

Implementation of the World Englishes Instructional Model for Enabling Thai Students' Listening Comprehension toward Varieties of English

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Abstract

The aims of this study were 1) to examine the effectiveness of the World Englishes instructional model in enabling students to improve their listening comprehension towards varieties of English, and 2) to investigate students' attitudes towards the use of the World Englishes instructional model. The methodology of this study followed a mixed-method research design by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods based on the evaluation of test results and interview data. The research findings revealed improvement in students' ability to understand when listening to different speakers of English as a result of implementing the World Englishes instructional model. The test results showed that the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. There were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of intelligibility and comprehensibility between pre-test and post-test. Moreover, students were satisfied and had more positive attitudes towards teaching and learning based on the World Englishes instructional model.

Keyword: World Englishes (WEs), English as a lingua franca (ELF), Listening comprehension, intelligibility, comprehensibility

1. Introduction

The English language is now very important for communication, having the status of an international language (EIL) or a lingua franca (ELF) widely used for communication by people all over the world. Because of the rapid increase in English usage worldwide, non-native speakers of English comprise a much larger population than native speakers, outnumbering them by nearly 3 to 1 (Crystal, 2008). It is clear that the number of speakers in the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle is higher than speakers in the Inner Circle of English. According to Seargeant and Swann (2012), it is no longer accurate to consider a single form of English because many different varieties of English exist around the world today.

There have been concerns that the spread of English variation could lead to communication problems, meaning certain speakers would be unintelligible to some listeners (Jenkins, 2000; Smith & Nelson, 2006). Consequently, an important aspect of communication is being intelligible (Seargeant, 2012). Nowadays, the intelligibility of English has become crucial, so it is prudent to consider exposure to new varieties of English for teaching and learning in an ELF context (Björkman, 2013; Kim, 2017).

In Thailand, English plays a more important role than it did in the past because it is now used as an international language or a lingua franca for communicating among the ASEAN countries (Piamsai, 2017). It is unavoidably predictable that Thai people will need to work with an increasing number of people who use English for communication, particularly within the ASEAN community. Hence, Thai students not only have to make use of English for communicating with native speakers from the United States of America or the United Kingdom, but also have to communicate with Asian people from countries in the ASEAN community who use English but have a different L1 (Todd, 2006).

In addition, the curricula used for teaching English in Thai higher education institutions rarely includes exposure to the different types of English spoken throughout the world. This may result in students having problems when trying to comprehend other non-native English speakers they will have to communicate with in the future

(Kongkerd, 2013). Previous research has shown that students encounter difficulties when trying to understand different varieties of spoken English (e.g. Gass & Varonis, 1984; Matsuda, 2003; Galloway & Rose, 2014; Orikasa, 2016), similar to Thai EFL students who also have this problem (Kongkerd, 2013; White, 2016). Sung (2015) recommended that English teachers should help students understand the different varieties of English and encourage them to be open-minded as well as more tolerant of the English diversity throughout the world.

A review of World Englishes theories and principles revealed that only a few studies have focused on how educators could utilize the concept of World Englishes in English language teaching, particularly in Asia (Sung, 2015). Moreover, previous studies concerning the utilization of World Englishes in the classroom concentrated on students' attitudes regarding speakers' intelligibility and variety of English, meaning few studies have focused sufficiently on the utilization of World Englishes concepts and how being exposed to English varieties can bolster students' listening comprehension.

Therefore, it is essential to implement the World Englishes instructional model by exposing students to the concepts of World Englishes and adding varieties of English, thus supporting and strengthening Thai students' listening comprehension according to levels of intelligibility and comprehensibility. The study did not intend to substitute the native yardstick, but instead add varieties of English to bolster students' listening comprehension ability.

1.1 Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the effectiveness of the World Englishes instructional model in enabling students to improve their listening comprehension concerning varieties of English
- 2) To investigate students' attitudes toward the use of the World Englishes instructional model

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) To what extent does the use of the World Englishes instructional model enable students to improve their listening comprehension concerning varieties of English?
- 2) What are students' attitudes towards the use of the World Englishes instructional model?

2. Literature Review

2.1 World Englishes

The idea of English variety is at the core of World Englishes (Bolton, 2005). World Englishes is an area of research referring to the localization and identification of nativized English varieties, especially in post-colonial (outer circle) countries (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Jenkins, 2006). However, B. Kachru, Y. Kachru, and Nelson (2006) recognized that the term World Englishes began with English in the outer circle, and subsequently consisted of English in the inner and expanding circles. In the same way, Bolton (2004) mentioned that World Englishes is an umbrella term encompassing all varieties of English and new Englishes in countries such as Africa and Asia, while Seargeant (2012) stated that World Englishes is used as an umbrella term comprising all the varieties of English that exist in the world.

The argument for the terms World Englishes (WEs) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) has drawn attention from numerous scholars and raised debates in various contexts. Jenkins (2009) stated that WEs and ELF should be aligned rather than being kept apart under Global Englishes. Ishikawa (2016) mentioned that the two approaches (WEs and ELF concepts) are especially appropriate for the general purpose of identifying Asian Englishes. Moreover, scholars have been investigating the ideological questions of English use and variants, consequently focusing on the circumstances behind the dispersal of English, especially in the expanding circle contexts with the specific term of ELF.

There have been several models used to describe the dispersal of English throughout the world (Crystal, 1988). Kachru (1985) stated that the model intended to elucidate the sociolinguistic realities and functional use of English worldwide and included three concentric circles. The Inner Circle refers to the majority, an indigenous language during the era of colonization (e.g. USA, Canada, and Australia), while an Outer Circle describes English used as an official language of colonization, but not the principal language (e.g. the Philippines, Singapore, and India), and an Expanding Circle indicates the use of English not directly related to colonialism, but more precisely alludes to the widespread effect of globalization, whereas English use in the Inner Circle plays an important role as a model (e.g. Thailand, China, and Indonesia).

With the current use of English in real-life circumstances, such a model may not be completely appropriate (Rampton, 1990; Seidlhofer, 2002; Graddol, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Dröschel, 2011; Jenkins, 2015). Moreover, various scholars have put forward other models and explanations for the spread of English use to improve

Kachru's model by revising and developing models to be more suitable with real situations (e.g. McArthur, 1998; Modiano, 1999; Graddol, 2006; Yano, 2009).

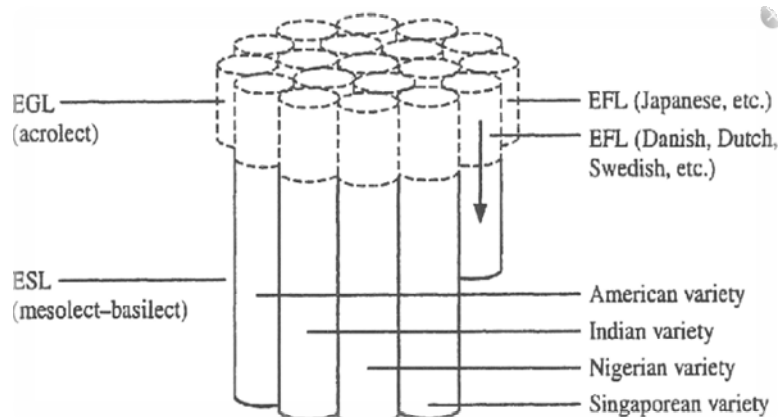


Figure 1. Yano's Cylindrical Model

Yano's (2009) *cylindrical model* represents the context of English usage inside a cylinder. The top surfaces of each cylinder are grouped to form a stage that represents the mutual comprehensibility of varieties of English. Based on this model, phonological features, lexical features, and grammatical features, in theory, are transferred from one variety to another. The model epitomizes World Englishes democratically and dynamically rather than statically by moving towards a focus on all varieties.

Following an amalgamation of World Englishes models, Yano's (2009) model appeared to be the most suitable as it was in line with the present-day contexts in which Englishes are utilized globally by a variety of speakers throughout the world. Therefore, the selection of World Englishes models needs to be investigated and integrated primarily in order to develop students' ability to communicate globally with present-day users of English.

The results of previous studies in the educational context supported the implementation of the World Englishes concept into the classroom realizing it helped improve students' recognition and provided more awareness and positive perspectives towards English diversity (Ates, Eslami, & Write, 2015; Chang, 2015; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020). Boonsuk and Ambele (2021) recommended that the aims and syllabuses used in pedagogy need to be up to date, especially in terms of the English that is utilized in the English language classroom, and set up for the pertinent use of English rather than concentrating on native norms. Moreover, Matsuda's (2003) study pointed out that EIL teaching is required to prepare students for their future use of English and should include both L1 and L2 speakers in various regions of the world. Chiba and Yamamoto (1995) asserted that exposure to the differences informs and functions of English is essential for students who have to use English with other English speakers and not just native British or American English speakers. However, teachers should consider teaching contexts and students' communicative purposes for English use depending on various factors (Seargeant, 2012).

2.2 Intelligibility and Listening Comprehension

With the dispersal of World Englishes and the growth of different variations of English, an important part of communication in this term is intelligibility (Seargeant, 2012). Smith and Nelson (1985) clarified the term of intelligibility into three levels for better understanding. First, intelligibility means being able to recognize a word and an utterance. Second, comprehensibility means being able to understand the meaning of the word and utterance. Third, interpretability (the highest level) means comprehending the meanings that lie behind the words and utterances as well as perceiving a speaker's intentions.

In terms of the basic comprehension of spoken English variations, there are two levels: intelligibility and comprehensibility (higher level). In terms of independent levels, they are interrelated but not the same (Munro & Derwing, 1995). Intelligibility without comprehensibility can sometimes occur and the differences between them can be measured (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Smith and Nelson (1985) stated that intelligibility means recognizing words and utterances. Comprehensibility is a more sophisticated understanding and means being able to understand words and utterances. Furthermore, this term refers to the process of deciphering, which listeners use in order to attain their listening objectives when related to listening comprehension (Rost, 2002). The process of deciphering starts with the smallest components of sound, such as syllables and phonemes, and then expands continually to words, phrases, sentences, and meanings, integrating understanding from knowledge of the world,

personal experiences, or prior knowledge (Field, 2008). For instance, Jenkins (2000) indicated that listeners begin to decipher the phonemic components of words /b/, /d/, /g/ continually moving on to the larger components of words and sentences used by the speakers combining prior knowledge and experiences to predict the message.

The two relevant levels of intelligibility and comprehensibility (Smith & Nelson, 1985) are related to listening comprehension (listener's role). The measurement is divided into two parts based on perceived speech: speech intelligibility and speech comprehensibility, as explained below:

Intelligibility level (recognition at the word level) refers to the phonological features in the English phrases that the listeners try to recognize as different from their own in terms of words and utterances for the next level (Nelson, 2011). For instance, it can be explained at the first stage that listeners can decode and process beginning from the sound components with phonemes /p/, /t/, /k/ and progressing onto words such as 'pin', 'tin', 'cap', then connecting to utterances (Jenkins, 2015, p. 29). To check listeners' word recognition of varieties of English based on this context, students have to answer questions in a cloze test by listening to audio texts and writing down the words they recognize in provided spaces (Buck, 2001; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Comprehensibility level (understanding) refers to listeners who are able to comprehend fundamental meaning by deciphering sounds from the first phase and moving on to the second phase of comprehensibility: understanding the meanings of words and utterances. For instance, when listeners are able to identify the word 'please', they usually understand that it involves a request, essentially relevant to a polite signal (Nelson, 2011). Hence, checking listeners' meanings comprehension of English varieties for this context may involve listeners being asked, for instance, to complete a multiple-choice test by listening to passages and answering comprehension questions with multiple-choice answers (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Kachru & Smith, 2008).

From previous studies concerning ELT classes, White et al. (2016) investigated the issues and difficulties faced by EFL students when listening to different accents that are unintelligible. The students were presented with a variety of English accents. The findings of the tests revealed that being familiar with an accent could aid the listener's understanding. The researchers further indicated that exposure to unfamiliar accents encouraged students to be better at their listening comprehension. Tassev (2019) examined the relationship between students' perceived speech of comprehensibility level and attitudes toward various English accents based on the pronunciation model. The results found that students had an awareness and were open-minded about various English accents, which would be useful for them when applying knowledge for future communication. Furthermore, Kim's study (2017) mentioned that experiencing different varieties of L2 English facilitates listeners' comprehension. Kang (2010) recommended that ELT teachers should encourage students to develop their comprehension of the various varieties of English.

Jung (2010) pointed out that outcomes could be different based on the ability of the student. If some students were more proficient, they may not encounter problems when listening to listening passages. However, less proficient students could have problems when they are not able to understand a phrase or utterance while listening. Correspondingly, Sangnok and Jaturapitakkul (2019) indicated that being linguistically proficient is more impactful on students' ability to understand spoken language than other variables. Tanewong (2018) pointed out that EFL students who have low English proficiency and perceptual processes face obstacles in identifying linguistic information, such as distinguishing between sounds and recognizing words and meaning. The researcher also indicated that the limitation of students' L2 vocabulary and familiarity with the language features could make students have difficulty in comprehension, for instance, sound system and text structure. Similarly, Tran and Duong (2020) found that an important factor for students' listening comprehension problems was lexical and phonological issues such as vocabulary and speech rates. According to Orikasa (2016), it is necessary to enhance students' listening comprehension towards different speech accents and increase their understanding of how different varieties of English are used and understood. The author suggested that further studies should examine the correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility to enable students to gain more understanding of words and utterances. Also, Matsuura (2007) suggested that further research needs to examine the correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility more thoroughly in order to enhance students' comprehension of speech diversity.

In conclusion, the increasing identification of English is the most common term in the literature of World Englishes (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Bolton, 2012). Many scholars and researchers have emphasized the development of new approaches in English studies and teaching models. As a consequence, students have to develop their skills in order to cope with future encounters with various English speakers who are likely to be their interlocutors. There is now a requirement for new perspectives on instructional models and

approaches. Exposure to varieties of English, together with comprehension of use, should be encouraged (Seidlhofer, 2011). Presently, English is a global language, and linguistics views have shifted. The world does not only have American English or British English. There are also many occurrences of English variation supported by a number of speakers around the world (Boonsuk, 2021).

2.3 ELF Phonological Features and Accommodation Skills

With increased globalization, the unprecedented internationalization and increase of English use as a lingua franca (ELF) throughout the world have brought about a significant shift in the sociolinguistic landscape (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019). It means that the definition of the term ELF (under the global Englishes paradigm) rarely includes native speakers, and native speakers do not comprise the majority of speakers involved in ELF interaction. Thus, the term EFL (under the modern foreign languages paradigm) refers to English as it is understood and utilized as a foreign language according to norms from native-level perspectives (Jenkins, 2000, 2011).

Jenkins (2000) presented a list of the phonological features that appear to cause the most communication failures between non-native English interlocutors. These features are crucial for the mutual intelligibility of ELF communication between non-native speakers rather than native speakers. There are five essential phonological features of English pronunciation teaching based on the Lingua Franca Core, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. ELF Phonological Features

The Lingua Franca Core	
1. Consonantal inventory	All sounds except /θ/, /ð/ and /ʃ/; most substitution of /θ/, /ð/, and /ʃ/ are permissible
2. Phonetic requirements	Aspiration following the fortis plosive /p/ /t/ /k/ and fortis and lenis differential effect on preceding vowel length
3. Consonant clusters	Medial and final clusters simplified according to L1 rules of elision
4. Vowel quantity	Maintenance of long-short vowel length contrast
5. Nuclear stress	Production, placement, and division of speech streams into word groups

In addition, the fundamental approach used to enable students to adjust and attain their goals in ELF communicative contexts is referred to as accommodation skills. Accommodation skills define the terms of speakers' and listeners' roles, called productive and receptive phonological accommodation (Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010). Based on Walker (2010), the productive skill (speaker's role) means speakers make themselves more easily understood by their interlocutors. In contrast, receptive skill (listener's role) means listeners engaged in ELF communication remain open-minded and accept that they should deal with a certain amount of L1 transfer. Students learn these approaches to adapt so that they can comprehend and reciprocate their English interlocutors.

Improving the listening comprehension skills of students faced with a variety of spoken English inevitably means that students need to develop what is called receptive phonological accommodation (Walker, 2010). This term is used to explain the listeners' ability to change their previous expectations when listening to sounds, syllables, words, and utterances (listening to a passage, comparing different phonological features, completing assignments, discussing and sharing ideas, and reading a listening script for comprehension). Rather, they should accept that it is impossible to achieve one hundred percent pronunciation of the target language at all times and instead manage the differences in L1 transfer. Walker (2010) claimed that listeners will be able to better comprehend speakers whose accents are not the same as their own if this shift in approach can be achieved. It means, inevitably, that students need to be more open-minded and develop greater flexibility in deciding what they listen to and also be more accepting of the different English varieties in ELF situations.

Scale, Richard, and Hui Wu (2006) carried out an analysis of undergraduate students' accent perception. Students listened to passages spoken by four speakers, each with different English accents from America, England, China, and Mexico. From research on international intelligibility, the researchers reported that students were able to hear, interpret, and make comparisons between the key features among the various accents. A

receptive approach would address both intelligibility and listening comprehension to increase flexible communication and the respectability of accent variation.

From the aforementioned, it can be concluded that mutual intelligibility is more universally accepted as a legitimate aim when teaching second-language pronunciation. Exposure to different phonological variations of English is crucial for students to prepare themselves to use English in ELF communication. Therefore, teachers should focus more on mutual intelligibility and the importance of accommodation skills instead of focusing on greater accuracy with restriction to the native-speaker norms of English (Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

In this study, the participants consisted of an intact group of thirty 2nd year Civil Engineering students who were taking the English for Everyday Communication course at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiangrai, Thailand. An analysis of participants' English listening proficiency from a TOEIC mock test showed they were at the intermediate level (CEFR B1).

3.2 Research Instruments

3.2.1 Intelligibility Test

The pre-test and post-test were primarily used as a way of examining students' listening ability to recognize words and utterances by filling in words in blanks after listening to them (Buck, 2001; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The tests were compiled following the unique characteristics of phonological features of ELF speakers (Chinese English, Indonesian English, Singaporean English, and Philippine English), which consisted of segmental and suprasegmental features, namely 1) consonantal inventory, 2) phonetic requirements, 3) consonant clusters, 4) vowel quantity, and 5) nuclear stress (Jenkins, 2000). Recorded audio clips of these sessions were edited down to one-two minute listening passages. The recorded audio was derived from www.dialectarchive.com. Each test consisted of approximately 40 items (10 items per variety) with a total of 40 points containing 200-250 words in length. The duration of the test was 20 minutes. The scores were attained by totaling the correct answers. Words with added or deleted morphemes were counted as incorrect.

3.2.2 Comprehensibility Test

A pre-test and post-test were used to investigate students' ability to understand the basic meanings of words and utterances by completing tests with multiple choices (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Kachru & Smith, 2008). The tests had multiple-choice questions with four choices (a, b, c, and d) to test how well students were able to comprehend the meanings of words and utterances with additional exposure to the ELF phonological features (Jenkins, 2000) of 4 varieties of English. The recorded audio was derived from www.dialectarchive.com, the same as the intelligibility test. The test consisted of approximately 20 items (5 items per variety) with a total of 40 points containing 200-250 words in length. The duration of the test was 20 minutes. The raw score was obtained by counting the number of correct answers from multiple-choice questions and converting the numbers into a mean score.

Note: For validation of the tests, the intelligibility and comprehensibility tests were sent to three experts, who provided comments and suggestions based on the appropriateness of the test, after which it was amended and tested on 30 students with the same characteristics as the target participants. The test was validated to find out the reliability using the Test-retest method by Pearson Correlation Coefficient (Bland & Altman, 1986). In addition, the test was designed according to the students' English proficiency, which was equivalent to the CEFR B1 vocabulary level derived from the Cambridge Dictionary Online <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/level>. The listening passages for the intelligibility and comprehensibility tests were the same.

3.2.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to find out more about students' attitudes towards instruction and improving listening comprehension following the World Englishes instructional model. The types of interview questions used for the interviews comprised questions concerning knowledge, questions about experience, and questions asking for opinions (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The participants for the semi-structured interview sessions were randomly selected and divided into three groups according to listening comprehension proficiency (high, medium, low), indicated by the total scores of the tests. As well as using the test results, the qualitative method from the interviews was utilized to discuss and support the quantitative data reported in the discussion part.

Note: The interview questions and principles were derived from academics in the field of education research and English teaching. Furthermore, the interview questions were scrutinized by three experts with over ten years of experience in the fields of English teaching and education. The questions used in the semi-structured interview were assessed for completeness and suitability of language and content by the experts and used an open-ended evaluation form.

3.3 Research Procedures and Data Analysis

3.3.1 Research Procedures

To implement the World Englishes instructional model, 1) the researcher analyzed and integrated the theoretical concepts of the model design and development by Dick et al. (2001), Gagné et al. (2005), and Morrison et al. (2011). The instructional model has ten main components including: analyzing students' needs, considering students and contexts, formulating objectives, designing course contents, determining teaching media and materials, considering teaching strategies, designing learning activities, implementing the instructional model, evaluating the instructional model, and summarizing and revising the instructional model. 2) The needs analysis was conducted to find out students' needs, problems, expectations, and suggestions for English listening instruction. 3) The researcher took into account the students' level of proficiency and the learning contexts in terms of which varieties of English and which skills would be presented in the classroom, as well as which varieties of English and what type of skills students would need to study and use outside the classroom (Seargeant, 2012). 4) The related theories and concepts (World Englishes, intelligibility and listening comprehension, ELF phonological features, and accommodation skills) were analyzed and synthesized. 5) The World Englishes instructional model was constructed. 6) The researcher designed the research instruments. 7) The instructional model and research instruments were evaluated by experts and then revised, when necessary.

After conducting the instructional model, there were five steps for the implementation of the model and for studying the effects it had on the students' ability to understand varieties of English. 1) Students took the intelligibility pre-test and the comprehensibility pre-test before the instructional model was implemented. 2) Before implementation, an introductory session was held to present the concept and framework of World Englishes, variations in English, reciprocal understanding in ELF situations, and English used as an ELF in ASEAN contexts. The researcher also provided the students with an understanding of the teaching and learning activities that followed the World Englishes instructional model. 3) Implementation was put into practice for 10 weeks using the World Englishes instructional model. 4) The students took the intelligibility post-test and comprehensibility post-test after completion of the implementation of the instructional model. 5) Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit specific answers from students.

3.3.2 Data Analysis

To investigate the effectiveness of an instructional model in improving students' listening comprehension towards varieties of English in terms of speech intelligibility (a measure of word recognition) and speech comprehensibility (a measure of meaning understanding), the quantitative data obtained from the intelligibility test and comprehensibility test were analyzed. To examine and make comparisons between the students' intelligibility and comprehensibility scores for the pre-test and the post-test, mean and standard deviation (S.D) were used to compare the students' scores before and after implementation of the instructional model. In addition, content analysis was used to interpret the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews of students' opinions concerning the instruction and listening comprehension improvement based on the World Englishes instructional model.

4. Results

4.1 Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Table 2. Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Scores at the Intelligibility Level

	Number	Mean (27)	S.D	t	p
Pre-test	27	9.41	5.48	22.51	0.00
Post-test	27	25.56	4.96		

**Significant at the .01 level ($p < 0.01$)

Table 2 presents a comparison between pre-test and post-test listening scores at the intelligibility level (a measure of word recognition). There were statistically noteworthy differences in the mean scores for pre-test and post-test ($t= 22.51, p= 0.00$). The mean score for the intelligibility pre-test was 9.41, while the mean score for the intelligibility post-test was 25.56. The findings revealed that the post-test score was significantly higher than the pre-test at a 0.00 level of significance.

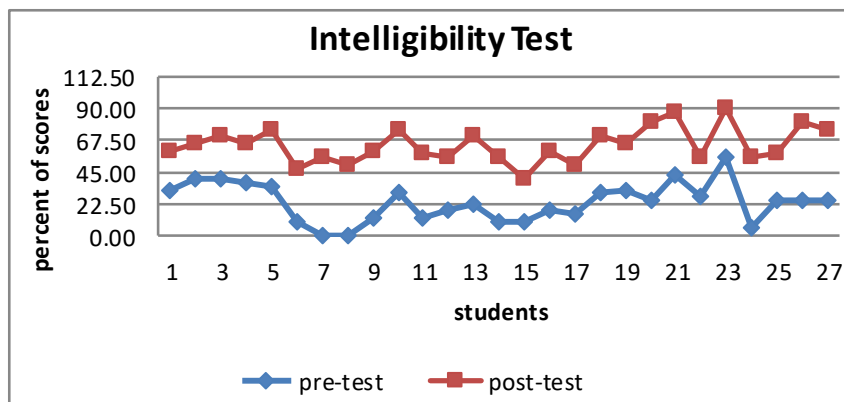


Figure 2. Comparison between Mean Scores for Pre-test and Post-test at the Intelligibility Level

Figure 2 shows the intelligibility length scores for students before and after participating in the course. A difference between pre-test and post-test scores was apparent. The scores for the post-test were much higher than those for the pre-test. Most of the students achieved the post-test score, selecting words to fill in the blanks, which was a higher score by 10-15 points.

Table 3. Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Scores at the Comprehensibility Level

	Number	Mean (27)	S.D	t	p
Pre-test	27	9.37	2.95	4.28	0.00
Post-test	27	11.26	2.28		

**Significant at the .01 level ($p < 0.01$)

As shown in Table 3, there was a difference between the mean scores for the pre-test and post-test at the comprehensibility level (a measure of meaning understanding) at the 0.00 level ($t= 4.28, p= 0.00$).

It was found that the World Englishes instructional model improved the students’ learning outcomes scores. The mean scores for the post-test exceeded those of the pre-test scores; the pre-test mean score was 9.37, while the post-test mean score was 11.26.

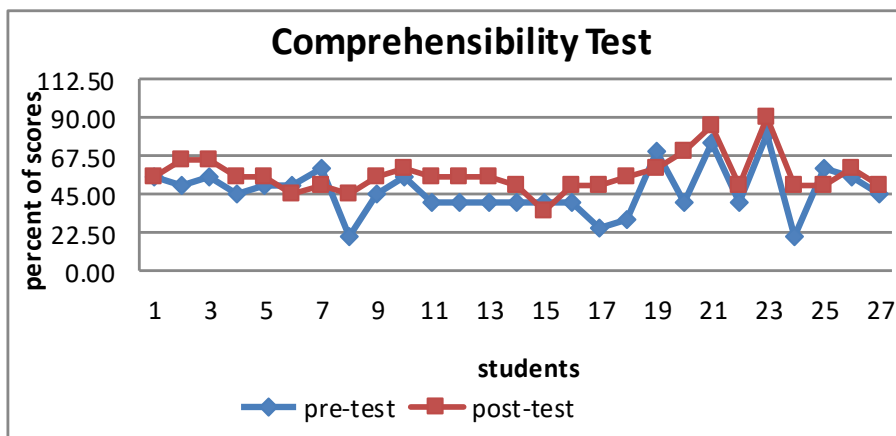


Figure 3. Comparison between Mean Scores of Pre-test and Post-test at a Comprehensibility Level

Figure 3 shows the extent of comprehensibility scores attained by the students. The figure compares the pre-test and post-test listening comprehension scores. It is evident that the instructional model improved the scores of learning outcomes. The post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. Most of the students achieved the post-test score by selecting multiple choices in their listening comprehension with a higher score of 3-6 points. In short, students improved their ability to comprehend different words and utterances of varieties of English.

Table 4. Differences between Mean Scores of Pre-test and Post-test for Intelligibility Level and Comprehensibility Level Scores

Criteria	Number	Pre-test	Post-test	t	p
Intelligibility test	27	9.41	25.56	22.51	0.00
Comprehensibility test	27	9.37	11.26	4.28	0.00

**Significant at the .01 level ($p < 0.01$)

*Tests were distributed to 27 students (3 students left)

Concerning the dissimilarity between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test in the one experimental group, as shown in Table 4, it was revealed that the students achieved higher post-test scores in the intelligibility tests ($t=22.56$), while the post-test score of the comprehensibility test was 11.26. The results of the post-test at both levels were higher than those obtained in the pre-test. Therefore, the results of the intelligibility test and comprehensibility test revealed that the students improved their listening skills after following the World Englishes instructional model.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The statistical differences between pre-test and post-test scores provided evidence that the students' listening comprehension improved after completing the course. It can be concluded that the course based on the World Englishes instructional model effectively enhanced students' recognition and understanding of different varieties of spoken English.

The results showed that students' listening comprehension towards varieties of English improved after the implementation of the concepts and theories of World Englishes. The World Englishes instructional model provided students with an understanding of the concepts of the diversity of English used in an ELF context with the exposure of varieties of English built into the course. For this reason, being able to recognize different varieties of English can assist students to develop a more extensive perspective of English use since English in an ELF context is not only used between Inner Circle speakers but also between Outer Circle and Expanding Circle speakers. Students need to be prepared and exposed to the different functions of English for use with various speakers rather than only native English speakers (Chiba, 1995; Matsuda, 2003). Thus, the key points of ELT should be updated, particularly in terms of English used in a lingua franca context, instead of concentrating only on native speakers of English (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2021).

In terms of the results of the variance between mean scores of pre-test and post-test in this research, it was revealed that the students improved their post-test scores, as shown in Table 4. These results exhibited that the students made more improvement in listening comprehension by implementing the World Englishes instructional model. However, post-test mean scores for comprehensibility were not as high as the post-test mean scores for intelligibility.

The findings also showed that a majority of students attained higher scores on the intelligibility test than on the comprehensibility test, which follows what was stated by Munro and Derwing (1995); comprehensibility level is higher than intelligibility level. Both levels are interrelated but are entirely different. For that reason, it can be affirmed in this study that students face difficulties and need to improve their listening ability at the comprehensibility level. An interview extract showed that most of the students enhanced their ability to recognize words (intelligibility level). However, some students had problems understanding what words meant (comprehensibility level) in the recorded listening passages.

"I think my English listening comprehension has improved, but not much because my English level is quite low. However, at least I can recognize the different accents in words from ASEAN English speakers I am exposed to."

Furthermore, one of the students expressed that he understood and enjoyed learning in the class.

“For me, I enjoyed learning in this course. It was very interesting. I don’t think it was that difficult and I understood the speakers in the passages.”

According to Jung (2010), results may differ according to the level of English proficiency for each student. If students are highly proficient in English, they may encounter few or no problems. In contrast, students with a low level of proficiency may encounter problems when something is said to them. These results were in line with Sangnok and Jaturapitakkul (2019) and Tanewong (2018), who indicated that language proficiency has a significant impact on students' listening comprehension. Moreover, Kim (2017) stated that students who gain experience with L2 varieties of English facilitate an actual understanding of L2 English.

In addition, most of the students mentioned that their English listening comprehension had improved by being exposed to and practicing varieties of English, making them more familiar with different English variations.

“My English listening comprehension improved after completing this course. I can recognize, understand, and familiarize more with different accents from ASEAN speakers.”

In correlation with the study by White, Treenate, Kiatgungwalgrai, Somnuk, and Chaloechatvarakorn (2016), the findings from the tests revealed that it is easier for a student to understand if he or she is familiar with a particular accent. The researchers concluded that exposure to an unfamiliar accent helps students with speech comprehension. It can be claimed that familiarity is an important part of helping students to gain more listening comprehension of English varieties with which they are unfamiliar.

Apart from the findings being in line with previous research mentioned above, however, it was found that individual words could obstruct students' listening comprehension. According to Tran and Duong (2020) and Tanewong (2018), students may have difficulty comprehending linguistic information because they have limited knowledge of English vocabulary. A majority of the students said they sometimes had problems comprehending certain words and not knowing what those words meant, which affected their overall understanding.

“I had problems with some vocabulary words. I didn’t know the meanings of some vocabulary in each passage. I need to practice and learn more about vocabulary. I think if I know more vocabulary, my English listening will be better.”

In summation, the findings from the interviews concerning the model instruction revealed that it was different and engaging. The model enabled the students to extend their listening skills, but also enhanced their familiarity, tolerance, and flexibility concerning varieties of English. For instance:

“I agree with the World Englishes instruction. The instruction helps me to gain more skills in listening comprehension. I’m more flexible, tolerant, and familiar with varieties of English. The contents are new and interesting with real clips instead of listening to textbook audio only. I like to learn English from authentic resources.”

“I think I am more tolerant to ASEAN varieties of English that my teacher taught in class. For instance, I listened to Chinese English and Indonesian English. The first time, they were quite difficult to understand, but now both varieties are tolerable for me.”

It can be claimed that implementing the World Englishes instructional model is not only useful for increasing students' ability to comprehend, but also for enabling students' familiarity with the different varieties of English, and developing tolerance and flexibility. Moreover, most students felt satisfied and had a more positive attitude towards English variations when participating in learning activities following the World Englishes instructional model. The findings were correlated with previous research concepts in classroom instruction, which help students to improve recognition and gain more positive perspectives towards English diversity (Ates, Eslami, & Write, 2015; Chang, 2015; Tassev, 2019; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020).

6. Implications and Recommendations

Some further implications and recommendations of the study are as follows. First, the one interesting point in the findings was that students had difficulties because of limited vocabulary, which hampered their ability to understand the meanings from decoding the sounds. In other words, individual vocabulary items obstructed students' ability to comprehend because not knowing the meaning of specific words interfered with their global understanding. Further research should take this aspect into account and focus more on vocabulary knowledge, practice, and strategy based on consideration of students' English proficiency. Second, in exposing students to varieties of English in class, the question concerning which specific varieties of English students should be exposed to needs to be addressed. Seargeant (2012) pointed out that the choice of the language presented to students is dependent on several varying contexts. Teachers need to think about the teaching and learning

situations (what English knowledge and skills need to be presented in class) as well as the students' reasons for communicating. Teachers need to think about the knowledge and skills that can be utilized by the students beyond the classroom. In addition, the study by Kang (2010) proposed that a single model may not be used for all students; students should be encouraged to develop their ability to comprehend the different varieties of English around the world. Third, students' listening comprehension should be enhanced by introducing them to different varieties of English. To develop fundamental comprehension, teachers need to concentrate on both intelligibility (recognition at the word level) and comprehensibility (meaning comprehension) because these processes are usually interconnected (Munro & Derwing, 1995).

Last but not least, this research does not incorporate ability at the interpretability level, which is the ultimate skill utilized when understanding spoken language and a skill that needs to be explored in future research. Further research needs to explore this skill (the students' ability to discern meanings behind words and utterances) to investigate students' comprehension ability in specific social and cultural contexts with consideration of teaching context, students' proficiency, and students' communicative purpose. Moreover, further research needs to include speaking skills to give students the chance to implement speaking through interaction. Employing a guest speaker (Ates, Eslai, & Wright, 2015) is one authentic activity that could be used in the classroom to give students the opportunity to improve their listening skills in conjunction with their speaking skills in preparation for communication with English speakers beyond the classroom.

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