Thai English? Non-Thai English Lecturers' Perceptions of Thai English and World Englishes

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Abstract

The role of English as a medium of communication among diverse linguacultural users has resulted in a significant rise in the number of new Englishes. Using a semi-structured interview for data collection, this qualitative study investigates the perceptions of six foreign English lecturers at four universities in Thailand towards Thai English and its usage in the classroom and World Englishes-informed pedagogy. The qualitative content-based analysis revealed the participants' mixed perceptions towards Thai English and its usage in the classroom. While most participants expressed likeness for Thai English, likewise World Englishes-informed pedagogy; nevertheless, some of them still maintained that Thai English is a 'broken', nonstandard variety of English. They further reported that accepting Thai English usage in the classroom might be a laissez-faire attitude that could hurt rather than assist Thai students to prepare for real-world exams during/after graduation since most, if not all students, will have to take high-stakes exams in English. These mixed perceptions implicate that enhancing English pluricentricity awareness and Thai English features in Thai education might foster Thai/other English(es)

| | acceptability/likeability among (non)Thais in using English for their own specific needs and purposes. |

Introduction

The global spread and use of English as an international lingua franca for inter/intracultural communication among peoples from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is, today, an undisputed reality. This language that was once owned by a specific group of native speakers (e.g. UK and USA), has increasingly experienced a worldwide spread that has resulted in its shifted roles as a language with global ownership. Today, research has shown that anyone or nation is entitled to claim ownership of English and use the language for whatever purpose (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020; Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Rose & Gallloway, 2019). As a result, different appellations have been used to describe such new roles, e.g. English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011), English as an international language (EIL) (D'Angelo, 2012; Crystal, 2008; Jenkins, 2011), World Englishes (WE) (Jenkins, 2009), and recently, Global Englishes (GE) (Gallloway & Rose, 2015).

The term WE is adopted and operationalized in this study as a paradigm "where nonnative varieties of English can be considered" (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 6). Similarly, Pennycook (2007, p. 5) refers to WE as "the spread and use of diverse forms of English within processes of globalization", while Canagarajah (2005, p. 5) considers WE as "the diversity of English used around the world." This diversity of Englishes makes the global use of English less tied to specific English varieties or ethnic groups such as Britain or America (Galloway & Rose, 2018). Thus, English functions in scope across regional, social, and ethnic boundaries bringing about different distinctive varieties of English (e.g. in Southeast Asia, for example, where the status of English has grown and spread in education as an international language) for intrantional, international, instrumental, and integrative purposes (Kirkpatrick, 2014). In fact, the pluricentricity of English uses and its users is widely accepted in English language teaching (ELT) with WE pedagogical principles and practices being key to this understanding (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Hino, 2018).

With increasing interest in the WE paradigm from different fields (e.g. English language education and sociolinguistics), discussions have

been predicated on WE implications in English language teaching and learning. Thus, the need to move away from "teaching and learning a single variety of language and culture from a particular speech community" (Rajprasit & Marlina, 2019, p. 19), to a pluralist emphasis on WE pedagogy in EIL (Hino, 2018; Mckay & Brown, 2015). To illustrate, Matsuda and Friedrich (2012) and Mckay and Brown (2015) have advocated the need for curriculum innovations in raising learners' awareness of English diversity and promoting multilingualism. While scholars (e.g. Matsuda & Friedrich, 2012) have reported on WE-informed teachers' adherence to this shift, however, the response for teachers, particularly in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) context, according to Tarrayo et al. (2021) has been relatively slow despite the cruciality of teachers' perception in teaching practices. Specifically, despite the pluricentricity of English varieties in different linguacultural contexts where English is used, many Expanding-Circle countries, such as Thailand, still remain deeply rooted in traditional standard EFL-oriented English language ideology and pedagogy that regard Inner-Circle English varieties (e.g., from the UK and the USA) as true legitimate and best models for ELT (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, 2021, 2022; Ren, 2014; Seidlhofer, 2011).

It should be noted that the general preference for a native-like English variety in Thailand (as opposed to a local Thai English variety) by most Thais is common; however, perceptions among Thai students and teachers varies (Boonsuk et al, 2021; Buripakdi, 2012; D'Angelo, 2012; Galloway & Rose, 2018; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Rose & Gallloway, 2019). While these scholars have articulated the need for ELT stakeholders to increase learners' awareness of WE in such contexts and develop favorable attitudes toward global and local English varieties in ELT, the response to this call for the case of Thai English in Thailand is still relatively minimal. With this therefore, the ability to use Thai English which has been reported (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, 2021; Tarayo et al., 2021; Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2015; Trakulkasemsuk, 2012) to be liked and intelligible to other Thais and foreigners alike is crucial. Also, although the linguistic diversification of different Englishes and what it means in Thai ELT has been somewhat explored to compensate for the fall of the native-speakerism ideology (Galloway & Rose, 2014; Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2015), the knowledge gap on deeper insights into perceptions of Thai English and its existence remains too broad to convince Thai practitioners (especially those who are heavily native

standard-oriented) that Thai English is viable and legitimate like every other native varieties. One missing link that is considered crucial and for which the present study seeks to investigate is to 'hear' what foreign lecturers and researchers from Kachru's Inner, Outer and Expanding circles, working in Thailand think of this local English variety with the hope to add to previous study that have mainly focused on Thai teachers' perception of this phenomenon. With Thailand now serving as a work destination for many English teachers, their voices on how they also perceive English uses/users in Thailand might add to the broader understanding of this issue for Thai policy and educational stakeholders in making informed decisions on realistic ELT practice in Thai English language education.

Moreover, previous studies have focused on the debate of Thai teachers' and students' perception of Thai English, whether it exist or not (Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2015; Trakulkasemsuk, 2012; Tarayo et al., 2021); however, no single study has delved into insights from foreign lecturers who also serve as interlocutors with Thai users of English. Thus, this study seeks to investigate how foreign university lecturers of English in Thailand perceive Thai English and its usage in the classroom and World Englishes-informed pedagogy. From this aims, two research questions were derived:

1. What are perceptions of foreign English lecturers in Thailand toward Thai English and its usage in Thai EFL classroom?
2. What are their perceptions of World Englishes-informed pedagogy?

Defining Thai English and its Features

The appropriateness and comprehensibility of English spoken in Thailand by Thais, generally referred to as 'Thai English' based on the WE paradigm is debatable due to its distinct linguistic characteristics (see details of such linguistic features hereafter). Despite the fact that standard English varieties (e.g. British or American English) is widely recognized as the ultimate model in Thai English language classrooms, non-standard English, also known as "broken English", is nevertheless, widely utilized across Thailand (Phuengpitipornchai & Teo, 2021; Pingkarawat, 2009). According to Bennui (2017), Thai English is a variant of the English

language spoken by Thai people. While many studies (e.g., Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Buripakdi, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Choedchoo, 2015; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2015; Ying Ying & Castelli, 2013) into Thais' beliefs and perception towards English varieties have shown unfavorable (and in most cases, mixed) attitudes and inferiority complexes toward non-native English varieties, including Thai English; however, the existence of Thai English, is one that till today, still remains challenging to accept as a unique variety of English (e.g., Bennui, 2017; Tarrayo et al., 2021).

Thai English, according to Roger (2013), has linguistic elements such as sounds, words, grammar, and discourse styles that are affected by the Thai language. In line with Jenkins' (2009) categorization of the distinction of English varieties into four levels, Thai English too, according to Trakulkasemsuk (2012) and Phuengpitipornchai and Teo (2021) has four linguistic levels of variation: phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse.

Phonologically, Rogers (2013) highlights the distinction of Thai English at two levels: segmental and suprasegmental. In contrast to native speaker models, the segmental level is concerned with the use of consonant and vowel sounds. Since it is difficult to pronounce the sound /θr/, for example, which is absent in Thai, most Thais pronounce the sound as /tr/ as in the word "three" in a Thai style. Also, Thais simplify their articulation of monophthongs, diphthongs, and triphthongs for vowels in similar ways as they do for consonant sounds. For example, according to Phuengpitipornchai and Teo (2021), the triphthong /aɪə/ in the word "fire" is generally pronounced as the diphthong /aɪ/, while the monophthong /ɪ/ in the word "average" is frequently pronounced as a diphthong /eɪ/. For words at the suprasegmental level relating to stress, tone, and intonation, Thai equally stress all syllables in a word and accentuate the final syllable.

For the morphological category, Baker (2008) stated that Thai is not just pragmatics-based, but also that Thai words do not inflect to express grammatical relations within sentences. Since English words are inflected, such as -s, -es for number, person, gender, and case, as well as -s, -es for tense, aspect, and mood, this distinguishes Thai and English. Bennui (2017) also observed that the morphological characteristics of Thai English include the development of new words. Thais, for example, use Thai words like "Tuk Tuk" and "Som Tam" in English conversations, and they sometimes mix Thai and English phrases to form new words like "Soi

four". A study by Trakulkasemsuk (2012) also shows that Thais blend English words to create new meanings. In the Thai context, for example, "hi-so", a created term for a wealthy person, is widely used. This word is a combination of the words "high" and "society".

Syntactically, the linguistic traits influenced by Thai English users' dialects in Thai English syntax include grammatical parts of English utterances found in their first language grammar rules, such as subject-verb agreement and tenses. These new formations are referred to as 'new ways of saying it' (Pingkarawat, 2009). Each word in Thai determines a grammatical relation and interpretation. Thais, for example, constantly use the word "laew" to indicate a past action in their talks. Thai people can determine grammatical relations without necessarily changing the forms of any component in their word choices by adding this kind of vocabulary (Pingkarawat, 2009; Rogers, 2013).

Regarding discourse style, Chamcharatsri (2013) claims that there are three distinct features of Thai English discourse styles: code-mixing, discourse particles, and reduplication. Mixing Thai and English codes in speech is known as code-mixing; meanwhile, discourse particles are linguistic components (or affixes), for example, "ka" or "na" that are embedded in English sentences to show Thai cultural courtesy aspects (Pingkarawat, 2009; Trakulkasemsuk, 2012). Reduplication, for Rogers (2013), refers to the Thai pragmatic discourses' syntactic repetition. That is, it is the way speakers repeat words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to achieve certain effects on the listeners (e.g. "I bought this very, very costly shirt").

Relevant Studies

The use of English in Thailand as a lingua franca has resulted in variational changes in how English is used by Thais with other users of English during communication. To exemplify, the 'Thainess' concept has relatively received attention in areas like English in Thai media (e.g. Troyer, 2012), Thai English professional writing (e.g. Buripakdi, 2012), a description of relative clauses in Thai English (e.g. Pingkarawat, 2009), Thai students' perception of English ownership and Thai English accent (e.g. Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, 2021), and Thai teachers' perception of Thai English and WE (e.g. Tarrayo et al., 2021); yet, studies on foreign English lecturers in Thailand views on Thai English and WE has not been explored.

This therefore necessitates a holistic view of teachers' perceptions from both Thai and non-Thai English teachers working in Thailand on this phenomenon as "Thai English as a local variety of English in Thailand based on English language teachers' perceptions towards it" (Tarrayo et al., 2021, p. 2) is key for policy design and teacher education.

Several research have been carried out in recent years to investigate the nature of Thais' attitudes toward World Englishes in the ELT setting. These studies have looked into how Thais perceive different forms of English, such as Singaporean English, Chinese English, Malaysian English, and so on (see e.g., Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021, 2022; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Choedchoo, 2015; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2015). However, only few studies have looked into Thais' perception of their own English (see Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021 for details), not mentioning non-Thai perceptions of the same phenomenon. To illustrate, Choedchoo's (2015) research found that while the Thai accent was scored lowest in terms of correctness, it was rated highest in terms of pleasantness by 98 Thai tertiary students. This result corroborated with the findings from Ambele and Boonsuk (2021) who conducted a study on 250 Thai tertiary learners' attitudes towards their own Thai English accent across 5 universities in Thailand. The findings also identified a dominant standard English language ideology and lack of WE awareness as being responsible for such negative attitudes towards Thai English. In a related study, Saengboon (2015) investigated the attitudes of 198 Thai undergraduate students' perception to World Englishes. The result showed that inner circle Englishes' accents were the most popular compared to non-native accents. Contrarily, most participants found the Thai English accent to be unappealing. Similar to Seangboon's (2015) findings, Jindapitak and Teo's (2012) study revealed that English major students in Thailand showed a higher favorable attitudes for inner-circle Englishes than others. Although Thai English accent was the third most preferred accent, the percentage difference between Thai English and the first two accents (American and British English) was significant. Most notably, the findings from Jindapitak and Teo (2012) revealed prejudicial tendencies, as non-native speakers' accents were stereotyped.

There are few studies that have looked at how Thai English is regarded by non-Thais, except from those conducted in Thailand. Weerachairattana et al. (2019), for example, conducted a study in China

with 130 university students. According to the findings, 33% of the respondents were inclined to hold a negative opinion of English variations from expanding circle countries such as Thailand. In a nutshell, despite the fact that numerous research have examined Thais' perceptions regarding Thai English, there are still gaps that have not yet been adequately addressed as earlier pointed out in the introduction. Hence, the focus of the current study.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study explores the perceptions of non-Thai foreign English lecturers in Thailand towards Thai English and its usage in the classroom and World Englishes-informed pedagogy.

Context and Participants of the Study

Data for this study was collected from participants across different state universities in Thailand. The four universities considered as appropriate sites for data collection are located in the center and north-eastern regions of Thailand. The choice of these universities was that they represent some of the most prestigious universities in Thailand offering international programs where English is employed as the medium of instruction, thereby attracting many Thai and foreign students/lecturers alike.

To reach the aims of this study, therefore, the participants chosen were six foreign lecturers of English across the inner, outer and expanding circle nations from the selected universities. The participants were contacted by email through the researcher's social network (Tagliamonte, 2011). Purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2011) was the main strategy used to select the participants based on the fact that they fulfilled "certain practical criteria, such as, geographical proximity, availability and willingness to participate in the study" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99). With the main objective of purposive sampling being that of focusing on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest and qualified to answer the research questions, the researcher sets out to find suitable participants with the relevant knowledge and experience to provide useful information on the research objectives. Thus, the non-Thai English

lecturers in this study were purposively recruited on the basis of their longevity in living, using and teaching English in Thailand (each of them have been teaching in Thailand for at least 5 years), and also because they are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (one from the USA, two from Europe, one from Africa, and two from Asia) where English is either used as a native language, second language or foreign language (see Table 1). This meant that the participants were those familiar with using and teaching English in a foreign Thai context where the use of English seems to vary from how the language is appropriated and utilized in other native and nonnative contexts. In this light, non-Thai English lecturers in Thailand were considered as the most suitable group to participate in this study since they had gained such experience in using and teaching English in and beyond their educational institutions in Thailand.

Table 1

Participants' information

Participants	Years of teaching	Origin	University location
L-1	8	UK	Northeast
L-2	6	China	Northeast
L-3	11	USA	Centre
L-4	7	Singapore	Northeast
L-5	5	South Africa	Centre
L-6	8	Ireland	Centre

Instrument

Since this study was an attempt to explore the lecturers' perceptions towards Thai English and its usage in the classroom and World Englishes-informed pedagogy, a semi-structured interview was used to delve into deeper positive and negative insights of the participants in light of the research aims. According to Richard (2003, p. 47), "interviews form the mainstay of qualitative research". Data collection through interviews offers an effective way to gain insights into attitudes and perceptions, and an understanding of one's personal perspectives in a way that is difficult to reach through survey or just observation. Moreover, a semi-structured interview is often used in qualitative inquires to allow participants to

express themselves and give the researcher an opportunity to access their ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher (Dörnyei, 2007). With the semi-structured design of the interview, prompts were prepared ahead of time (see Appendix A), as well as questions that emerge during the interview process (Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, utilizing this instrument provided insights that allowed the research objectives and questions to be achieved.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure started with seeking official permission from the selected universities and then, the participants. With the restrictions on movements in Thailand when data for this study was collected due to the Covid-19 pandemic, permissions were obtained through phone calls, online platform chats, and where necessary, emails. The interviews were conducted online via ZOOM with each participants on the basis of their accessibility and availability. As an interview protocol, the researcher listened rather than talked, explored rather than probe, throughout the interview process.

Before conducting the interview, to break the ice, the researcher started with a friendly conversation with the lecturers and asked general questions like names, origin of birth, institutions and years of living and teaching in Thailand. Later, the lecturers were informed of the scope of the study (i.e. research goals, research questions, interview procedure, and anonymity and data storage). The participants were further informed of their rights to withdraw whenever they wished in the course of the research.

The interviews were conducted in English since the participants were English lecturers and could all speak and understand English, with an encouragement for them to speak freely and honestly as their opinions would be confidential. The researcher then went through each interview question, one after the other, with the participants. Where an answer seemed too general or vague, the researcher either asked additional questions or verify or clarify the initials answers, or merely asked the participant to elaborate or provide particular examples. At the end of the interview, each participant was asked to provide any comments or suggestions, if they had, with regards to the research aims or questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative content analysis was used to evaluate and interpret the participants' responses. In general, qualitative content analysis is the systematic assigning of content to categories by subjective perception, taking into account the occurrence of categorical content (Selvi, 2020). It seeks to examine meanings and tries to provide key trends and credible findings in specific situations (Patton, 2002). Two broad phases of content analysis from Dörnyei (2007) were germane to this study: "(1) take the reply of each person in turn and mark in it any separate aspects of content, substantive statements or main points; (2) on the basis of the ideas and concepts highlighted in the texts, form wider categories to define the contents of the reaction in such a manner that will allow comparison with other answers" (p. 117). Thus, Dörnyei's (2007) content evaluation processes were adopted in analyzing the interview data of the participants in this study through four distinct steps, namely, (i) information transcription, (ii) pre-coding and coding, (iii) increasing memoirs of ideas, vignettes, profiles and other types of information display, and (iv) data interpretation and drawing conclusions.

The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed instantly after the interview while data collection was still in process. Since the research focus was on the contents of the participants' responses, and not the way they presented their opinions, prosodic features were disregarded. The interviews were transcribed closely by the researcher and cross-checked by the research assistants. Upon completion of the transcription, the transcripts were sent to each participant to verify the accuracy of the transcribed data. After this stage, the researcher started the analysis by reading carefully throughout the transcriptions to identify emerging themes or patterns appropriate to the study. In order to describe, structure, and interpret the data, coding was necessary for the second phase of analysis.

According to Dörnyei (2007) and Miles et al. (2014), coding is an approach used to classify and organize information gathered and to recognize relationships and trends. It provides researchers with an opportunity to "originally summarize information by sections" and "recognize an emerging theme, setup, or explanation" (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 86). A blended technique of "top-down coding or deductive approach" was implemented in this study where coding was enforced on

preconceived codes focusing on the research objectives, and "bottom-up coding or inductive approach" where coding emerged from the data.

The interview data were then edited and reorganized after the preliminary codes were created to make them clearer and more concise. Later, the emerging themes from the data were grouped into distinct categories to show how they were interrelated. Thus, some codes were structured into sub-categories, discarding those irrelevant to the research objectives. The codes that emerged from each group of respondents were modified for consistency throughout the coding phase.

During the initial coding stage, producing memos was also a helpful approach in examining patterns of the data gathered, their relationships, interpretations, and explanations. Dörnyei (2007, p. 254) considers memos (or memo) as "an exploration of the codes' concepts, hunches, and thoughts". These memos may be brief sentences or phrases, or as long as there are several paragraphs, and should consist of ideas or main concepts. Thus, the method further helped in grouping the emerging themes from the data. Ultimately, the findings from the data were interpreted and conclusions drawn as the last phase of the data analysis procedure.

Findings and Discussion

The findings presented in this section are discussed in terms of three salient themes from the data analysis: perceptions of Thai English (see 5.1), Thai English in the classroom (see 5.2), and World Englishes-informed pedagogy (see 5.3). The excerpts from the interview data in the presentation are identified with a generic pseudonym (L) used for all the non-Thai lecturer-participants, followed by a number to differentiate them (e.g. Participants L-4).

Perceptions of Thai English

In response to the first part of research question one, the participants overwhelmingly reported, in recognition of other English varieties (e.g. British and American Englishes), that Thai English can also be considered as a legitimate English variety in its own right and thus, be regarded as "expressing the unique linguistic identity of Thais and how Thais use English" (Participants L-5 and L-1). However, some of the

participants still hold the view that the "so-called Thai variety of English is just a form of non-standard kind of English used in Thailand" (Participants L-1 and L-5), and in different contexts like tourism (Phuengpitipornchai & Teo, 2012) and newspaper discourse (Pingkarawat, 2009), for example. Excerpts 1, 2 and 3 support this mixed view:

Excerpt 1

More non-native speakers now use English as a lingua franca due to its evolving role and adaptation in different contexts to suits local communicative needs. However, this does not automatically make the kind of English used in such contexts legitimate. In fact, such variations in most contexts like Thailand are mere forms of broken English than a variety in itself (Participants L-1).

Excerpt 2

So, with the present-day different varieties of English like the Thai English variety, it really does not matter how someone speaks or with what variety as long as the person is understood. With my experience of travelling and teaching in foreign contexts, I think that Thai English shares an equally important role as native varieties of English. Thai English is not some variety that anyone, including Thais, need to be ashamed of for fear of being ridiculed or scorn; it is the English variety of Thailand and uniquely reflects Thais' identity, local cultural values and ways in which they use English (Participant L-2).

Excerpt 3

Thai people cannot just run with this idea of Thai English to believe that it should be promoted as legitimate; it is still considered as bad English in my view. However, despite this personal view, I have come to appreciate the beauty of such linguistic diversity as it shows how the language has changed. I am always delighted to listen to Thai people speak using Thai English. Comprehension is what matters and not the English variety that one uses to express oneself. Thais should appreciate the beauty of how they use English

and feel proud, yet, still aim for native or near-native competence (Participant L-6).

In corroboration with the data in Excerpts 1 and 3, the so-called Thai English represents a variety of broken English spoken by Thais (Bennui, 2017). However, for most of the participants, using Thai English comes with a certain 'charm' (Participants L-3 and L-4) and 'linguistic beauty' (Participant L-5) brought about by the manner in which Thais use the English language (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; D'Angelo, 2012). According to the participants, 'Thai English is not bad English' (see Excerpt 2); rather, it 'is a variety that portrays Thai linguistic identity, something that Thais should appreciate' (see Excerpt 3). This finding corroborates the results of similar studies (see e.g. Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, 2021; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Choedchoo, 2015; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Saengboon, 2015; Weerachairattana et al., 2019) that have reported a mixed perception and attitude towards English varieties and Thai English from both Thais and non-Thais alike in different contexts.

From another perspective, in ELF interaction, comprehensibility and intelligibility should be prioritized over what English variety a speaker uses (see Excerpt 3) (Rose & Galloway, 2019). Therefore, speaking with a familiar Thai English accent, for example, in Thailand could be charming and reflect a collective Thai identity. Like two participants affirmed, 'Thai English should not be viewed as a strange or failed English' (Participants L-2 and L-5). As teachers, the participants reported that 'real-life, practical and correct language usage does not only involve imitating native variety but also using one's own local English variety in a manner that is comprehensible (Participants L-6 and L-4) (Baker, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2014). This therefore creates an understanding that there are many English varieties (e.g. Thai English) in existence across the globe that are equally worthy of recognition and appreciation. Thus, diminishing geographic and linguistic boundaries of English, reducing its diversity gaps, and acknowledging its diversity and dynamism (Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Galloway & Rose, 2018; Weerachairattana et al., 2019) is partly what WE seeks to promotes. WE, also, on the other hand, does not dismiss nor calls for a replacement of native varieties of English used by native English speakers (NES) (e.g. British and American English). Its sole purpose is to raise awareness of the fact that there are other English varieties in use on the planet today. As a result, the use of English should not be limited to native speakers' varieties only (e.g. British or American Englishes), but also, other

English varieties developed by the local context (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, Baker, 2012, 2015).

The participants' mixed perception of Thai English as a variety reinforces the widely acknowledge role and place of both native and nonnative Englishes in educational practice (see 5.2) (Fang & Ren, 2018; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012). Thus, to completely eradicate the 'native speakerism' (Holliday, 2006) and EFL-oriented notions of ELT in a context like Thailand (Galloway & Rose, 2018) may only seem a partial solution to the problem. Correspondingly, some participants asserted that native English varieties still mirror the actual English language practice in ELT with 'the internationalization of the English language and not only on who uses the language in accordance with local linguistic realities' (Participants L-1, L-2 and L-3). Moreover, given that English is no longer tied to any particular variety, nonnative users are no longer compelled to adopt native English varieties or try to imitate native speakers to gain local acceptance (even though this might not be the case for global acceptance) but can appropriate and creatively use their own local variety of the language to blend with their local linguistic realities for intracultural communication (Jenkins, 2006; Seidhlhofer, 2011).

Thai English in the Classroom

In response to the second part of research question one, the participants acknowledged the existence of "a kind of Thai way of using English" (Participant L-2) in the classroom, "particularly during classroom discussion, peer feedback and question and answer session" (Participant L-4). The participants further reported that "Thai English can be allowed to be used alongside native varieties in Thai English language classrooms as English is now a lingua franca language in Thailand" (Participants L-5 and L-6). Although all the participants acknowledged that native English varieties (e.g. British and American Englishes) still dominate Thai EFL classroom, and that it should still be the target norm, given that most, if not all, Thai students will have to take high-stakes examinations in English; nevertheless, they believed that awareness to English variety differences and contextual use and appropriateness need to be emphasized by teachers (see 5.3). In other words, while teachers might be a little tolerant with students using Thai English in the classroom for the purposes

mentioned by Participant L-4 above, all the teachers seem to agree that without such awareness and preparation, there might be a certain kind of laissez-faire attitudes that will not prepare the students for "real-world" exams that they are most likely to encounter once they leave school (see Excerpts 4, 5 and 6).

Excerpt 4

British and American English varieties should still be regarded as the best models to prepare Thai students for high-stakes examinations in English. EFL-oriented pedagogy where native varieties are prioritized as the standard seem to have a strong influence on teaching and learning goals of ELT in Thailand. While this will cater for laissez-faire attitudes in preparing students for real-world exams, certainly, this does not reflect how students use English in the classroom; and most importantly, learners' needs and goals of learning English are disregarded. Many studies conducted with Thai learners show that they feel less pressured and comfortable using their Thai English, for example, accent, in classroom (Participant L-5).

Excerpt 5

Amidst globalization, English remains a significant pedagogical language in Southeast Asia. With English being used to access life opportunities, Thai learners as citizens in the global village need more responsive ELT strategies in the classroom that will familiarize them with interlocutors of different English varieties and cultures. Therefore, while native English varieties should still be emphasized in the classroom for purposes of exams, for example, the learners' own English variety, for instance, and culture should also be emphasized for effective English language learning (Participant L-4).

Excerpt 6

When preparing students for real-world exams and international standard tests, the native English variety should be prioritized in teaching and learning in the classroom (Participant L-3).

The data show the participants' acknowledgement of the acceptance and promotion of native British and American English varieties as best models to 'prepare students for real-world exams' (see Extract 4) in the classroom. One reason for this, according to the participants is that most, if not all, students will have to take high-stakes examinations in English (see Extracts 5 and 6). Moreover, ELT in Thailand has been shaped by policies and curriculums that are, in most cases, not locally generated and teaching approaches that iconize the native speaker variety (D'Angelo, 2012; Saengboon, 2015). Basically, such curriculums encourage Thai learners and teachers to follow the native English speaker convention (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Saengboon, 2015; Weerachairattana et al., 2019). This argument seems to make sense when one thinks of the practicality of using English for international academic tests and exams.

Based on the findings, however, the participants believed that English diversity and virational uses as a lingua franca should not be neglected in EFL contexts (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Weerachairattana et al., 2019). As English is now a global language with many varieties in use, educators might need to raise learners' intercultural awareness of these varieties and appropriateness for contextual and goal-oriented uses by implementing practical and realistic policies (see Boonsuk et. al, 2021). Providing such classroom opportunity and space will increase students' WE-awareness pedagogy and build them up to become 'global intercultural citizens' (Participants L-1, L-3 and L-4) than just being limited to 'all or some varieties of English' (Participants L-2, L-5 and L-6).

From another perspective, the participants further opined that from their experiences living and working in Thailand for many years, they have observed, and so believe that 'Thai learners would feel more relieved and enjoyable if given the freedom to use their own Thai English variety in class' (Participants L-4 and L-6). This observation shows the non-Thai teachers awareness and realization of the use of Thai English alongside native ones in the classroom since it is now widely accepted that English is not exclusively tied to a particular nation/variety (D'Angelo, 2012). Put differently, depriving EFL learners of their local English variety use in the classroom in this age of the globalization of English in higher education where English serves as an international lingua franca is inappropriate (see Excerpts 4). This calls for ELT stakeholders in EFL contexts like Thailand to

rethink these ideas and re-conceptualize current English beliefs and behaviors to balance the actual English development and use in the Thai ELT classroom, which is diversely pluricentric in nature, in order to keep up with the linguistic complexities of English and goal-based appropriation of the language.

Preparing English language learners for today's English diversity requires more responsive pedagogies in addition to conventional EFL-oriented framework and English nativeness idealization. As Jindapitak and Teo (2012), Ambele & Boonsuk (2020) and Weerachairattana et al. (2019) suggest, English has become a medium for intercultural communication, and most English dialogues take place outside of the English native contexts, involving interlocutors with linguacultural diversity. However, other practical and real goal-based uses of English for exams and international tests (e.g. IELTS) should not also be neglected when such responsive pedagogies are framed by policy, administrators or teachers. Thus, learners awareness need to be fostered in order to familiarized them with different English varieties, when to use which and for what purpose, in order to achieve practical and realistic English language teaching and learning results (Akkakoson, 2019; Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2018).

Perceptions on World Englishes-Informed Pedagogy

The data revealed that the foreign lecturers expressed an 'embracing attitudes' (Participant L-3) towards the notion of World Englishes as an apt description of the different varieties of Englishes nowadays. Being foreign lecturers in an EFL context where English occupies an ELF status, the participants congruently agreed that their teaching of English in Thailand only broaden their understanding and appreciation of the realistic use of English 'as they have realistically experienced how different English users use English differently' (Participants 5 and 6). For example, Participants L-3 and L-1 in Excerpts 7 and 8, respectively, strongly echoed this point:

Excerpt 7

My living and working in Asia in general and Thailand in particular is an eye-opener to the countless number of Englishes in existence besides British and American English

varieties. We cannot deny that with globalization and migration of peoples from varied sociolinguistic backgrounds, the role of English has fast changed; once a language owned by a selected few to now an inclusive global language with local and global ownership. With an understanding of this linguistic shift in English, one should now be looking at users of English through the lens of World Englishes users with different varieties and not native standard imitators given that non-native users of English outnumbers native speakers; even with their own English variety (Participant L-3).

Excerpt 8

Nowadays, the current sociolinguistic roles of the use of English in different parts of the world is a reality. Using English in Thailand has introduced me to even more varieties of English, and I think that all these varieties are as equally important as the native English varieties even though each variety certainly has its place in terms of use ad usage. My understanding of the expansion of English is the global effect it has on those who use it as a lingua franca. World Englishes is vital and at present, a good descriptor of the many English varieties today (Participant L-1).

The WE-informed awareness attitude of the participants show that their experience in using and teaching English in Thailand played an influential role as seen in Excerpts 7 and 8. While this might not seem surprising since they teach English, however, previous research (e.g. Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Buripakdi, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Choedchoo, 2015; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Ying Ying & Castelli, 2013) with Thais and non-Thais teachers teaching similar English courses suggest a mixed perception towards Thai English and WE. The findings from the current study corroborate that of previous research in de-emphasizing the fact that local Englishes should be promoted at the detriment of native Englishes in local contexts. The data shows how the non-Thai teachers interpret their prior experiences. However, such interpretation of past experiences may also differ with individual realities and beliefs (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020; Sifakis, 2019).

Nowadays, the roles of English have changed from a monocentric to now a pluralistic shift with the increasing use of English by, and in most cases, nonnative users in ways that depicts their lived sociolinguistic

experiences and identity (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020; Mckay & Brown, 2015). For example, the perceptions of Participants L-3 (Excerpt 7) and Participants L-1 (Excerpt 8) is shared by the other lecturers (Participants L-2, L-5, L-4 and L-6) who all stated that they 'are aware of the global shift in English uses and users'. Based on this finding, Kirkpatrick (2014) and Jenkins (2009) observed that WE provides awareness and insights into the sociolinguistic and sociocultural fluidity and diversity of Englishes. And this diversity is brought about by the "processes of globalization" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 5) as English becomes more pluricentric than monocentric (Canagarajah, 2005; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2007). In fact, De Swaan (2001) in his linguistic galaxy model observes that "English is the language of global communication" (p. 6). Thus, the plural description of English as 'Englishes' in order to include other English varieties like Singaporean English, Malaysian English and Chinese English. Even the participants acknowledged the 'present availability of many Englishes globally' (Participants L-2 and L-4) which implicate that different English users successfully speak English differently (Jenkins, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2014). Such users should, therefore, not be considered as failed or unsuccessful English users simply because how they speak English does not conform to native standard but as successful communicators in their own right (D'Angelo, 2012; Jenkins, 2009, Mckay & Brown, 2015). Therefore, differences in speakers' Englishes are no longer problematic in communication and native English variety is no longer the aspired standard except for particular academic (e.g. exams) and career (e.g. international English tests) purposes. So, in keeping with WE practice, as long as interlocutors (outside this academic and career contexts) can understand each other without any difficulties or communication breakdown, then, it is not necessary to be native standard imitators. More so, it may seem unrealistic to attain native standards in a world of many varieties of English (D'Angelo, 2012; McKenzie, 2010; Pennycook, 2007). Even with regards to English ownership, Participants L-3 and L-5 maintains that English has a 'global ownership' (see also Excerpts 7 and 8). Every nation can now claim rights on how they appropriate and use the language to serve local communication needs given its global lingua franca role (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

It is clear that the participants' experiences living and teaching English in Asia and Thailand has offered them interesting opportunities to use and be exposed to different English varieties, thereby, sharpening their understanding of WE. Overall, the non-Thai lecturers' perceived mixed opinions of Thai English and its usage in the classroom is unsurprising as previous research has shown that even Thai teachers and students themselves still have an overwhelming negative attitude and inferiority complexes toward Thai English and non-native Englishes (e.g., Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Buripakdi, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Choedchoo, 2015; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Ying Ying & Castelli, 2013;). Moreover, perceptions towards the existence of a unique legitimate Thai English variety still remains varied and challenging (e.g., Bennui & Hashim, 2014; Tarrayo et al., 2021) which still leaves the questions of 'Does Thai English really exist?' open for further empirical scrutiny.

This implicates that native English standard adherence in an EFL context like Thailand where English serves as a lingua franca cannot be completely abandoned for local varieties. While standard varieties still have its place in Thai education as it dismisses the laissez-faire attitude that might hurt rather than help when it comes to the teaching of English in Thailand and practically preparing Thai students for "real-world" exams that they are most likely to encounter once they leave school, awareness of local English varieties (e.g. Thai English) might equally be raised to also prepare the students to be successful inter/intracultural communicators (Baker 2012; Fang & Ren, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019) outside such academic contexts. ELT in Thailand can also benefit from redesigning new policies that raises learners' awareness by addressing language pluricentricity issues in order to ensure that learners are equipped with the required inter/intracultural competencies to deal with the current diversity and fluidity of English communication (Akkakoson, 2019). Therefore, Scholars and educators in Thailand need to recognize and understand the reality of this progression. As Modiano (2009, p. 59) observe "an understanding of the diversity of English, for production as well as for comprehension, makes one a better communicator". Both local and foreign teachers in ELF settings thus need to be aware of and recognize English diversity for effective language teaching, and making learning and using the language more appropriate in the learners' contexts

(Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020, 2021; Mckay & Brown, 2015; Ren, 2014; Sifakis, 2019).

With regards to the limitations of the study, the small number of the study participants from only four universities in Thailand cannot be representative of the views of all foreign English lecturers in Thailand. This is a potential limitation to generalize the results of the study. To gain more in-depth and interesting insights into foreign English teachers' perceptions of Thai English and its usage in the classroom and World Englishes-informed pedagogy, interested scholars can expand on the sampled population, universities and disciplines of the participants, in addition to utilizing different data collection instruments and analytical frameworks. An equal limitation is that the data obtained from the participants are self-reported interview data only. A triangulation of research instruments and even analysis might provide a well-balanced and more insightful data and findings.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. From your perspective, what is the current role of English in Thailand?

2. Do you agree that English is a global language with global ownership? Please explain.

3. What are your views on the existence of different English varieties in contexts where English is used as a lingua franca (such as Thailand) and what they represent?

4. Do you believe that there is anything as such like a local Thai English variety? Please explain.

5. What are your perceptions towards Thai English?

6. What are your beliefs about using Englishes/Thai English in the classroom?

7. Should only native English varieties (e.g. British and American Englishes) still be promoted/used in ELF contexts/classroom such Thailand or an integration of both native and nonnative varieties through a WE-informed pedagogy? Please explain.

8. What are your views on raising WE-awareness pedagogy in Thailand?

9. Do you think that the current English teaching/learning practices in Thailand prepare learners to be aware of World Englishes issues and become global citizens themselves? Please elaborate.