the study, a close-ended questionnaire was distributed to 57 Vietnamese lecturers. Their answers were converted into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using a deductive approach. A Mann-Whitney U test, a nonparametric alternative for the independent samples t-test, was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' rating scores towards the teaching of EIL among teachers of English who had pursued their postgraduate and doctoral studies overseas and in Vietnam. The results revealed that teachers' international learning experience had a significant influence on teachers' perspectives whereas teaching experience, teachers' qualifications, and gender had no significant impact. The study suggests teachers are to be exposed to intercultural environments in order for them to develop beliefs and attitudes which will result in their adaptation of teaching EIL.

Keywords: English as an international language (EIL), intercultural communication, teachers' beliefs, teacher-related variables.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that today the number of bilingual speakers of English surpasses that of the first language speakers. The latest research from British Council predicts that by 2020 the number of people actively learning English will exceed 1.9 billion (British Council, 2013). This impressive number reveals a changing socio-linguistic reality of English, that is, English becomes the most dominant international language of the 21st century – a language of global communication, international trade, entertainment, education, and technology. This adds more functions and roles to the English language (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Matsuda, 2012). Cultural diversity and intercultural encounters, therefore, become the reality of the modern world, requiring intercultural competence to become a requisite response. In this regard, British Council emphasizes that the trend toward

21st-century education has shed light on the crucial need of being competent in communicating with multilingual and multicultural speakers. Similarly, Ge (2004) states that the main goal of English language teaching (ELT) in the 21st century is to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC), that is, the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with other interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). Therefore, not only does the English teaching practice focus on developing linguistic skills, but also enables learners to go beyond their own cultural boundaries. Given that reason, the pedagogy that prioritizes the single norms or the models of the native speaker becomes no longer adequate (British Council, 2013; Hamid & Baldauf, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Marlina, 2014; Sharifian, 2014). In many ELT contexts, the EIL paradigm which promotes varieties of Englishes and diversity of cultures in English communication has been employed by many language educators as an effective alternative to the above pedagogy and notably to enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence (Matsuda, 2012; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011; McKay, 2012; Phan, 2008). In Vietnam, however, the EIL paradigm is not widely adopted by many Vietnamese practitioners in their language classrooms. The native-speaker model is still dominant in ELT classrooms in which cultures of English-speaking countries are introduced and emphasized more than learners' own cultures and other cultures (Phan, 2008). Moreover, most of the time learners are exposed to American English and British English varieties rather than World Englishes such as Indian English, Singlish or Manglish (Nguyen, 2017; Tran & Ngo, 2017). This explained for the fact that many English users in Vietnam are facing problems using the language with non-native-English speakers in daily communications. Hence, several researchers (e.g., Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Mai, 2016; Nguyen, 2017; Tran & Moore, 2015; Tran & Ngo, 2017) have proposed a crucial need for ELT practitioners to change their teaching perspectives in order to meet Vietnamese learners' communicative needs.

As Webster et al. (2012) state, it is teachers' beliefs that cause their classroom practices which are unlikely to change if these influencing factors are not changed. Therefore, making changes in teachers' beliefs is considered to be one of the most important steps for the educational development and innovation. Nevertheless, research on the factors causing changes in teachers' beliefs, particularly concerning teaching EIL, is still scarce. This study, hence, contributes to filling the literature gap by exploring variables affecting teachers' beliefs concerning the EIL teaching implementation in higher education classrooms in Vietnam.

In what follows, the paper will review the features of an international language, distinguish the concept of EIL with World Englishes and English as a lingua franca, followed by an overview of EIL pedagogy. After that, the role of teachers' educational beliefs and teacher-related variables will be also presented. Next, the methodology of the study will be explained in more detail, followed by the findings, and then discussion and implications. The

paper will end with a conclusion capturing the main points of the study.

Literature Review

Features of an International Language

A significant definition of an international language was made by Smith (1976), stating that an international language is one which “is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another” (p. 17). Smith also makes important assertions on the relationship between an international language and culture, including (1) learners of an international language do not need to accept cultural beliefs, values of the native speakers, (2) the ownership of that language is de-nationalized, (3) and the educational role of learning is to enable learners to communicate their own cultures and personal ideas to others. This assumption is valid for the use of EIL in a global sense where English is used by individuals to communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds. However, McKay (2002) argues that it should be modified to fit the use of EIL in a local sense. Elaborating from Smith’s assumptions, McKay notices some essential revisions, distinguishing the use of EIL in a global and local sense. Firstly, when being used as an international language, English is used both in a global sense for intercultural communications between nations and in a local sense as a language of wider interactions within multilingual communities. Secondly, no longer does the use of English as an international language connect to the culture of Inner Circle countries. Thirdly, in a local sense, English as an international language is embedded in the culture of the country where it is used. Finally, as an international language in a global sense, one of its primary functions is to enable users to share their own cultures and ideas with others. These interpretations are more contextually sensitive, and, hence, are substantially beneficial to language practitioners across contexts to develop their own teaching approaches fitting their learners’ communicative needs in both global and local situations.

English as an International Language, World Englishes (WE) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Due to the changing sociolinguistic reality of English, several scholars have developed different frameworks to conceptualize, research, learn and teach English, such as English as an international language, World Englishes, and English as a lingua franca. However, there are still terminological debates on using these terms as alternatives. Distinguishing these terms, therefore, has a substantial significance to form the pedagogy of EIL, which will be presented as follows.

Firstly, the use of World Englishes is based on Kachru’s (1986) description of institutionalized varieties of English, in which three main types

of English speakers are distinguished. The first so-called members of Inner Circle are the native speakers of English for whom English is the mother tongue. The second so-called members of Outer Circle are the non-native speakers of English who use an institutionalized second-language variety of English. The third is the non-native speakers of English who view English as a foreign language, called members of Expanding Circle. Kachru maintains that the Outer Circle members have an institutionalized variety of English, which was created through a long time “of acculturation in new cultural and geographical contexts; they have a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative, and legal system” (p. 19). Such uses result in the development of nativized discourse and style types of varieties. Thus, Kachru describes institutionalized second-language varieties of English as World Englishes. While Kachru’s model was contributory to recognizing the validity of varieties of English, it is believed that the diffusion of English has changed its socio-linguistic reality; and hence, has brought with it far more complexity in use than can be captured by this model.

In terms of English as a lingua franca, House (1999) asserts that ELF interactions take place “between members of two or more different lingua-cultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue” (p. 74). This interpretation confirms Firth’s (1996) definition that English is “a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (p. 240). In this sense, ELF is used with a narrow meaning, which includes only interactions between L2 speakers of English who do not share the same culture, and hence excluding, for instance, Indian speakers of English who have different mother tongues and choose English to communicate with each other (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). It also excludes interactions between L1 and L2 English speakers as well as those between the English speakers within the Inner Circle countries. WE scholars criticize ELF approaches that ignore the pluricentric nature of English.

Regarding English as an international language, some researchers equate it to WE or ELF. However, due to the diversity of the social contexts of English, these usages to describe English in its global status appear insufficient. In this study, the term EIL is interpreted according to McKay’s (2002) definition which considers EIL as an “umbrella” term. EIL, in this sense, characterizes the use of English between any two L2 speakers of English who share the same culture or own a different culture. It also includes speakers of WE communicating within their country, as well as ELF interactions. It then includes L2 speakers of English using English with L1 speakers. By this understanding, EIL is viewed “far more complex linguistically than is allowed for in either the World Englishes or ELF model” (p. 16); nevertheless, EIL cannot separate from WE and ELF but embed them (Marlina, 2014).

The pedagogy of English as an International Language

The pedagogy of EIL is informed by the concept of EIL perspective or paradigm (Sharifian, 2009), which states that EIL “rejects the notion of a single variety of English which serves as the medium for international communication. English, with its pluralized forms, is a language of international and intercultural communication” (p. 2). In other words, the EIL paradigm promotes the diversity and complexity of the form, user, and culture of the language. Elaborating from these assumptions, Marlina (2014) points out three main aspects of EIL pedagogy, including (1) assisting learners across contexts to gain knowledge and be aware of the pluricentricity of English, (2) encouraging learners to have an equal recognition and behavior towards all varieties of English, (3) and developing their ability to negotiate and communicate effectively in intercultural encounters.

Several researchers (e.g., Marlina, 2014; Matsuda, 2003, 2005, 2012; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) assert that the shift to EIL pedagogy is an irreversible necessity in light of the development of the language and society today. It poses a need for English language teachers and teacher-educators to re-examine and adjust their teaching methodology, instructional variety and model, teaching materials, curricula, and testing and assessment (Brown, 2012; Canagarajah, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011) to fit their learners’ needs, which might first stem from teachers’ educational beliefs.

The role of teachers’ educational beliefs

Regarding beliefs, Borg (2001) puts that “a belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior” (p. 186). A consensus among interpretations of beliefs is that beliefs dispose or guide people’s thinking and action, which helps individuals make sense of the world. For that reason, beliefs become very important in the teaching and learning process.

In terms of teachers’ educational beliefs, Xu (2012) asserts that it is central to shaping their planning and curricular decisions, and in effect, determining what should be taught and what teaching approaches should be employed. It confirms Turner, Christensen, and Meyer’s (2009) claim that teachers’ beliefs orient their decision-making, behavior, and interactions with students. Similarly, Williams and Burden (1997) assert that “teachers’ deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they were told to adopt or course book they followed” (p. 57).

In Vietnam, there is no common English teaching perspective for all teaching levels and among teachers. Rather, the ELT practice seems to vary among teaching practitioners, which might greatly be influenced by each

individual's beliefs (Tran & Moore, 2015). Hence, in order to make innovations in the language teaching, there is an urgent need for making changes in teachers' beliefs to suit the changing sociolinguistic reality of the English language. To fulfill that goal, there is a vital need to study variables affecting teachers' beliefs regarding teaching EIL.

Teacher-related Variables

Research has found some potential variables such as international experience, teaching experience, and gender that might affect teachers' performance, attitudes, and educational views, which are presented below.

Firstly, regarding international experience, scholars from the field of cross-cultural psychology and intercultural training have noted the impact of study-abroad experience on teachers' educational views (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). In particular, overseas experience provides an individual with opportunities to live and work in a multicultural environment, bringing valuable experiences with regard to global affairs (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2000). As Grant and Secada (1990) claim, overseas experience helps develop teachers' cultural knowledge, broaden their global perspective, and raise their belief in the value of multicultural education through interactions with interlocutors from varying cultural backgrounds. In line with this, Cushner and Brislin (1996) maintain that experience with multicultures will increase teachers' world-mindedness and reduce ethnocentrism.

In terms of teaching experience, during the 1970s and 1980s years of experience was believed to have a relationship with teachers' effectiveness (Klitgaard & Hall, 1974; Murnane & Phillips, 1981), albeit not necessarily significant. Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges (2004) confirm that belief by asserting that teachers with less than three years of experience are typically less effective than more experienced teachers. Similarly, Harris and Sass (2007) maintain that on average senior teachers are more effective than less experienced teachers. However, Darling-Hammond (2000) argues that after five to eight teaching years, the benefits of experience appear to be reduced. More recent findings like Chingosa and Peterson's (2011) suggest that experience perhaps assists with effectiveness although some senior teachers seem less effective later in their work.

Also, the literature shows some noticeable findings of different attitudes between female and male teachers towards the teaching profession. The recent study by Erdamar, Aytaç, Türk, and Arseven (2016) combines the findings of 35 relevant studies composing a sample of 4,289 male and 6,073 female preservice teachers in Turkey and reveals that female teachers display more positive attitudes towards their occupation compared to male teachers. It confirms Çapri and Çelikkaleli's (2008) and Kaya and Büyükkasap's (2005) findings that female teachers tend to be more enthusiastic about the teaching profession than male colleagues. Females, in particular, view teaching as an ideal profession and have more ambition to be a teacher. In this sense, Akkaya's (2009) study indicates that female teachers in Turkish Education Department are more successful than male counterparts with regard to their

attitudes and academic success. Hence, it is claimed that gender significantly has an effect on teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession.

While the above-mentioned variables have been found to influence teachers to some aspects, there is no research found regarding the effect of teachers' qualifications. Moreover, no research has been conducted on whether such variables affect teachers' beliefs regarding teaching EIL. It is hypothesized that overseas-learning experience, teaching experience, teachers' qualifications, and gender affect teachers' beliefs concerning teaching EIL perspective. To fill the gap in the literature, this study adopted a quantitative approach to test the given hypothesis by addressing the following research question: How do overseas learning experience, teaching experience, teachers' qualifications, and gender affect teachers' beliefs regarding teaching EIL?

Methodology

Participants

Ninety-eight tertiary teachers were invited to participate in the survey through email and Facebook. Within one week, 52 teachers responded, giving a response rate of 42.86 %. This number increased to 61.22% after five more reminder emails over two weeks. As the number of novice teachers was merely three people, and only two teachers gained BA degree, their responses were removed from the dataset, leaving 57 responses. The biographical information for the participants is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
The biographical information for the participants

Category	Gender		Teaching experience		Learning experience		Teachers' qualifications	
	Male	Female	Junior	Senior	Overseas	Non-overseas	MA	PhD
Number	10	47	33	24	32	25	10	47
Proportion (%)	17.55	82.45	57.89	42.10	56.14	43.86	17.55	82.45

Note: Junior: 4 – 9 years, Senior: >=10 years

Instrument

The questionnaire included two sections. In the first section, there were questions asking the participants about their age, gender, teaching experience, overseas learning experience and their qualifications to collect bio-data. It was followed by eight statements pertaining to EIL teaching principles. The

participants would tick on the appropriate option (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree) to show their attitudes towards each statement (See Appendix 1).

Data collection and analysis procedures

Firstly, the survey was sent to 20 teachers who were asked to try to answer questions and give any comments relating to the questions' contents, lexical items, and structures. Then the questionnaire was revised according to the respondents' feedback, such as reducing some redundant items, correcting some grammar mistakes, and facilitating the meanings of some complex sentences. Finally, the last version was delivered to the participants online.

Reliability analysis was conducted with the questionnaire data using SPSS 22. The Cronbach's alpha value of .727 indicated an acceptable level of reliability (Field, 2009).

For the data analysis, the participants' responses were converted into numbers to calculate scores, such as strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1.

It was hypothesized that overseas training experience, teaching experience, teachers' qualifications, and gender impact teachers' beliefs concerning the implementation of EIL teaching in language classrooms. Nevertheless, in analyzing the data, null hypotheses of no difference and no effect were tested. It was expected, however, that these null hypotheses would be rejected. All the null hypotheses were tested at alpha .05 level of significance and with a 95% confidence interval. The procedure of data analysis consisted of the following phrases.

Firstly, the observed values of the Shapiro-Wilk statistics, the test of normality, for the rating scores of all teacher groups did not meet the assumption of normality ($p < .05$). A visual inspection of the histograms and normal Q-Q plots also showed that the scores were not normally distributed. Therefore, a non-parametric test, Mann-Whitney U test, was employed to examine the research question.

Secondly, a Mann-Whitney U test, a nonparametric alternative for the independent samples t-test, was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' rating scores towards EIL teaching principles, between overseas and non-overseas trained teachers, junior and senior teachers, MA and PhD teachers, and male and female teachers.

Lastly, the value of effect size (Cohen's d) was calculated to determine the magnitude of the difference.

Results

Overseas learning experience

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 33.81) for the principle that the EIL teaching target is not the native-like were significantly higher than of non-overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 22.84), $U = 246.00$, $z = -2.618$, $p = .009$, and the strength of association between the two groups, that is, the effect size is moderate ($r = -.35$). It is illustrated in Figure 1.

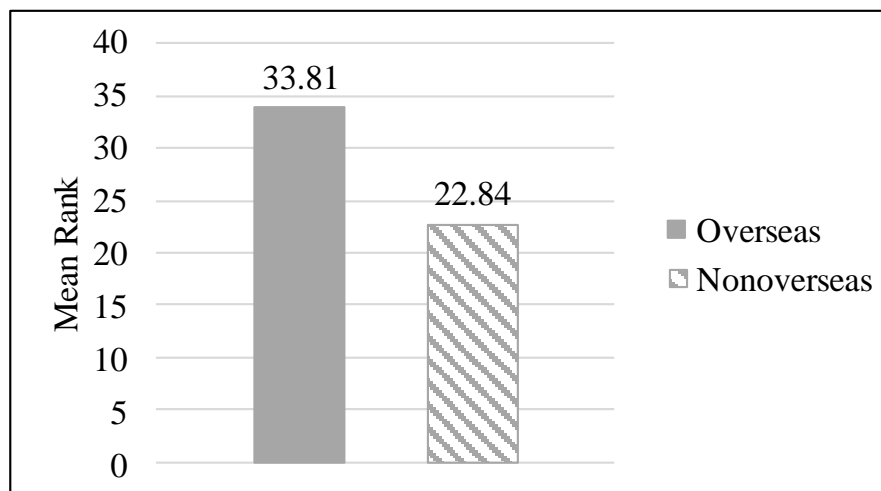


Figure 1. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that the EIL teaching target is not the native-like

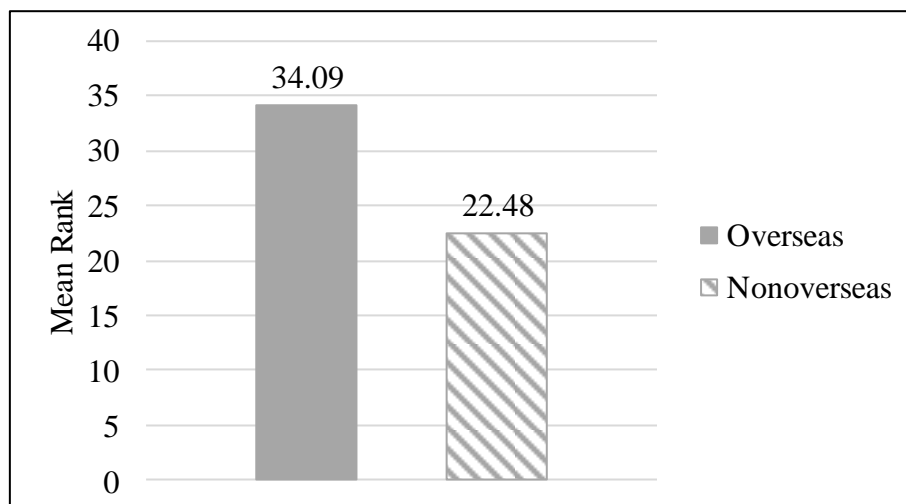


Figure 2. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties and its users as bilinguals or multilinguals

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 34.09) for the principle that learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties and its users as bilinguals or multilinguals were significantly higher than of nonoverseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 22.48), $U = 237.00$, $z = -2.803$, $p = .005$, and the effect size is moderate ($r = -.37$). It is illustrated in Figure 2.

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 32.58) for the principle that learners should be exposed to different varieties of English other than American and British English were significantly higher than of non-overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 24.42), $U = 285.50$, $z = -1.967$, $p = .049$, and the effect size is moderate ($r = -.26$). It is illustrated in Figure 3.

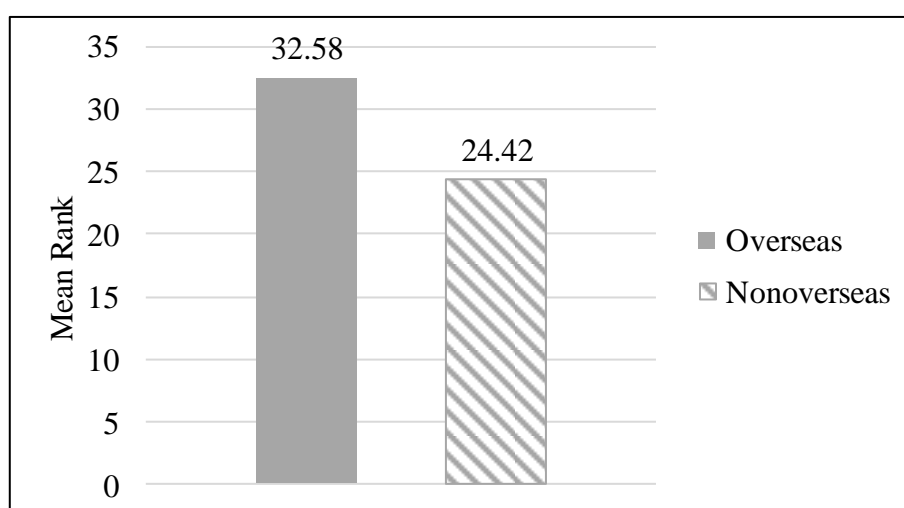


Figure 3. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should be exposed to different varieties of English.

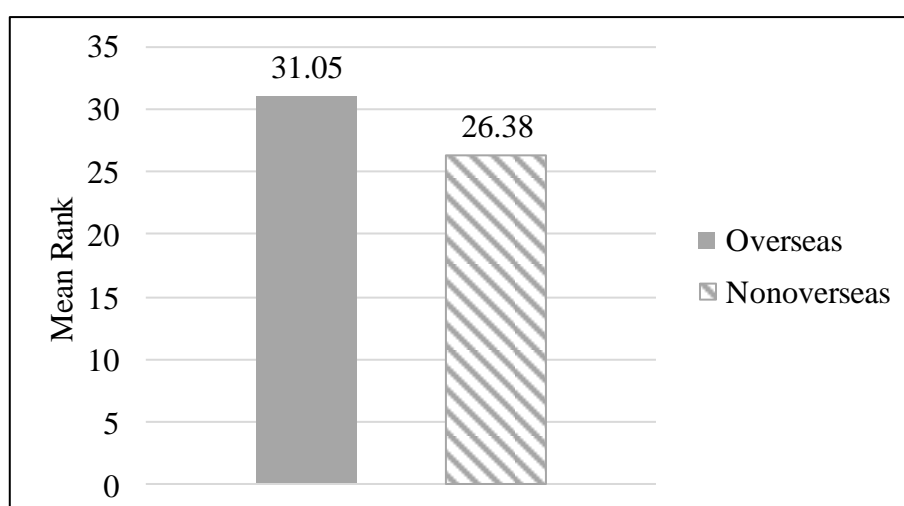


Figure 4. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should develop negotiation skills of English varieties

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 31.05) and non-overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 26.38) for the principle that learners should develop negotiation skills of varieties of English in multilingual communications were not significantly different, for $U = 334.50$, $z = -1.226$, $p = .220$. It is illustrated in Figure 4.

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 35.23) for the principle that learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in intercultural communications were significantly higher than of non-overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 21.02), $U = 200.50$, $z = -3.613$, $p = .000$, and the effect size is approaching large ($r = -.48$). It is illustrated in Figure 5.

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 34.09) towards the principle that learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold in the target language were significantly higher than of nonoverseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 22.48), $U = 237.00$, $z = -2.816$, $p = .005$, and the effect size is moderate ($r = -.37$). It is illustrated in Figure 6.

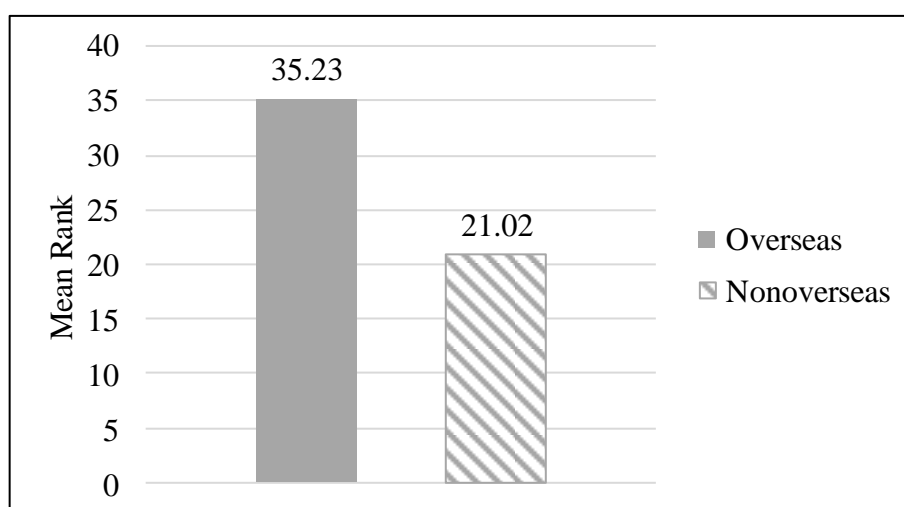


Figure 5. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in intercultural communications

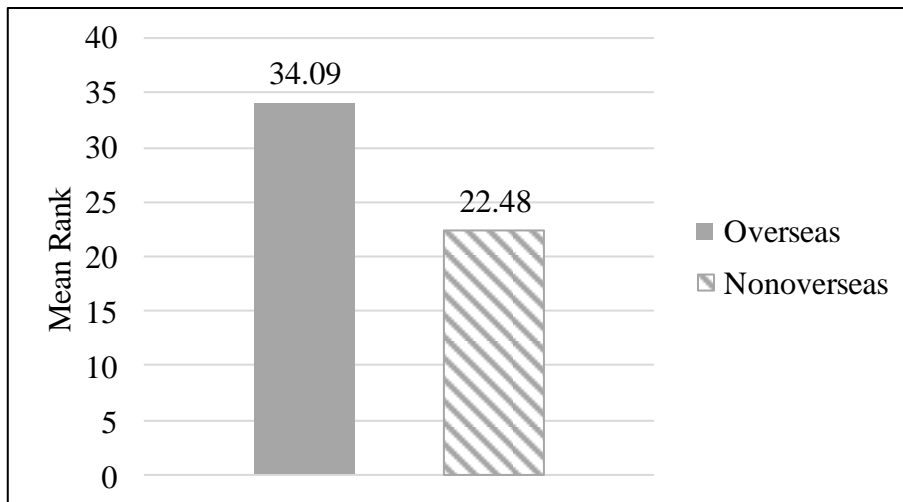


Figure 6. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold in the target language

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 33.45) for the principle that learners should be exposed to diverse cultures were significantly higher than of nonoverseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 23.30), $U = 257.50$, $z = -2.508$, $p = .012$, and the effect size is moderate ($r = -.33$). It is given in Figure 7.

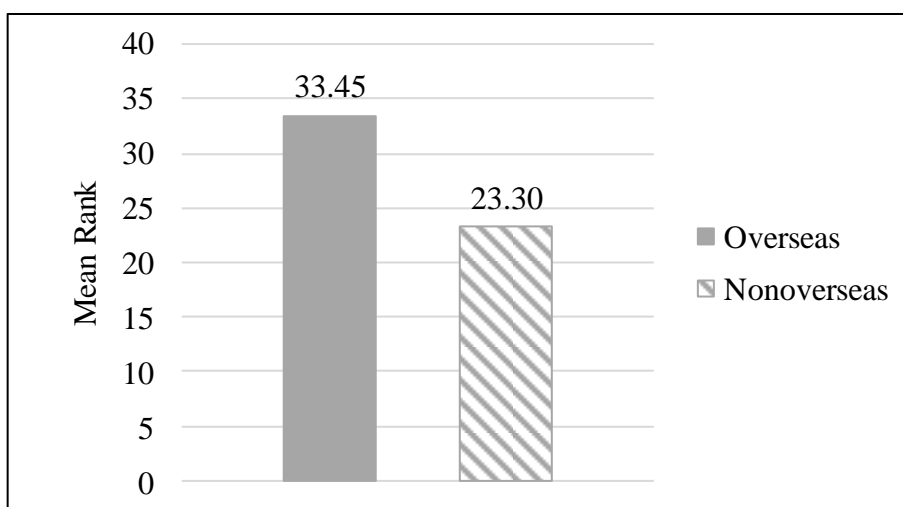


Figure 7. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should be exposed to diverse cultures

Rating scores of overseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 31.50) and nonoverseas-trained teachers (mean rank = 25.80) for the principle that learners should develop negotiation skills of diverse cultures in intercultural

communications were not significantly different, $U = 320.00$, $z = -1.485$, $p = .138$. It is given in Figure 8.

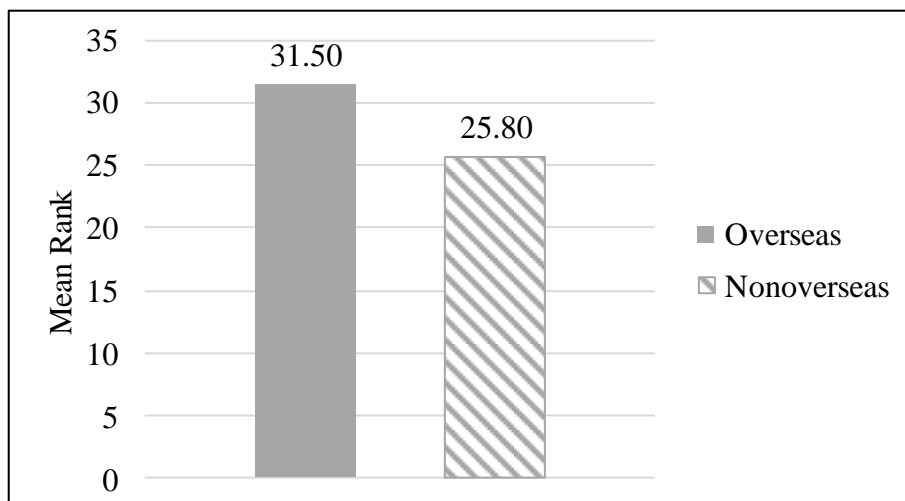


Figure 8. Mean ranks between overseas- and nonoverseas-trained teachers' scores for that learners should develop negotiation skills of diverse cultures in intercultural communications

In general, the rating scores of overseas-trained teachers' attitudes towards most of EIL teaching principles, excepting principles 4 and 8, were significantly higher than those of nonoverseas-trained teachers', with the magnitude of the differences were from moderate to large. Therefore, it can be concluded based on this sample that overseas learning experience has a significant influence on teachers' beliefs regarding teaching EIL.

Teaching experience

Descriptive statistics in Table 2 showed that rating scores of junior teachers and senior teachers for all EIL teaching principles were not significantly different, $p > .05$. There was no evidence to reject the hypothesis that there was no difference between junior and senior teachers' scores. Therefore, it can be concluded based on this sample that there was no influence of teaching experience on teachers' beliefs concerning teaching EIL.

Table 2
Differences of Median and Mean Ranks between junior and senior teachers' rating scores for each principle of teaching EIL

Items	Teaching experience	N	Mdn	Mean Rank	U	z	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. The target of teaching EIL is not the native-like.	Junior	33	4.00	28.36	375.00	-	.725
	Senior	24	4.00	29.88			
	Total	57					
2. Learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties and its users as bilinguals and multilinguals.	Junior	33	4.00	28.95	394.50	-	.995
	Senior	24	4.00	29.06			
	Total	57					
3. Learners should be exposed to many varieties of English other than American English and British English.	Junior	33	4.00	28.61	383.00	-	.840
	Senior	24	4.00	29.54			
	Total	57					
4. Learners should develop skills to negotiate varieties of English in multilingual communications.	Junior	33	5.00	29.80	369.50	-	.659
	Senior	24	5.00	27.90			
	Total	57					
5. Learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in intercultural communications.	Junior	33	4.00	27.58	349.00	-	.429
	Senior	24	4.00	30.96			
	Total	57					
6. Learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold in the target language.	Junior	33	4.00	28.33	374.00	-	.718
	Senior	24	4.00	29.92			
	Total	57					
7. Learners should be exposed to diverse cultures.	Junior	33	4.00	29.50	379.50	-	.795
	Senior	24	4.00	28.31			
	Total	57					
8. Learners should develop skills to negotiate diversities of culture in intercultural communications.	Junior	33	5.00	29.05	394.50	-	.966
	Senior	24	5.00	28.94			
	Total	57					

Note: U = the Mann-Whitney test statistic, Mdn = Median, z = a standardized score, *p<.05

Table 3
Differences of median and mean ranks between MA and PhD teachers' rating scores for each principle of teaching EIL

Items	Degree	N	Median	Mean Rank	U	z	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. The target of teaching EIL is not the native-like.	MA	47	4.00	27.81	179.00	-1.242	.220
	PhD	10	5.00	34.60			
	Total	57					
2. learners should be taught to use English successfully with their natural sounds like bilinguals or multilinguals.	MA	47	4.00	28.13	194.00	-.920	.360
	PhD	10	5.00	33.10			
	Total	57					
3. Learners should be exposed to many varieties of English other than American English and British English.	MA	47	4.00	28.86	228.50	-.146	.884
	PhD	10	4.00	29.65			
	Total	57					
4. Learners should develop skills to negotiate varieties of English in multilingual communications.	MA	47	5.00	30.06	185.00	-1.221	.222
	PhD	10	4.00	24.00			
	Total	57					
5. Learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in English communications.	MA	47	4.00	25.95	91.50	-3.390	.001*
	PhD	10	5.00	43.35			
	Total	57					
6. Learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold.	MA	47	4.00	27.36	158.00	-1.735	.083
	PhD	10	5.00	36.70			
	Total	57					
7. Learners should be exposed to diverse cultures.	MA	47	4.00	29.55	209.00	-.597	.550
	PhD	10	4.00	26.40			
	Total	57					
8. Learners should develop skills to negotiate diversities of culture in intercultural communications.	MA	47	5.00	30.20	178.50	-1.368	.198
	PhD	10	4.00	23.35			
	Total	57					

Note: U = the Mann-Whitney test statistic, Mdn = Median, z = a standardized score, *p<.05

Teachers' qualifications

Descriptive statistics in Table 3 showed that rating scores of MA and PhD teachers for seven out of eight EIL teaching principles were not significantly different, $p > .05$. There was no evidence to reject the hypothesis that there was no difference between MA and PhD teachers' rating scores. Therefore, it can be concluded based on this sample that there was no influence of teachers' degrees on their' beliefs regarding teaching EIL.

Gender

Descriptive statistics in Table 4 showed that rating scores of male and female teachers for all EIL teaching principles were not significantly different, $p > .05$. There was no evidence to reject the hypothesis that there was no difference between male and female teachers' rating scores. Therefore, it can be concluded based on this sample that there was no influence of teachers' gender on their' beliefs regarding teaching EIL.

Discussion and Implications

The findings indicate that overseas-trained teachers are more likely open-minded to the implementation of EIL teaching principles in English language classrooms than non-overseas-trained teachers. It suggests that study-abroad experience significantly affects teachers' beliefs in a positive way towards teaching EIL. It is consistent with Cushner and Mahon's (2002) and Grant and Secada's (1990) findings that international experience offers significant cross-cultural immersion, leading to one's intercultural awareness and professional development in terms of global-mindedness. Also, Cushner and Brislin (1996) maintain that experience with multicultures will increase teachers' world-mindedness and reduce ethnocentrism, and, hence, making significant changes in teachers' educational views. This relationship between international experience and teachers' positive attitudes towards teaching EIL proposes that this paradigm is associated with the knowledge and skills that are necessary for learners in intercultural encounters.

Teachers are, therefore, supposed to take more opportunities to study or travel overseas to experience the international and intercultural environment. It is because the new demands of the globalized world require teachers to increase their knowledge and experience to serve the learners who are expected to become global citizens in the future. This emphasizes significant immersion experiences in multicultures other than one's own (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). In addition, policymakers or employers are supposed to provide teachers more opportunities to join international events or exchange programs with international institutions. The findings also revealed that there was no impact of teaching experience, teachers' qualifications, and gender on teachers' beliefs concerning the EIL teaching.

Table 4
Differences of Median and Mean Ranks between male and female teachers' rating scores for each principle of teaching EIL

Items	Gender	N	Mdn	Mean Rank	U	z	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. The target of teaching EIL is not the native-like.	Male	10	4.00	27.10	216.00	-.421	.673
	Female	47	4.00	29.40			
	Total	57					
2. Learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties and its users as bilinguals and multilinguals.	Male	10	4.00	27.85	223.50	-.258	.796
	Female	47	4.00	29.24			
	Total	57					
3. Learners should be exposed to many varieties of English other than American English and British English.	Male	10	4.00	30.25	222.50	-.280	.779
	Female	47	4.00	28.73			
	Total	57					
4. Learners should develop skills to negotiate varieties of English in multilingual communications.	Male	10	5.00	35.00	175.00	-1.465	.143
	Female	47	5.00	27.72			
	Total	57					
5. Learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in intercultural communications.	Male	10	4.00	23.15	276.50	-1.382	.167
	Female	47	4.00	30.24			
	Total	57					
6. Learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold in the target language.	Male	10	4.00	26.10	206.00	-.654	.513
	Female	47	4.00	29.62			
	Total	57					
7. Learners should be exposed to diverse cultures.	Male	10	4.50	31.75	207.50	-.632	.528
	Female	47	4.00	28.41			
	Total	57					
8. Learners should develop skills to negotiate diversities of culture in intercultural communications.	Male	10	5.00	29.90	394.50	-.218	.827
	Female	47	5.00	28.81			
	Total	57					

Note: U = the Mann-Whitney test statistic, Mdn = Median, z = a standardized score, *p<.05

Conclusion

The study adopted a quantitative research method with a view to exploring variables affecting Vietnamese EFL lecturers' educational views and beliefs towards the EIL teaching. Based on the research sample, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence of international experience on teachers' beliefs whereas no influence is found with their teaching experience, qualifications, and gender. As the study participants are merely tertiary lecturers, the findings are not intended for generalizable purposes. It is recommended that further research should be conducted in other contexts such as for secondary school teachers. Moreover, the results are analyzed based on merely quantitative data; hence, more qualitative studies are suggested being conducted to triangulate the findings.

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Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire (English version)

Thank you for participating in this project. This questionnaire is designed for research purposes only, and all information will be kept confidential. The questionnaire will begin with some questions asking you about personal information. It, then, includes 8 statements regarding teaching English as an international language (EIL) principles.

Based on your experience with English language teaching and learning in Vietnam, please tick (√) the appropriate response (strongly agree, agree to some extent, neutral, disagree to some extent, strongly disagree) to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Then please briefly explain your answers with a simple language.

Because its aim is not about the participants' English proficiency but about the participants' beliefs concerning English language teaching, each statement will be in both English and Vietnamese to ensure the validity of the answers.

Age:

Gender: Male Female

Teaching experience: Novice (1-3 years) Junior (4-9 years)
 Senior (>=10 years)

Overseas learning experience: Yes No

Highest degree: BA MA PhD

The target of teaching EIL is not the native-like.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should be encouraged to respect other varieties and its users as bilinguals and multilinguals.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should be exposed to many varieties of English (Singlish, Indian English, ...) other than American English and British English.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should develop skills to negotiate varieties of English in multilingual communications.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should be encouraged to appreciate diverse cultures in intercultural communications.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should learn how to explain and express the cultural values they hold in the target language.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should be exposed to diverse cultures.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Learners should develop skills to negotiate diversities of culture in intercultural communications.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral Disagree

Strongly disagree