Global Englishes and the Native Speaker Standard in EAL Classrooms

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All glory to God - Acts 1:8

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INTRODUCTION

According to recent estimations, of the approximately 1.5 billion speakers of English, more than seventy-five percent (around 1.1 billion people) have learned English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Stevens, 2019). This means that the vast *majority* of current English speakers would be referred to as 'non-native', while the *minority* would be considered 'native'. While this might not come as a surprise to most people, it does beg the question: Does speaking English like a 'native' speaker really matter? J.J. Wilson (2008) summarizes this question by stating the following, "…[T]hese days, there is perceived to be less need for students to speak like the English, Australians, North Americans or any other native speaker… most English in the world is spoken between non-native speakers, and teachers generally don't need to sound like native speakers in order to provide good models for students to listen to" (p. 29).

EAL classrooms around the world often put pressure, whether consciously or unconsciously, on their students to minimize their accents when speaking English (Li & Li, 2007). Teachers often instruct EAL learners in strategies to help them get rid of their particular differences in pronunciation, word choice, grammar, etc that vary from those of a 'native' speaker of English; as a result, students can feel frustrated when they do not sound like a 'native' when speaking English and feel pressured to keep trying (Sung, 2013). Understandably, these feelings are oftentimes the strongest among those who live in English-speaking countries (Creese, 2010).

Prejudices or assumptions about people who in a particular way (accent, non-standard grammar, etc) can negatively affect the learning process of EAL learners (Roessel, Schoel, & Stahlberg, 2020). These negative beliefs - that a person is somehow incompetent in a language simply because they have an accent - are strongest amongst speakers of English as a first

language (Kozlowski, 2015). There is something of a feeling of ownership that speakers feel over their first language(s) (L1), in this case, English. But in reality, the vast majority of EAL learners and speakers will never reach the standard that is considered 'native' (Medgyes, 2001). And why should they feel like they need to?

Recently, a Chinese student at Harvard went viral with a video she recorded for a homework assignment in which she stated that she had decided not to try and improve her English anymore (Wenxin, 2022). The student, Tatala, gave the reasons for her decision in the video. She explains that "she has always been a good student when studying English; however, she never felt satisfied and her confidence has wavered throughout the journey of learning the language" (Moon, 2022, p. 1). Tatala clarifies that, while she is not abandoning the language, she no longer wants to pursue the cultural identity behind English (Wenxin, 2022). Additionally, she adds that "language can cause people to judge personality, background, and intention since language is considered to be a part of one's identity… even if I am just not perfect at English, so what? This is my second language. This is the lingua franca I was pushed to learn" (Moon, 2022, p. 1).

While Tatala's story might have made headline news, her position is not unique and, in fact, voices many of the frustrations experienced by EAL learners and speakers (Blommaert, 2009). Tatala's story emphasizes the struggle of linguistic identity. This is a topic that many individuals may not be aware of, but it can have a profound effect on every language learner (Teng, 2018). To counter this pressure on learners to 'speak like a native,' some in the international TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) community have begun to emphasize the necessity of teaching English in a global setting (Global Englishes). Specifically, by teaching Global Englishes in EAL classrooms around the world, thus

intentionally stepping away from the 'native' English speaker standard (NESS) (Tardy, Reed, Slinkard, & LaMance, 2021).

Research was also conducted for this thesis. The purpose was to better understand the perceptions of the NESS from the viewpoint of EAL learners and speakers in multilingual contexts, specifically: What are the factors in EAL classrooms that introduce or reinforce the NESS (e.g., teacher beliefs, learner goals, texts, assessments)? The process of learning another language can be negatively impacted by the NESS that is established by both EAL teachers in the classroom and by learners' perceptions. The aim of this study was to identify what the NESS is and where it comes from. It is worth uncovering and analyzing the reasons that so many EAL learners and speakers feel pressure to sound like what can only be described as a *minority* of English speakers and how these factors impact the curricula of EAL programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, research into the spread of English across the world has increased considerably. The use of English as an international trade language has caused a significant surge in the number of EAL classrooms worldwide (Spencer, 2021). As Galloway and Rose (2019) wrote, "The rise of English as a global language has changed the foundations of how the language is taught and learned" (p. 4). This shift that they are referring to has become a topic of much debate among linguists and TESOL professionals over the past decade (Jenkins, 2012). Therefore, it is worth evaluating some of the research papers and studies that have been published in recent years and how they are impacting the TESOL community at large and the EAL learners they serve.

What are Global Englishes?

The first important matter to understand is the differences in the wide array of vocabulary used in relation to English, starting with Global Englishes. Global Englishes is commonly used as an umbrella term to describe the combination of three separate and distinct terms, namely World Englishes, English as an International Language (EIL), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). While teachers and professionals use these terms interchangeably, they do, in fact, have different meanings which should be clarified.

Defining a First Language

The initial term that needs to be discussed is that of a home/heritage language (HL) or first language (L1). These terms are oftentimes used interchangeably and refer to the language(s) that an individual grows up speaking and is, oftentimes, most proficient in or is the language(s) that they speak/spoke as a child in their home environment (Galloway & Rose, 2019). An example of this would be an individual who lives in southern India and whose L1 is Hindi. Hindi, in this case, would often be called this individual's 'native' language. However, this term, 'native', has, in recent years, become somewhat of a controversial phrase for reasons that will be presented later on.

Some people speak several languages of which they would consider themselves 'native' speakers. Yet this has been argued by some linguists as being technically impossible, as one language will always be more ingrained and widely utilized in a speaker's brain, if only by a little bit (Kroll, Michael, Tokowicz, & Dufour, 2002). To better illustrate what this argument consists of, take, for example, a speaker living in the United States who considers themselves a 'native' speaker of both English and Spanish. This individual has learned both languages since

they were a child and has no distinct 'non-native' accent when speaking either. They speak Spanish at home and with their close friends, and English in school and everyday interactions in their home community. While they might consider themselves to be a 'native' speaker of both languages, when asked to engage in a conversation surrounding a largely scientific topic, such as physics, they may find that they lack the vocabulary to speak as freely about this topic in Spanish as compared to English. This would be attributed to the fact that this speaker has gone to a monolingual English-speaking school which would show that English is, in fact, more 'native' to them than Spanish (Hoff, Welsh, Place, Grüter, & Ribot, 2014). However, this argument depends on a definition of 'native' that constrains an L1 to whichever language is more *dominant* in the Broca and Wernicke areas of the brain (associated with speech production/articulation and comprehension respectively), instead of to whichever language is more important for their personal identity.

This concept of only being 'native' in one language is a controversial topic in the field of Multilingual Language Acquisition (MLA), with professionals taking both sides of the argument. Some linguists maintain that it is possible for an individual to be a 'native' speaker of multiple languages (Pang, 2012). On the other hand, Dr. Annick De Houwer (2009) states that there is no such thing as a multilingual individual who is 'native' in two or more languages, but there *are* highly proficient bilinguals who can function very well in multiple languages (p. 1). The topic of first languages is an immensely complex subject that can vary depending on the individual and definition of what a 'native' language is. For the purpose of this paper, the definition that will be adopted of a speaker's L1 ('native') language(s) is as follows: "[an] individual [who] acquired the language in early childhood and maintains its use, has intuitive knowledge of the language, is communicatively competent, is able to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse, and identifies with

or is identified by the language community" (Lee, 2005, p. 155). To illustrate what this means, we can once again consider the L1 Hindi speaker. This individual also learned English growing up and considers both languages of equal importance to their linguistic identity; therefore, we would consider both of these languages as their L1s. But what is even more important than the definition is realizing that, oftentimes, whatever language(s) that a person considers as their L1 can greatly impact their linguistic identity (Ortaçtepe, 2012). This is an important issue because a language has a culture and history behind it and, therefore, whatever language(s) an individual identifies with is also an intrinsic expression of something much deeper than a set of sounds with arbitrary meanings.

Defining Global Englishes

The term English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is another acronym that is popular among linguists and TESOL professionals but has become usurped by people outside of the field (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2020). ELF refers to both the linguistic use of language across speakers of different L1s and the sociolinguistic implications of the use of English as a contact language (Galloway & Rose, 2019). For example, we would use ELF when discussing how our Hindi speaker uses English differently at home to talk with his mother vs in his classes at school. Essentially, then, this term is used either when we are speaking about how EAL learners use English in different contexts and situations or when discussing how different languages are gaining new words from their contact with English.

The subject area of English as an international language (EIL) pertains to the effects of the spread of English as a global language, with a predominant focus on the pedagogical implications (Galloway & Rose, 2019). This means that we would refer to EIL when speaking about topics that pertain to English in classroom settings (McKay, 2018). For our Hindi speaker,

this means that the English that he learns in his classroom at his school is EIL. EIL is oftentimes confused with ELF, but their definitions are different. As discussed previously, ELF is used when referring to people who do not have the same L1 and how they use English in different contexts. EIL, however, is used to refer to English as a general global means of communicating and, in particular, refers to the movement towards an international standard where the Native English Speaker Standard (NESS) is not held as the gold standard (Sharifian, 2009).

World Englishes can be defined as a specific focus on the different linguistic features of English varieties and their sociolinguistic implications (Galloway & Rose, 2019). This means that we use this term to refer to differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, and/or pragmatics of different English varieties or about how these variations and varieties impact an EAL learner or speaker in their unique environment (McKay, 2018). Therefore, when comparing our Hindi speaker's English to that of an L1 speaker from London we would use the term World Englishes.

Lastly, Global Englishes is the sum of all of these terms (ELF, EIL, and World Englishes). This is the broadest of all of the terms and, therefore, there is no surprise that the term *World Englishes* is often used interchangeably with *Global Englishes* since they appear to have the same semantic meaning. But the most important difference is that Global Englishes focus on generally easing communication between people of different L1 backgrounds (Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021). It is for this reason that the term Global Englishes will be used most widely in subsequent chapters when referring to the push to step away from the 'Native' English Speaker Standard (NESS) as a way to improve global communication. However, when a more specific term is required it will be used to refine the broad scope of Global Englishes.

Identity and Language

The quotes from Tatala's video brought to light an oftentimes overlooked area of language learning: linguistic identity. This is a topic that is critical to understanding how an EAL learner or speaker relates to not only their L1 but also to the target language, which is, in this research, English (Teng, 2018). "Language is considered part of one's identity" (Tabouret-Keller, 2017, p. 1). Linguistic identity describes the relationship between an EAL learner or speaker's identity and their home language(s) and how they understand their place in the world through the lens of language; this is an issue that may vary widely depending on the region or community of residence (Tabouret-Keller, 2017). For example, an EAL learner in a region of rural southern Russia will have a much different linguistic identity in relation to English than a refugee-background EAL learner in New York City. The Russian EAL learner may feel no reason to distance themselves from their L1, in this case, we will assume Russian, as they are still connected to their home culture and environment. However, the refugee-background learner may feel the need to distance themselves from their L1, assuming this is not English, in order to be embraced by the English-speaking world around them; this could lead them to feel the need to begin the process of assimilation (Hatoss, 2013). In this case, the use of ELF will affect each EAL learner's linguistic identity differently.

These effects are important as, whether an EAL learner or teacher realizes it or not, linguistic identities have the potential to shift throughout their lives (Hatoss, 2013). For a highly proficient bi- or multilingual individual, this change may not be very noticeable, but for a refugee-background adult EAL learner, it could be gradual and even mentally painful (Bhat, 2017). It is, therefore, the responsibility of the EAL teacher(s) to recognize this important relationship between language and identity because a shift can alter 1) how a learner relates to

culture, 2) conveys their emotions and opinions, and, most importantly, 3) their motivation and investment to learn English.

Motivation and Investment

The impact of linguistic identity on a learner's motivation is not a trivial matter and plays a large role in EAL classrooms and the progression of EIL. This has led to an increased emphasis for teachers to ask the question: "Are my students motivated to learn the language?" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 37). As Norton and Toohey (2011) noted, "A language learner may be highly *motivated* but may nevertheless have little *investment* in the language practices of a given classroom or community…the language learner, despite being highly motivated, may not be invested in the language practices of a given classroom" (p. 421). In the case of our Russian EAL learner, they may be very *motivated* to learn in order to watch a show that is in English but have no need or desire to change their linguistic identity from Russian. Thus this learner will be more invested in learning in a classroom that helps them achieve their goal of understanding conversational English. Naturally, the motivation for the refugee-background learner in New York will be different. They may be extremely motivated to learn English and invested in the classroom - no matter what topic is being taught - if they are trying to change their linguistic identity to match that of those around them. Each individual EAL learner studies English for a different purpose, thus leading to vastly different motivations in the classroom; these motivations can directly impact their linguistic identity (Ushioda, 2011).

While motivation is a critical part of language learning in any EAL classroom, the issue of investment goes hand-in-hand with it. Motivation defines investment, namely that motivation is the internal state of the learner while investment is the external actions that we make in response to the motivation (Darvin & Norton, 2021). And just as motivation pertains to linguistic

identity, so too does investment. A paper written by Darvin and Norton (2021) describes this relationship in the following way: "While identity categories of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation provide us with the language to think about the learner and the subject positions she or he occupies, investment is the means through which we can dissect the social world where the learner performs multiple identities" (p. 3). It is through understanding the complex relationship between linguistic identity, motivation, and the investment of learners that EAL teachers can design teaching strategies and curricula to better assist the learning process.

Translanguaging and the Multilingual Turn

Linguists, by better recognizing this relationship, have begun to challenge previously conceived ideas of language. One example of this is *translanguaging*. Until recently, languages were generally viewed as discrete, independent entities, with speakers interacting with only one language at a time. However, translanguaging challenges this concept of monolingual orientation by proposing viewing languages not as separate entities, but as part of an interwoven system (Galloway & Rose, 2019 & Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W., 2015). This means that linguists recognize a speaker's ability to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, potentially from across several languages, when engaging in communication in any language (Bell, 2006). This is similar to notions such as code-switching, where an EAL learner or speaker unconsciously switches their vocabulary, intonation, and so forth, based on the environment in which they are using English. Both code-switching and translanguaging are critical to linguistic identity because they build a bridge from one aspect of an EAL learner or speaker's linguistic identity to another (Wei, 2017). This is helpful for TESOL professionals because in categorizing

all languages as part of one interwoven system we can view linguistic identity in much the same way: one unified system (Galloway & Rose, 2019).

This movement can be summarized as a rejection of the monolingual bias, which is that speakers of only one language are considered normal or the standard while speakers of several languages are exceptions. For the Russian EAL learner, the concept of translanguaging can be very beneficial since they are still closely connected to their home language, Russian. This viewpoint would, therefore, help them navigate their linguistic identity in Russian and in English. However, for the refugee-background EAL learner, this concept could prove to be more of a challenge since they are living in an English-dominant community. They may be immersed in an environment that has not yet rejected the monolingual bias and may feel that it is necessary, or even normal, to reject their home language(s) in an effort to 'fit in' or that they need to separate their language identities. Instead of pressuring EAL learners and speakers to view themselves as having several separate identities based on the language in use in any given context, translanguaging helps them view themselves as under one united identity, which is simply multifaceted (Galloway & Rose, 2019). And this viewpoint could help the refugee-background EAL learners and speakers to feel that they can stay connected to their home language(s) while learning English without becoming increasingly isolated from their multiple language identities.

In addition to translanguaging, another growing movement that is important to address is the *multilingual turn*. The multilingual turn also pushes away from the monolingual orientation and emphasizes the importance of other languages in addition to the dominant lingua franca (Galloway & Rose, 2019). The monolingual bias has undermined Applied Linguistics and also Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory for years and has thus impacted methods for

teaching EAL (Meier, 2017). While translanguaging deals with linguistic identity and how it is affected by linguistic repertoire, the movement of the multilingual turn seeks to make multilingual learners feel like they are no longer the exception to the rule (May, 2013). This can help lead to EAL learners not feeling as pressured to create a shift in their linguistic identities.

Both translanguaging and the multilingual turn break from traditional monolingual orientation and have the potential to significantly impact an EAL learner and speaker's linguistic identity. Translanguaging understands the importance of all languages being interwoven; the multilingual turn puts importance on other languages (Meier, 2017). As a result, both the Russian and refugee-background EAL learners who speak multiple languages can feel like they do not need to place their identity on the language that the world perceives as the dominant lingua franca, English (Hatoss, 2013). This idea supports these learners to be able to see all of their languages in their linguistic repertoire as of equal importance to their identity which can lead to a shift in motivation and create a positive change in their investment while learning EAL (Bell, 2006).

The Issue of Linguicism

In this complex realm of linguistic identity, positives are often accompanied by negatives and the most damaging issue EAL learners and speakers can face is *linguicism*, also known as linguistic prejudice (Quasthoff, 2020). It does not take much to understand how prejudice against a language, whether done consciously or not, can be detrimental to EAL learners and speakers. And, unfortunately, linguicism can be found both inside and outside of the classroom. When one language is perceived as better or worse than another, learners can develop an accompanying internal bias which would have a huge impact on their linguistic identity, leading to negative changes in motivation and investment.

Linguicism is an ongoing issue that can look a hundred different ways depending on the context; it is not only found among English speakers. Take, for example, High German. This vernacular is considered, by most L1 speakers of it, as the 'correct' way to speak German (Russ, 2002). High German is a dialect that is used and taught in most university and school settings in Germany and can differ greatly from the everyday dialects of German that are spoken elsewhere (Clyne & Clyne, 1995). This is just one example of linguicism, where *High German* is regarded as the 'better' way to speak German. This leads to speakers of varieties of low German being stigmatized and feeling prejudiced against in academic settings. Evidence of this linguicism in German can be seen clearly all over Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Germany (McMonagle & Rühlmann, 2019). For instance, the southern region of Germany, Bavaria, presents a clear example of this. Bavarian is part of the low German category and therefore is understood to be different from High German. While Bavarian is spoken in everyday interactions throughout Bavaria, High German is taught in schools and is considered by most as the correct and even *polite* way to speak. A person who continues to speak Bavarian German in a classroom, government setting, or any other 'high society' setting could be judged as being uneducated and/or rude (McMonagle & Rühlmann, 2019). Thus, a Bavarian child must learn early on that this linguicism exists and adapt their language to different environments (Russ, 2002). This is just one example of many instances of linguicism in society, but it is an issue that can and does impact individuals around the world.

This is just a small taste of the rich and complex area of study that is linguistic identity. These factors, whether positive or negative, can shape and influence linguistic identity in all EAL learners and speakers (Bell, 2006). And when a learner's linguistic identity is changed, this can affect the investment of the learner in their EAL classroom (Quasthoff, 2020). These

damaging attitudes that lead to linguicism are often a direct result of monolingual biases and have no place in an EAL classroom. For the Russian EAL learner, their linguistic identity may not be affected by the addition of another language to their repertoire or by linguicism. Their motivation would be driven by their goals in English and their investment in the classroom will be directly impacted by how well the teacher helps them reach these achievements. For the refugee-background EAL learner and even low German speaker, their identities to their home language(s) can be directly and negatively impacted by linguicism. This means that their motivation and investment can be based on the desire to change their linguistic identity in order to conform to a set of 'native' speaker standards.

Prescriptivism and Native Speaker Standards

The motivation behind the rise of translanguaging and the multilingual turn is driven by the monolingual bias, which is a direct result of ingrained societal prescriptivist beliefs. Prescriptivism is defined as the belief that there are correct and incorrect ways to use language and that there are rules about language that speakers should follow (McIntosh, 2022). In the realm of EAL classrooms, this belief can oftentimes lead to the establishment of strict adherence to traditional prescriptivist grammar. This means that a language is presented as a set of rigid rules that an EAL learner *must* follow in order to speak English correctly (Straaijer, 2016).

An Introduction to Standard English

Prescriptivism in English has its roots as far back as the eighteenth century. According to authors R. Watts and L. Wright (2000), "The role played by attitudes towards language in helping to create these social distinctions had already been realized explicitly with the emergence of a generally accepted written standard at the beginning of that century" (p. 57). This emergence

of a written standard affects English speakers to this day and has led to distinctions in more 'correct' writing styles (i.e., academic writing vs. texting) and even the development of dictionaries. While the rules have continued to be updated and redefined, the basic goal is still the same: the perceived preservation of a standard variation of English (McIntosh, 2022).

The perceived need to preserve a written form of English has played a critical, yet largely unrecognized, role in the lives of English speakers for centuries (Straaijer, 2016). But writing is not the only aspect to be tainted by prescriptivism. After all, one of the most common ways to mark social distinctions is through the production and institutionalized reproduction of standard and non-standard ways of *speaking* (Quasthoff, 2020). This is to say that speakers of English make different social distinctions based on the way a person speaks, i.e., their phonology, syntax, lexicon, and pragmatics. This prescriptivist ideology can still be seen clearly in the present day. All we have to do is consider the example of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and its place in the English-speaking world. Speakers of AAVE are often placed at a disadvantage in classrooms or with job opportunities, due to the fact that Standard American English (SAE) is prioritized as the 'correct' way of both speaking and writing (Smith, 2020).

This traditionalist way of thinking about language is not new by any means and has been the subject of numerous studies and research papers. For instance, Watts and Wright (2000) describe the institutionalization of SAE as such: "Without the prior existence of prescriptive attitudes towards language, the rise of Standard English as a 'social symbol' would hardly have been possible" (p. 30). It should come as no surprise, then, that SAE is still considered a goal many EAL learners and speakers strive to achieve since it is perceived as a powerful social symbol in English-speaking societies (Smith, 2020). But in order to attain this level of language 'perfection', EAL learners and speakers face added pressures to conform to countless rules; this

can be the root that leads many to seek to rid themselves of L1 accents that they perceive are putting them at odds with the social standard (Milroy & Milroy, 2012). This is linguicism at work.

EAL Learners and Self-Assessed Inadequacies

One way that this institutionalization manifests itself in EAL learners and speakers is in *self-assessed inadequacy*. This self-assessment occurs when an EAL learner or speaker believes that their English language skills are inadequate based on their own perceptions and idealizations of what a good speaker of English is (Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019). This self-judgment is best illustrated in a study of a group of German scientists by Ammon (2003). These particular scientists believed that their English was not adequate for them to be able to publish scientific research papers in their field of study. Since scientific articles are most widely received and recognized by the international community when they are published in English, this puts an increase of pressure on these scientists. "It seems safe to assume that of scholars in other fields, practically none can write a text in English that meets the standards of the [English speaking countries]" (Ammon, 2003, p. 30). This led to these scientists seeking out and paying L1 English speakers to edit their works before ultimately submitting them for publication.

It is not just scientists that face the consequences of self-assessed inadequacies resulting from prescriptivist-based linguicism. University students also tend to put enormous amounts of pressure on themselves, since a prospective student's English language ability can lead to their acceptance or rejection by institutions. "It seems likely that language plays a considerable role in the different attractiveness of universities in English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries – a factor whose extent merits analysis" (Ammon, 2003, p. 31). Not only this, but Ammon (2003) points out how this helps entire countries have a language-based advantage and

are, therefore, on a different footing in international communication due to the global position of English (Ammon, 2003, p. 32).

Kachru's Inner-Circle Countries Model

One term that is critical to address when talking about English-speaking countries is that of *Inner-Circle Countries Model*. This concept involves arranging countries into different circles based on the English language (Kachru, 1985). According to Kachru, inner-circle countries include nations where English is the primary language, i.e., the United Kingdom or the United States (1985). Outer-circle countries are nations that have been historically affected by the spread of English, such as India. In these multilingual settings, English is the second language and is generally used as the major international means of communication (EIL). And lastly, expanding-circle countries refer to nations that have accepted English as the most important international language of communication and teach it as a foreign language, as is the case in Russia.

While Kachru's model has been critiqued for centering inner-circle countries in a way that implies some notion of ownership, it nonetheless provides a useful lens through which to evaluate English language use globally (Al-Mutairi, 2020). With this model in mind, the case of the German scientists deserves another look through Kachru's lenses. The scientists' English would, most likely, be sufficient for publishing research papers in outer- and expanding-circle nations but becomes an issue in inner-circle countries (Ammon, 2003). While their English would be good enough to get their papers published, the scientists perceive the prescriptivism of Standard English (SE) and judge themselves accordingly. This means that, since they are not L1 English speakers, they do not deem their language abilities as being good enough for inner-circle countries (Sung, 2013). This may seem like a logical conclusion, but in reality, SE is not the L1

language *even* for most people in *inner-speaking countries* (Milroy, 2012). To illustrate this, consider a study done by Hudson (2000). He states that only around 10% of the population in the UK has what he considered SE as their L1, and he goes so far as to surmise that the same is the case for other inner-circle countries (Hudson, 2000). This means that the German scientists' English would have been similar to a *majority* of English speakers in the inner-circle countries where their research papers would be published and read.

Unfortunately, the prescriptivist view of having 'perfect' English when publishing a scientific article is often valued above the quality of the content (McIntosh, 2022). This is a real issue that faces many EAL professionals and oftentimes leads them to spend copious amounts of money on translators and/or L1 English editors (Ammon, 2000). For example, if a medical doctor in Greece desires to publish the findings of a study about a potentially life-saving vaccine, the correct use of prescriptivist grammar is the issue that they would face. Failure to live up to the NESS could result in a scenario where their discoveries are discounted, the focus shifting instead from the content of the paper to their adherence to strict grammar rules (Sung, 2013).

The Struggle to Define Standard English

These revelations give rise to the question of how to properly define Standard English (SE). While many L1 English speakers do not know how to define what SE is, they usually, instinctively, know how to recognize it. For example, most L1 speakers of English are able to differentiate between standard and non-standard English when given the following chart (Hudson, 2000, p. 1):

Standard English	**Non-standard English**
I **did** it.	I **done** it.

Come **quickly**!	Come **quick**!
… **those** books …	… **them** books …
I did**n't** break it	I **never** broke it.
We started first, **didn't we**?	We started first, **isn't it**?

Most L1 speakers of English are able to recognize that saying 'I done it' is not the 'correct' use of grammar and that they should, instead, say 'I did it' (Hannah, 2017). Even if the use of the word 'done' in this instance is what most of the speakers of a dialect would naturally say, they are still aware that it is 'wrong'. As Hudson (2000) puts it, "Standard is the kind of English which is:

1. Written in published work
2. Spoken in situations where published writing is most influential, especially in education (and especially at the university level)
3. Spoken 'natively' (at home) by people who are most influenced by published writing – the 'professional class'" (p. 2).

Linguistic Myths about English

While modern English-speaking communities seem to still adhere to linguistic prescriptivism, it is important to note that this ideal hinges on one main assumption: that English has reached a state of perfection – or what many linguists refer to as the *Myth of Perfect English*. This myth is the foundation of prescriptivism because without it, SE has no superiority and there is no reason to keep the language from adapting and changing. As Watts and Wright (2000) put it, "In order to give some substance to the myth of superiority, it [is] necessary to represent Standard English as having already reached a state of perfection, creating the myth of the perfect

language" (p. 35). The very foundation of the view of linguistic prescriptivism is that a language, in this case English, has reached a point where it cannot and should not be changed or improved in any way; thus speakers should seek to learn this 'perfect' way of communicating. This is often referred to as the *Myth of the Undesirability of Change* (Creese, 2010).

The aforementioned myths, the myth of perfect English and the undesirability of change, not only go against the natural development of all languages but can also prove to be extremely harmful in EAL classrooms (Kayaalp, 2015). It is not hard to see how this could be the case. EAL learners are normally explicitly taught SE, whether American (SAE) or British (SBE) (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2011). These standards have superiority in inner-circle countries' societies and they often perceive this throughout their EAL journey. One of the most common ways learners are confronted with the NESS is when an EAL teacher calls out a phrase, word, or a grammar use in class and explains how it is 'bad' English (Galloway & Rose, 2019). Thus, the EAL learners pick these notions up from their teachers, much like children learning from their parents, that there is a possibility of speaking 'bad' English and it should be avoided.

But prescriptivism should, by no means, be discounted or completely thrown to the side as it does serve a purpose and is critical to support successful communication and mutual intelligibility. However, there is a fine line that, if crossed, can lead to prescriptivism becoming something of a dominating force. While it is, fundamentally, not a bad thing to teach EAL learners English standards and rules, it can lead to linguicism further along in their learning journey (Kayaalp, 2015). For example, if a learner is taught by a strict prescriptivist EAL teacher, they may develop self-assessed inadequacy, since they do not view themselves as meeting the minimum standard for the English language. This is where an EAL learner can risk prescriptivist grammar becoming a dominating language ideology in their own lives.

Creating a New Viewpoint

It is clear, then, that a new outlook needs to be established with regard to prescriptivism, one that emphasizes embracing Global Englishes and strikes a balance between establishing intelligibility and maintaining speakers' varieties of English. Embracing Global Englishes does not mean that EAL teachers would be accepting that grammar has no place in their classroom (Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021). Rather, Global Englishes emphasizes the importance of effective communication over impeccable grammar, and seeks to recognize the value of each individual's variety of English. If an EAL learner or speaker can communicate successfully with EIL, then they should not be placed under the NESS, when many L1 English speakers do not themselves meet these very standards (Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021).

The issue of prescriptivism and the NESS raises the question of who, then, gets to decide what constitutes as SE? The answer to this question is often considered to be the same individuals as those who 'own' the language. Now, this might be a humorous thought because no one can own a language, but this is, essentially, what L1 speakers of a language tend to believe. EAL learners and speakers often face the feeling that they need to conform to strict prescriptivist ideals because they are just 'borrowing' English. (Straaijer, 2016). Since *they* are not L1 speakers, many learners of other languages(s) feel that they need to adhere to the 'native' speaker standards of that language (Milroy, 2012). EAL learners and speakers can believe that they need to reach the NESS out of fear that if they do not, it will reflect poorly upon them (Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021). And this fear is not unfounded.

Inner-circle countries do tend to put the same pressure on EAL learners and speakers as they do on L1 English speakers (Kachru, 1985). The question then arises as to when is an EAL learner considered an EAL speaker. After all, not all EAL learners are actively in the classroom

or perceived to be working towards further developing their English language skills. Are they still considered learners? According to Strand (2020), "Most EAL [learners] need around six years of support to achieve proficiency in English" (p. 1). Strand (2020) argues that it is after EAL learners have reached the level of 'proficiant' (where they can talk confidently and be understood well in most situations) that they are no longer considered a learner. But does this mean that an EAL speaker can be categorized as equal to L1 English speakers in terms of language competence? Rushton (2022) argued that EAL speakers will always be learners to some extent and, therefore, should not be categorized in the same way as an L1 English speaker. And, indeed, many will argue that to hold these learners accountable to the same standards as L1 speakers is extremely unfair. After all, EAL learners are just that: learners. They are not L1 speakers and should, therefore, not be expected to live up to the same standards as if they were (Galloway & Rose, 2019). While helpful as a goal, if an EAL learner can communicate effectively with the L1 or EAL speakers around them, then theNESS should not be seen as the *minimum* that a person must achieve (Ammon, 2000).

TESOL professionals have, recently, begun to push back against the NESS as a minimum for English speakers. Widdowson (1992) sums up the view of many professionals in the area of linguistics when he argues that "English is an international language, which implies that it is not a possession which [native speakers] lease out to others" (p. 385). When interacting with an L1 English speaker, many EAL learners and speakers tend to experience shame when using their English skills because they do not want to 'mess up' the language (Galloway & Rose, 2019). Even when an L1 English speaker makes errors while talking that affect mutual intelligibility, many do not believe that it is their place to tell a 'native' speaker what to do with their own language. But Norton (1992) argues that 'English belongs to all the people who speak it, whether

native or non-native, whether ESL [(English as a Second Language)] or EFL [(English as a Foreign Language)], whether standard or non-standard" (p. 427).

The Struggle to define a 'Native' English Speaker

Both Widdowson and Norton present powerful arguments, but they bring up another critical question: What is a 'native' (or L1) English speaker? Many TESOL professionals have begun to put quotation marks around the word 'native' or 'non-native' in an effort to put emphasis on what has been referred to as *the 'native' speaker myth* (Ammon, 2000). The most oft-cited definition for 'native' speakerhood is that an L1 speaker of English is a person who was born in an inner-circle country (Davies, 1997). However, the place of birth of an individual does not necessarily determine their linguistic identity. Take, for example, a person born in the United States yet grows up with Spanish as their primary linguistic identity. This would disprove that particular definition of 'native'. Another way to describe an L1 English speaker is to argue that they must have had a childhood in an inner-circle country and have spoken English throughout this time (Medgyes, 2001). However, this results in the exact same issue as the argument of birth, as one can still identify with a different language. There is also the case of children who grew up outside of an inner-circle country but speak English, such as children of individuals in the military, diplomats, missionaries, etc. The list of definitions continues well past just these two, but none can provide a truly 'perfect' explanation of what 'native' represents. From this it becomes obvious that the lines between a 'native' speaker and a 'non-native' speaker are not clearly defined and it seems to rely heavily on an individual's own linguistic identity.

But regardless of how we define a 'native' speaker, people who speak English as their L1 continue to have a distinct advantage over those who do not. This 'non-native' hindrance is referred to as a *linguistic handicap*, which can be recognized across many inner-circle countries

(Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021). For example, in the United States, it frequently happens that if a prospective EAL employee is viewed as not meeting the NESS, they can be overlooked in favor of an L1 English speaker. This can occur even if the EAL learner or speaker can effectively communicate in English and may even be able to do the job better than that of their L1 counterpart (Kayaalp, 2015).

Addressing the 'Native/Non-Native' Divide

So with all of these things in mind, what exactly would be the point of having the labels of 'native' and 'non-native' English speakers? Davies (1997) says that "The native speaker is a fine myth: but we need it as a model, a goal, almost an inspiration. But it is useless as a measure; it will not help us define our goals" (p. 157). In other words, it is often the goal of EAL learners and speakers to try to become as close to the NESS as possible. But as Kayaalp (2015) points out, we should be able to set the NESS as only a goal, while understanding that the boundaries between 'native' and 'non-native' are vague and often unable to be crossed.

Examples of the 'native/non-native' speaker divide can be seen almost anywhere in the world. Consider the case of an immigrant from Russia to the United Kingdom who speaks proficient English (C2; advanced CEFR Level), and even has English as their main linguistic identity. However, since they began learning EAL as a teenager, they do not consider themselves an L1 English speaker even if they have no distinguishable Russian accent. They unconsciously believe that they cannot cross this vague line from 'non-native' to 'native,' even if their English is on an L1 speaker's level. They see an L1 English speaker under the aforementioned shadow of the monolingual bias and think that to be an L1 speaker they would have to have only spoken English while growing up (Kayaalp, 2015). It is from examples such as this that many EAL learners and speakers realize that this ideal goal of reaching the NESS is unattainable and settle

for achieving effective communication in English rather than the NESS (Medgyes, 2001). Medgyes (2001) explained that "Attainment of native proficiency in English not only demands strenuous efforts, but it may also lead to a loss of native identity in one's home language(s) – a price many would find too great to pay" (p. 431).

This rising discussion among TESOL professionals regarding linguistic identity, the NESS, and L1 speakerhood has increased awareness of the importance of teaching Global Englishes to EAL learners. This drive has the potential for far-reaching impacts and forcefully pushes back against the prescriptivism found in many EAL curricula, thus breaking a standard of teaching and expectations for learners that have been implemented for decades. But even stepping away from the NESS, EAL learners can continue to still feel pressure to change a part of their linguistic identity in order to conform to what they perceive as the ideal for English. In other words, they set their goals for English to reach the level of L1 English speakers and do not consider the language as an international form of communication. Language is, by nature, fluid; all languages, including English, are forever changing and adapting, so trying to force them into the confines of a set of rules goes against everything that a language is. This means that no language or standard is ever perfect; so why do societies act like it is? As John F. Kennedy put it, "Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth."

METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature surrounding linguistic identity and its impacts on motivation and investment reveals an array of different opinions and perceptions surrounding the Native English Speaker Standard (NESS). Numerous studies and research papers have explored the linguistic identity of EAL learners and speakers (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Tabouret-Keller, 2017). However, they have largely focused on the hiring practices of EAL teachers and the

impact this has on learners (Medgyes, 2001) or in classrooms in inner-circle countries (Garcia & Kim, 2014). While it is understandable for there to be the influence of the NESS in classrooms in inner-circle countries, there seems to be a lack of information regarding what the NESS looks like in English-dominant vs non-English-dominant countries. How these standards are received and implemented in different contexts is critical when exploring the push for Global Englishes and a broader acceptance of varieties in EAL classrooms.

Design of the Study

Many L1 English speakers tend to believe that EAL learners and speakers should be pressured to conform to the NESS, yet that does not necessarily dictate how these individuals will perceive the issue. There is a shift among EAL teachers to evaluate their teaching strategies and curricula in order to step away from these perceived norms. But that does not address the expectations that these EAL learners may still experience both inside and outside of the classroom (Tardy, Reed, Slinkard, & LaMance, 2021). Some learners' goals entail studying or traveling abroad in inner-circle countries or finding employment there. These aspirations might warrant pursuing the objective of sounding like an L1 English speaker, while others may simply want to sound generally American or British because of the influence of social media, films, celebrities, etc. (Ammon, 2003).

The perspectives of EAL learners and speakers can provide a richer understanding of what the NESS looks like and how it is manifested outside of the lens of theoretical discussions. Theories need to be continually tested and reexamined in a variety of *current* contexts to garner a comprehensive understanding of the situation of the NESS and EAL learners and speakers' observations of them. Theories regarding these perceptions of the NESS would benefit from additional insights from EAL learners in *multilingual* contexts. It is not possible to reach any

definitive conclusion on how every EAL learner and speaker regards the NESS, but teachers can gather a better understanding of how these perceptions manifest.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to better understand the perceptions of the NESS from the viewpoint of EAL learners and speakers in multilingual contexts. The main question that provided the foundation of this study was: What are the factors in EAL classrooms that introduce or reinforce the NESS (e.g., teacher beliefs, learner goals, texts, assessments)? The process of learning another language can be negatively impacted by the NESS that is established by both EAL teachers in the classroom and by learners' perceptions. The aim of this study was to identify what the NESS is and where it comes from. The study specifically focused on EAL learners and speakers in a global context in order to explore the complex linguistic identities of individuals who navigate daily life in regions with multiple languages or within multilingual communities.

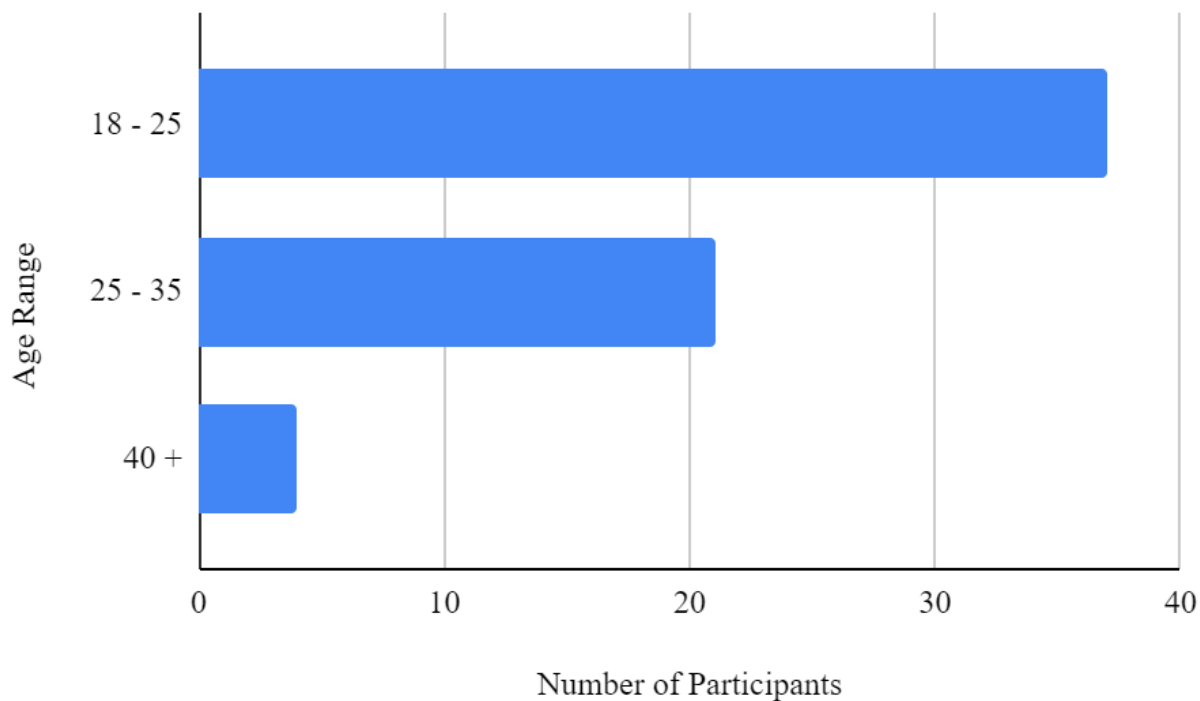
Another important objective for this study was to identify EAL learners' and speakers' attitudes towards the NESS and how it has impacted their perceptions of the concept of Global Englishes. This is important because, even though English has become a lingua franca, Global Englishes has yet to emerge as the predominant English taught in EAL classrooms, particularly outside of inner-circle countries. There is a potential for EAL learners and speakers in multilingual contexts to develop a prejudice *against* Global Englishes and see it as a 'lesser' form of English due to the influence of the NESS. This study also aimed to explore the potential for the use of Global Englishes in EAL classrooms, specifically in multilingual contexts, and the impacts that Global Englishes might have on these learners.

Research Methodology

Due to the complex nature of the questions asked in this research, a mixed research methodology was selected. While the variety of open-ended questions allowed for a qualitative approach to the participants' contributions to most of the questions, quantitative survey data was also important in order to find patterns. The qualitative methodology was critical to recognize individual opinions and experiences, while a quantitative approach was helpful to be able to synthesize this data into a more holistic and easily comprehensible way. The focus was always on the importance of the qualitative data as the objectives of this study focused on the importance of experiences and opinions of each EAL learner or speaker. The quantitative data was used to provide support to the qualitative findings and discussions.

Figure 1

Approximate Ages of Participants in the Study

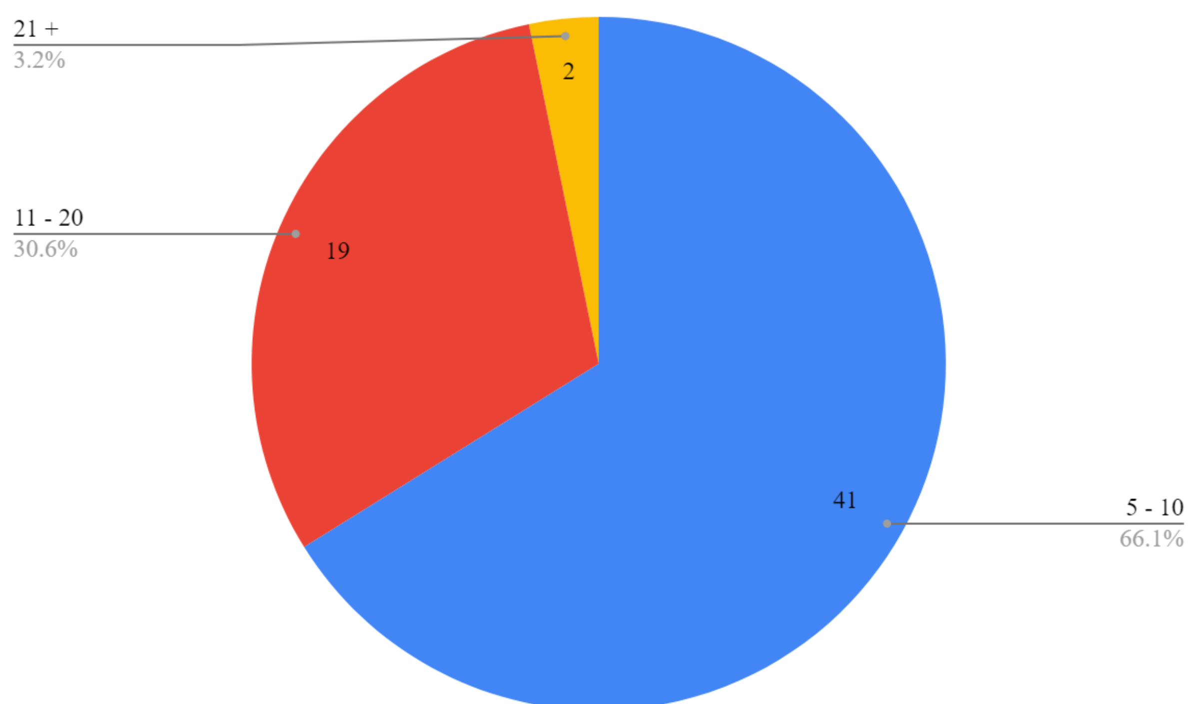


Context and Participants

This study was designed to give the utmost privacy to its participants and, therefore, it required the use of anonymous surveys. This research focused on the experiences and view of individuals using EAL in multilingual contexts, which included non-English dominant multilingual countries, as well as regions within English-dominant countries. A multilingual context could as easily be a country like Switzerland with many official languages as it could be a neighborhood in New York City.

Figure 2

Age Ranges of Participants at the Start of Their EAL Journey



Also due to the nature of the study, no limitations or prejudices based on ethnicity, race, language, or religion were placed on the recruiting process. It is also for the reason of anonymity

that no distinct variations between different cultures, linguistic backgrounds, gender, etc can be made, thus making the information about each participant rather limited. However, the qualitative information that was collected regarding the participants has been provided (see Figures 1 & 2). This data helped when analyzing the qualitative input in the findings and discussion section, specifically when trying to find patterns between perceptions of the NESS and different generations of EAL learners and speakers.

Data Sources and Analysis

Since the survey and, therefore, participation in this study was anonymous and voluntary, no personal data was collected about these individuals. This was done in order to provide the utmost privacy for those involved in the study. In order to target the correct population, access to the survey was sent via email to several individual EAL teachers in the United States, Germany, Brazil, and Russia and posted publicly on myTESOL Lounge - a forum for TESOL professionals. The survey was fifteen questions that consisted of a mixture of multiple-choice and short answers. These questions and the reasons why they were chosen are listed in the chart below.

Questions on the anonymous survey	The reasons behind these questions
- Is English your first language? - How old are you? - Do you have above a B2 level (low intermediate – CEFR level) of English? - Do you live in a multilingual context? (A country or region where one comes across multiple languages on a day-to-day basis)	**In order to keep the integrity of the study. If a participant indicated that they either** **a) spoke English as an L1,** **b) were younger than 18,** **c) had below a B2 English level,** **or d) did not live in a multilingual context then the survey would automatically**

	submit and their answers would not be considered in the final data analysis.
- At what age did you start to learn English as an additional language? - How many years have you learned English as an additional language?	**To identify any correlations between perceptions of the NESS and starting age and/or length of time spent learning English.**
- Why did you decide to start learning English as an additional language?	**To see if a certain motivation led to stronger NESS perceptions.**
- How did you learn English as an additional language? (i.e., in school, on my own (not in a classroom), by living for some amount of time in an English-speaking country (total immersion), etc.)	**To help identify where the NESS may have been first perceived by the participant.**
- While learning English as an additional language, did you feel pressured (by your teacher, family, friends, yourself, etc.) to 'get rid' of an accent in order to sound more like a 'native' speaker (i.e., speak like an American, Brit, Australian, etc.)? - Do you *currently* feel any pressure to 'sound like a native'?	**To help identify who may have first introduced the NESS to the participant and if this pressure continues to be placed on them.**
- Do you want to minimize or remove your accent (if any) when you speak English?	**To detect how the NESS has been internalized by the participant.**
- When speaking to a 'non-native' English speaker, have you ever or do you currently feel the need to minimize your accent (if any) or use more advanced grammar, vocabulary, phrases, etc.? - When speaking to a 'native' English speaker, have you ever or do you currently feel the need to minimize your accent (if any) or use more	**To pinpoint if the participant experiences the NESS differently and how it affects interactions when speaking with an L1 English speaker vs an EAL learner or speaker.**

advanced grammar, vocabulary, phrases, etc.?	
- Are there situations where you prefer to speak English with an accent (for example, not sounding like a 'native' English speaker)?	**To help identify if the NESS has affected a participant's linguistic identity.**
- Do you have additional thoughts, experiences, or comments about 'native' English speaker standards (feeling like you need to sound like a 'native' English speaker)?	**To allow for the participant to express any other experiences that they deem as relevant for the study.**

Upon the completion of the study in mid-February of 2023, there were a total of 62 participants who completed the survey. The answers collected were then exported into an excel spreadsheet where each set of responses were numbered. To ease the presentation of the findings, during the analysis of the data pseudonyms were also given to each set of answers. Participants were then placed into two different categories: *strong* and *weak*. *Strong* participants expressed intense pressure from the NESS and had solid perceptions of what these consisted of and how they were affected by them. If a participant indicated in any of the short answer questions regarding L1 accents that they felt that it was necessary to conform to the NESS, then these individuals' answers were highlighted in blue and a copy moved to a separate spreadsheet where they could also be analyzed separately. *Weak* participants expressed little, if any, pressure from the NESS and had a more unclear perception of what these standards are and how they were affected by them. If a participant indicated in any of the short answer questions regarding L1 accents that they did not feel it was necessary for them to conform to the NESS then the individuals' answers were highlighted in red and a copy moved to a separate spreadsheet where they could be

analyzed separately. While both *strong* and *weak* categories were separated to be examined, they were also studied together in order to find patterns between the two.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

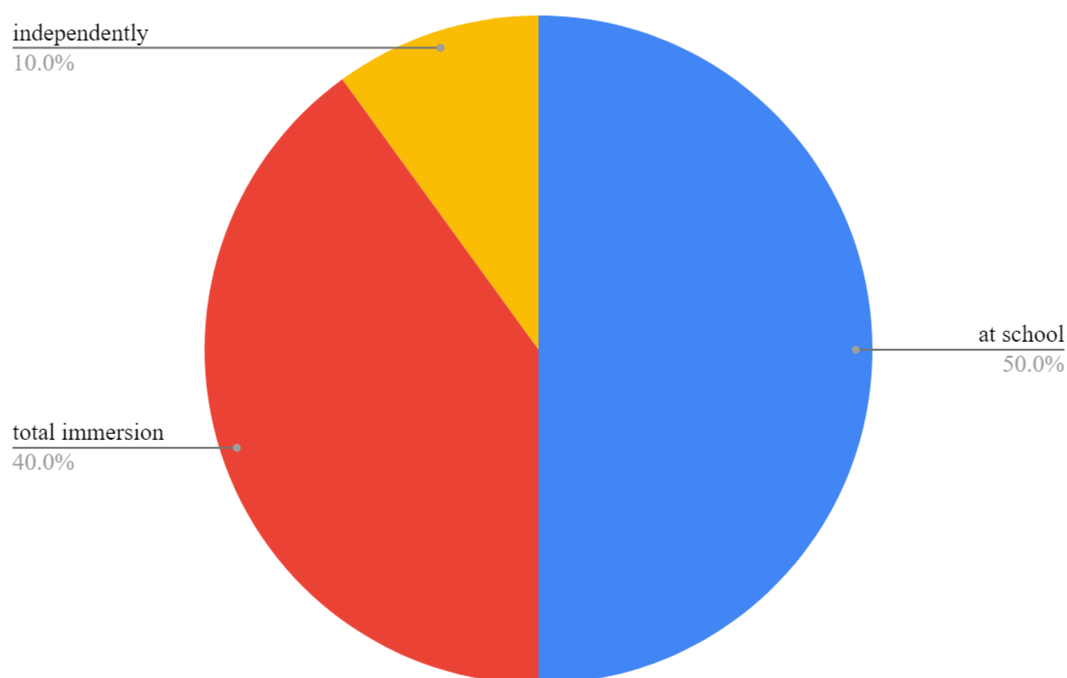
Participants provided a wide range of opinions, perspectives on the NESS, and experiences with learning EAL. Their insights are presented in the following sections based upon different contexts where these standards are experienced, how individual perceptions impact EAL learners and speakers' experiences, and how these standards impact the socio-emotional aspects of their lives.

Standards in Different Contexts

The first finding that stood out was that 33% (19) of participants who initially stated that they felt no pressure to conform to the NESS while learning EAL, indicated that they were *currently* feeling pressure - in regard to their accents - while speaking English. Half of these participants (50% or 9) specified that they learned English both in school and through total immersion in an inner-circle country. This is important because a vast majority of these individuals (92% or 8) indicated that they began to feel the NESS pressure during and after traveling to an inner-circle country. One of these participants, Poppy, stated that "I wanted to fit in and be seen as *American* instead of a tourist or immigrant. I remember I consciously started to change my pronunciation to mimic the locals to prevent them from thinking that I was different." Similarly, Russel wrote, "…people [in inner-circle countries] are always like: Hey where are you from? And I don't always want that foreigner stamp." This data shows that there is a correlation between traveling or living in inner-circle countries and an increase in pressure from the NESS (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

How Participants Learned EAL



Around half of the individuals (47% or 29) reported feeling pressured to conform to the NESS while in school. This was lower than initially expected. For example, a study conducted in 2012 of 37 EAL learners and speakers estimated that a majority (62% or 22) reported feeling pressured in the classroom to change or eliminate their accents (Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard, Wu, 2012). However, not all participants in this study reported that the teacher was the source of pressure; instead, 30% (11) remarked that it was they, themselves, that had put the pressure of the NESS on their own shoulders in an effort to minimize their L1 accent. This pressure from internal expectations was reinforced by answers from this study. For example, Tanya remarked, "I pressured myself. In France, having a French accent while speaking English is the subject of jokes. So, I trained myself to speak with an American accent." Another participant, Trevor,

reported, "…my family really wanted me to advance it [my American accent]." This is important, as a push for Global Englishes in EAL classrooms may face pushback from the learners themselves, not just the teachers (see Figure 3).

However, that is not to say that no comments about feeling pressured to change an accent by teachers or curricula were reported. Several participants remarked that they felt incredibly pressured to achieve the NESS in their EAL classrooms. Lea reported, "Teachers pressured us to get rid of our German accent…." Similarly, Candice wrote, "during university – yes, I felt pressure from my phonetics teacher and from myself. The teacher said we should [speak] clearly and [similarly] to native speakers." Russell even commented that his desire to minimize his accent was driven by the desire to get good grades. Interestingly, the issue of feeling pressured by the NESS when confronted with the prospect of grades was only brought up in six of the returned surveys - around 10% - of the total respondents. This is surprising, but a good sign that perhaps EAL teachers are actively taking steps to minimize how the NESS affects grading.

The Role of Motivation and Learner Goals

While every EAL learner and speakers' perception of the NESS and their effects are different, there were certain similarities between *how* a participant addressed perceptions of the NESS and *why* they had learned English in the first place. Those who learned EAL as a required subject in school for the purpose of traveling and consuming media tended to answer that they did *not* feel the need to change their accent when talking with 'Native' English Speakers (NNESs) (see Figure 3). Common answers from participants in this category ranged from those who "accept [their] accent as part of [their] identity" (Stella) to those who "want to impress others with [their] British accent" (Henry). In general, however, these participants reported having felt the most amount of pressure from the NESS while in the classroom or when talking

with EAL peers. Some even reported that changing their accent was not a goal or something that they even deemed necessary. For instance, Hannah commented, "I somehow wish to improve my accent, but it is not a high priority, especially as an American friend … called my accent 'exotic-erotic'."

Conversely, those who learned EAL, either independently or in school, for the purpose of business opportunities had largely different perceptions, with 100% (31) reporting feeling pressured by the NESS when talking with *anyone* in English (see Figure 2 & 3). The main reasons that were given in their answers revolved around how their English would be perceived in a workplace. Stacey commented, "For a job interview, not sound[ing] like a native [English speaker] may affect the decision." In a similar form, Candice wrote, "…I try to sound good so they perceive me as well educated and professional. Unfortunately, language proficiency can be perceived as a level of intelligence." This relates closely to the prescriptivist nature of the NESS.

L1 Accents in the Context of Telling Jokes

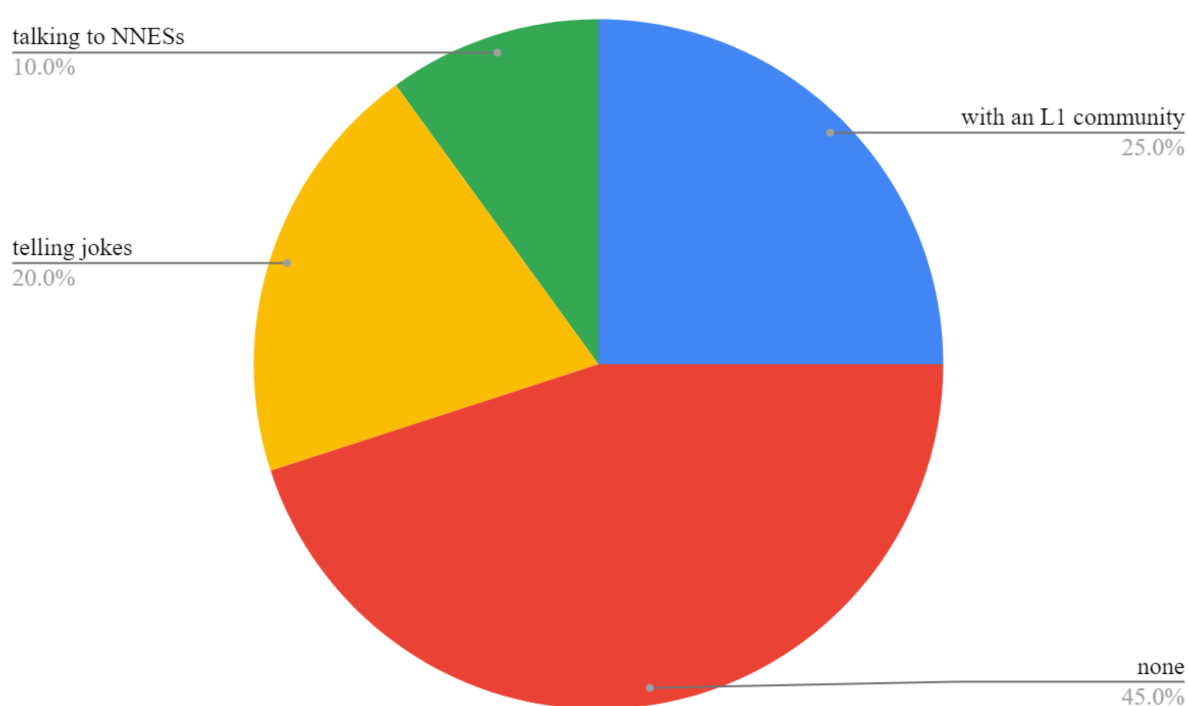
As shown in Figure 4, around 21% (13) of participants indicated that they preferred to default to the use of an L1 accent when telling a joke. While none of the participants suggested what exactly the jokes they would tell in their L1 accent would be, Poppy commented, "Sometimes I want to exaggerate things or tell a joke and I start to speak with [a] Russian accent on purpose, just to make fun of stereotypes". In a similar form, Sam also wrote, "As a joke, I'll sometimes 'switch on' my French accent".

An EAL learner or speaker's relationship to their L1, in terms of linguistic identity, can be, and is, complex. An individual who chooses to use an accent to communicate with their home (L1) community can have a much different, perhaps closer, connection to their L1, than

those who choose to use an accent to add another layer to jokes. These EAL learners and speakers might be trying to distance themselves more from their L1 community or show that their linguistic identity has shifted. However, another reason for this could be that these individuals have been influenced by others to use their L1 accents in English to make jokes.

Figure 4

When Participants Choose to Use an L1 Accent



While still a theory, this is possible as many celebrities and social media influencers have gone viral for making jokes with different L1 accents. Many end up on the 'wrong side' of the internet when telling a joke while using accents that are not their own; but either good or bad, exposure is exposure and millions of people around the world end up seeing these videos (Nabulsi, 2022). It could be that these EAL learners and speakers are exposed to such videos and may begin to consider it as a Native English Speaker (NES) norm. After all, many EAL

influencers who do not face backlash use their own L1 accents to accentuate a joke and do not face repercussions – thus making this practice seem ‘normal’ or even ‘expected’ (Yahoo, 2022). While this might not always be the case, it is an interesting theory to consider, especially as younger EAL learners and speakers who are consuming more and more social media are entering EAL classrooms.

The Impact of Age on Motivation

Based on the information collected, some generalizations regarding L1 accents and the age and motivation at the start of learning EAL can also be made. Each participant was asked to give the approximate age at which they started to learn English, how long they have learned English, and why they chose to start learning it. This data was then analyzed to determine if any correlations could be made based on the approximate starting age of the participants and their perceptions of the NESS.

Graphing the data in this category, a discovery was made about the approximate start age for learning EAL and the motivation behind it (see Figure 1). While a large majority of participants (67% or 41) began their EAL journey around the age of 8, there were several outliers who began after the age of 15 and even as old as 28. When comparing individuals within this 33% (20) of outliers, we can see that almost all of the time (97% or 19) their motivation for learning EAL was for business and career opportunities. The more mature age of these learners and speakers also meant that 92% (18) of them learned English independently and/or through total immersion in an inner-circle country. What made this finding particularly interesting is that 71% (14) of these older participants reported little to no feelings of NES pressure to eliminate or minimize an L1 accent when speaking English.

This then begs the question if the majority of pressure on accents is being introduced in classrooms rather than genuine interactions with NESs. This theory is reinforced by participants' responses. "Teachers pressured [me] to get rid of it [my accent] but English native speakers did not do that, they even encouraged me to be 'authentic'" (Eva). Andrew said that, "A friend of mine (in the US) told me that I should love my accent and it made me feel better since my teachers never told me that." As discussed previously, pressure to change an accent can cause a shift in linguistic identity that an EAL learner or speaker may not want and this creates implications that EAL teachers and classrooms will reap the consequences of, whether positive or negative.

The Influence of Individuals' Perceptions of English Standards

Context is not the only aspect where participants indicated pressure to conform to the NESS originated from or where it was most strongly felt. For example, several individuals expressed feeling a degree of prejudice against them based upon their L1 accent - including those that originated inside of the classroom. When an EAL learner is experiencing a feeling of judgment or prejudice, this can affect their ability in the classroom by greatly increasing the amount of time needed to learn proficient English (Krashen, 1985). More research is needed into this area as these feelings are not uncommon and their effects on EAL learners are not well researched; but as previously discussed, linguicism can have direct impacts on a learner's motivation and investment in the classroom.

The Role that Prejudices Plays on EAL Learners and Speakers

While not every participant in the study reported feeling prejudice against them for using an L1 accent, around a quarter of them (23% or 14) did. There was no distinct correlation that

could be drawn between age or perception of the NESS and feelings of prejudice. However, a majority of participants (84% or 11) who reported experiencing prejudices towards their L1 accent also indicated that they had learned EAL while spending at least some amount of time living in inner-circle countries (total immersion). These feelings were evident in the survey results. For example, Helena commented, "I feel like when speaking with an accent [it] will make an impression [that] I'm a beginner and didn't put any effort into learning the pronunciation." Similarly, Ava wrote, " I notice that native English speakers speak fast, but slow down and change their language when they notice that your English isn't great – it makes me feel like a baby." In these two comments, no explicit remarks about prejudices were made to the participants; but they could show a certain degree of linguicism that these EAL learners and speakers believe that NESs have against them.

Some comments regarding linguicism *did* expressly point to a feeling of prejudice against them because of their L1 accent. "I know that I don't have to sound like a native [English speaker] in communication, but I still feel that not sounding [like] one gives the impression that I am less qualified to speak out or inferior when communicating with English" (Amy). Thomas stated, "I want to be treated equal[ly] without any prejudice based on accents. I think that there are still those prejudices working." Unfortunately, this feeling of being underqualified or judged by NESs is not rare. In a different study conducted in 2005, more than 50% of EAL learners reported this feeling of judgment on a regular basis when interacting with L1 English speakers in inner-circle countries (LaBelle, 2005).

The Impact of Teachers' Own Perceptions and Prejudices

One of the most important correlations that were made was the importance of an EAL teacher's opinion on the NESS. Those participants in the study who learned EAL in a classroom

setting recorded lower amounts of pressure from the NESS when talking with Non-Native English Speakers (NNESs). A large majority of them (87% or 53) reported pressure while learning English and while speaking with NESs. This could correlate to them feeling on the same English language level as other NNESs and hearing a variety of L1 accents in the classroom. Regarding this parallel, Nathaniel said, “One teacher helped me with my accent which was very good and helpful but it did also make me more aware of that [the accent] and a little bit more uncomfortable.” Eva also commented, “I had a really bad ESL teacher when I studied in America who held back anyone with an accent, even if they were born in the country [America]”.

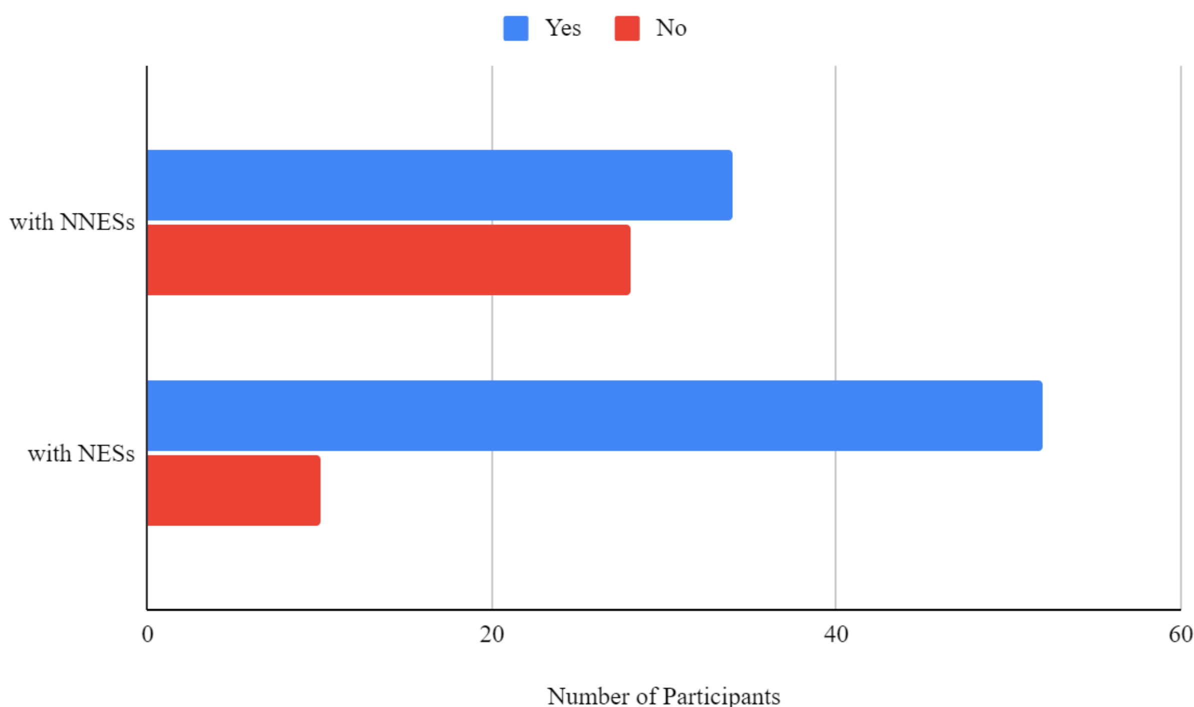
These comments go to highlight a sad trend in EAL classrooms with regard to learners’ L1 accents. These perspectives shine a light on EAL teachers’ *conscious* actions in a classroom, but several other comments, in particular, highlighted an entirely different issue: EAL teachers’ *unconsciously* expressing opinions and prejudices. These attitudes may not be explicitly acted upon in the classroom, but it does not mean that an EAL learner will not pick up on their teacher’s undertone. “I felt bad about [my accent] in school because teacher[s] would talk about being annoyed by other language learners’ accents [which] made me want to get rid of my own” (Helena). In Amy’s EAL classroom “[her] teacher would not make fun of our accents but would casually remark how society makes fun of people speaking with a too strong accent and I am worried about mine.” These experiences are important to consider because they emphasize how an EAL teacher’s casual comments can betray an underlying prejudice that can undermine a learner’s confidence.

The Impact of NESSs on EAL Learners Contexts with ‘Native’ English Speakers

Another finding occurred when learners answered the questions indicating with whom they feel pressure to minimize their L1 accent – either when interacting with a ‘native’ English speaker (NES) or a ‘non-native’ speaker (NNES). Around half of the participants (52% or 32) felt pressured to try to speak with an L1 English speaker accent when talking with a *NNES*. This data was then compared to the vast majority (78% or 48) who indicated feeling pressure when talking with a *NES*. This is an approximately 50% increase in participants who felt pressured when talking with a NES as compared to conversations with fellow EAL learners or speakers (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Differences of Pressure Among Participants to Conform to NESSs



The data still shows a clear 50% increase in pressure from NESSs regarding changing their accent when talking with NESs. Trevor wrote that the reason he felt this way towards NESs

was that, "…[NESs] are the ones who sometimes have trouble understanding my accent or other people's accents in general. If a native [English speaker] does not understand what I am saying it makes me feel very bad about my English and that makes me less willing to talk to native speakers later." This comment about NESs having trouble understanding accents was a perspective that was not limited to just one answer. Nicholas commented, "I remember consciously start[ing] to change my pronunciation to mimic the locals to prevent them from thinking that I was different and to help them understand what I was saying."

This would explain the 50% increase in pressure from the NESS among participants to minimize an accent when talking with NESs, but this was not the only reason given. Jacob, for example, wrote, "Sometimes I feel I am being judged by them [NESs]", an experience that Stacey seconded, "I do not want to feel inferior to those natives [English speakers] in terms of [the] language I am using." Participants also commonly reported feeling that nervousness got in their way when talking with NESs. Anastacia said, "…I sometimes feel 'stupid' and 'clumsy', [and don't] speak as well as I intend to." And yet another reason for this pressure from NESs was regarding the perception that L1 English speakers had 'ownership' over their language. Izik reported, "…English speakers seem to have an entitlement over every conversation and make some interactions uncomfortable."

Perceptions of Standards when Talking with Fellow EAL Learners

The other 48% (29) who indicated that they did *not* feel pressure to change their accent when talking with NNESs also provided a wide range of reasons behind their answers. For example, Russell stated that "No, [I do not feel this because] we are both learners". This was a sentiment that Lea's response agreed with, "If someone is not a native speaker I do not feel insecure because I suppose that they have an accent, too". However, even in this half of the

participants, the pressure when speaking to an EAL learner or speaker with a high level of English was brought to the forefront. Mariam summarized this point when she wrote, "… when I am talking to someone with my level of English or lower I can naturally communicate well and I don't think about any accents. But if the person is [a] native [English speaker] or just significantly better than me then I try to imitate them [so that I do] not feel dumb about not being able to pronounce things correctly."

This reveals a noticeable and, even, expected increase in pressure that participants felt when talking with NESs. However, still more than half of these individuals (50%) reported feeling the same pressure when talking with fellow EAL learners or speakers. While this might seem surprising at first, the reasons that these participants gave for their answers make their comments much clearer to understand. For example, Stacey commented, "They [NNES] might not understand well enough with my accent, so I need to improve mutual intelligibility." In a similar form, Vladimir wrote, "Non-native speakers with a higher English level to me make me feel uncomfortable as they appear to be smarter." This is an interesting point that many EAL teachers tend to forget or simply overlook as this pressure may not be as visible or apparent to them (see Figure 5).

The Socio-emotional Impacts of English Language Standards

While embracing a standard of English can help an EAL learner or speaker have improved confidence when speaking, it is also important to note that there are sometimes reasons that they might want to keep an L1 accent - especially one that they deem as important to their linguistic identity. But not only this, it is also critical to consider the emotional role that L1 accents can have on learners and the reasons why some seek to distance themselves from their L1 by readily embracing the NESS.

The Role of Emotions and Linguistic Identity

While it is clear that preserving an accent can help keep a learner or speaker's linguistic identity to their L1, it is also important to note that there are sometimes reasons that they might want to distance themselves from this language. It is essential to encourage an EAL learner to embrace their L1 accent, but teachers must also be aware when this encouragement could be unhealthy or damaging. One comment, in particular, came out of this study that brings this issue to light: "Despite my numerous years of learning English my speech is still marked by [an] accent which I occasionally try to suppress for the purpose of avoiding painful questions about my home [country] or the events occurring there" (Trevor).

Minimizing an accent to avoid painful emotions or questions is a topic that is not heavily researched or often discussed among TESOL professionals. This issue, namely accents and emotions, could be easily mistaken by an EAL teacher as a learner who is simply eager to perfect their accent in English and embrace the NESS. In this case, encouragement *against* changing an accent - apart from what is necessary for communication – might be met with resistance from the learner. Their linguistic identity might be shifting or have already shifted from their L1, thus giving them different goals when it comes to learning English and these goals should be respected by the EAL teacher. This comment serves as an important reminder that an EAL learner may feel the need to change their accent and this choice can stem from something deeper.

The Impact of the L1 Community on Accent Use

While pressure from NESs is almost expected, participants indicated that they also felt they would be judged when talking with other EAL learners and speakers in their home community while using their L1 accent. This was a topic that generated a variety of different

remarks. For example, Joshua commented, “People in my country make fun of others who speak with a good accent saying we show off.” This viewpoint was also seconded by Aubrey: “I think people are always making fun of other people’s accent[s]. Either because it is bad, [or] when it’s good they say people are trying to show off.” Meanwhile, Tanya remarked that “I want to have a native English accent because where I live speaking with a bad accent [in English] makes people make fun of you.”

These comments show an interesting dichotomy that seems to depend on the individual’s L1 community. The data pointed to the fact that it is not just NESs or EAL teachers that put pressure on learners regarding L1 accents, but highlighted the surprising fact that this feeling could be coming from inside of the EAL community itself. The desire to change an accent may be accentuated by the learner or speaker’s L1 community. Related to this issue participants seemed to express one common opinion: if you speak with an NES accent in your L1 community you are viewed differently, whether positively or negatively. As Trevor stated, “When I go back to my country of origin. I notice that people treat me differently if my English has a local accent instead of an American one.” But when considering this theory, it is important to remember the fact that this pressure likely originated from interactions with NESs.

Embracing vs Rejecting Linguistic Differences

Another interesting correlation pertains to participants’ opinions regarding situations where they would prefer to speak *with* their L1 accent (see Figure 4). While the largest percentage (42% or 26) indicated that there were *no* situations where they would choose to use an accent, 26% (16) said that they would prefer to use an accent when speaking with EAL learners or speakers in their L1 communities. “In my country of origin I would prefer to speak English with an accent in order to preserve my linguistic identity and national pride” (Trevor). “I

don't want to feel like I lost any connection with my family and friend[s] back home. I don't want them to feel bad about their accent" (Hannah). While 26% (16) is by no means the majority of participants, it does go to show that preserving an L1 accent in English can be extremely important to some learners. Not every EAL learner and speaker wants/needs to eliminate or even minimize an L1 accent while speaking English.

Despite the impact and roles that different contexts, cultural backgrounds, and teacher influence have had, 21%, (13) of participants still reported that they *accepted* and/or *embraced* their L1 accent while speaking English. As Joshua put it, "My accent doesn't spoil my speech so why would I want to change it?" And similarly, Anastacia wrote, "…I think it is quite normal that a non-native speaker would have an accent." These are powerful responses that emphasize the fact that not every EAL learner or speaker feels the exact same way about the NESS. Some might feel pressure to change their L1 accent for one reason or another, but there will always be those who embrace it. As Emma stated, "I don't want to change my accent. I accept my accent."

Further Discussions and Implications

The goal of this study was to help shed light on the experiences and perceptions of EAL learners and speakers of the NESS and the factors that affect them. While the results of this research cover a wide range of opinions and perspectives on the same issue, they deserve to be considered among TESOL professionals and EAL teachers. It also lays bare an interesting issue that is oftentimes overlooked in the TESOL community and in inner-circle countries' societies: NESs are often the ones who struggle with understanding L1 accents and, therefore, a push to embrace Global Englishes could lead to issues among the L1 English-speaking population (Hannah & Trudgill, 2017).

L1 Accents and the English-Speaking Population

The issues of the L1 English-speaking population interacting with EAL learners and speakers are multifaceted. While linguicism is certainly an issue that frequently arises in such interactions, yet another is the breakdown of mutual intelligibility - particularly on the side of the L1 English speaker. The prescriptivistic nature of inner-circle countries, like the US, can lead to L1 English speakers assuming that having a SAE accent is what all EAL learners should and do strive for - the assumption that their English fluency level is the only valid goal these individuals should have (Kozlowski, 2015). L1 English speakers are then limiting the amount of different accents that they hear and, as a result, are restricting their ability to understand these varieties of English (Hannah & Trudgill, 2017). While individuals in places such as New York City might have a higher degree of exposure to a variety of L1 accents in English, those in more rural areas of the US do not have the same kind of access. Instead, they are surrounded by those who speak, and a media who almost solely uses, SAE.

As English continues on its path as this age's Lingua Franca, and as its global impact grows, it is no surprise then that new dialects and varieties appear or expand in use (McKay, 2018). For an L1 English speaker or inner-circle country to limit themselves to one standard form of the language means that they are slowly isolating themselves from the rest of the outer- and expanding-circles (Roessel, Schoel, & Stahlberg, 2020). As critics of Kachru's model have put forth, is it right anymore to have inner-circle countries be at the center for this model? If anything, all three circles should be in an interwoven system where all countries are learning and growing from communication with each other (Al-Mutairi, 2020). In order for Global Englishes to prosper, and for EAL learners and speakers to feel able to accept different aspects of their linguistic identities, means that inner-circle countries need to provide more exposure and be open

minded to L1 accents (Sharifian, 2009). One paper suggested that the dominating force that is the US entertainment industry could make huge steps towards helping expose English speakers around the world to the beauty of different accents (Stevens, 2019). Just because an L1 English speaker might never meet an EAL learner or speaker, that does not mean that they could not be enriched by the exposure to the incredible variations that make their language beautiful.

EAL Learners and Teacher Beliefs

As the study showed, another issue that can impact EAL learners are their own teachers' beliefs and actions in the classroom regarding L1 accents and linguistic identities. Several participants shared their own experiences of how classroom interactions with teachers impacted their confidence and own opinions of their L1 accents. While every EAL teacher has their own opinions about the NESS and L1 accents, they should be cognizant of how their actions and words impact their learners (Sung, 2013). But with the push among TESOL professionals to have EAL classrooms embrace Global Englishes, one of the biggest impacts that a teacher can make is simply through their material selection (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). Similarly to L1 English speakers having a lack of exposure to different accents, every learner should have the same opportunity. Exposure to different accents during classroom activities can help EAL learners realize that L1 accents do not need to be minimized in order to reach a proficient level of English (Galloway, Rose, & McKinley, 2021). Careful and considerate material selection could help these learners improve their confidence, motivation, and, therefore, investment inside and outside of the EAL classroom.

This data also shows that it is critical that EAL teachers put emphasis on learning the linguistic background of their learners and why they might need or want to keep their L1 accent. As displayed in these comments, encouraging the erosion of an accent, beyond the point of what

is necessary for communication, can harm an EAL learner's relationship with their L1 community, as well as their linguistic identity. An EAL teacher's priority should always be their learners and how they can help them achieve their goals with English (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). If they want to embrace their L1 accent, then an EAL teacher should help support them. And if they desire to step away from their L1, that should be equally respected. But the price for learning EAL should never come at the cost of a learner's relationship to their L1 or force a shift in their linguistic identity. This is what Global Englishes is against (Jenkins, 2006).

Study Limitations

No research is ever perfect and this study also came with its fair share of limitations, the biggest of which is the anonymity of the participants. While it would not have been necessary to have direct contact with these individuals, it would have been beneficial to be able to expand upon the knowledge that was collected from them. In a future study it would be good to expand upon the questions asked in order to make more conclusive comparisons between the impacts of certain regions or cultures on these perceptions. It would also be beneficial to expand beyond just one data source so that more concrete conclusions and generalizations can be made.

Future Directions

While beneficial and important findings and implications were drawn from this study, improvements can always be made. The first improvement that would be beneficial would be the addition of more questions. The anonymity of the survey restricted certain questions that could have led to more useful findings. For example, how do different cultures and languages impact learners' and speakers' views of the NESS? Or how do these perceptions change or vary between those living in inner-circle countries and those who are in outer- and expanding-circle countries?

It would be interesting to interview these participants in order to form more concrete ideas of what exactly their perceptions and experiences are and how they have been impacted by various issues they have faced.

Even with the prospect of Global Englishes facing challenges when it comes to the L1 English-speaking communities, this is not a good reason to fall back towards strict NESSs and prescriptivist grammar in EAL classrooms. The TESOL community has been pressing towards more acceptance and retention of linguistic identities and L1 accents – and this is not at all a bad thing. Letting people accept their accents and not feel under pressure to change their identities is a critical goal, especially as English becomes ever-present in classrooms and even everyday settings around the world. The goal of any language is effective communication and this is Global Englishes.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Global Englishes into EAL classrooms has the potential to impact learners across the globe. It is often regarded as the next step in recognizing the global reach of English. With the majority of English speakers no longer speaking the language as an L1, it is important to move on from the assumption that the L1 speakers of a language 'own' it (Galloway & Rose, 2019). The NESS and maintaining strict prescriptivist grammar in EAL classrooms *should* be reassessed in favor of embracing a more global alternative – one that does not exile any speaker simply for not attaining 'native' speaker standards. But no teacher should ever assume that they know what is best for their learners – and EAL teachers should be no different. This simply means that the TESOL community should weigh the outcomes of embracing Global Englishes and how it could affect *all* EAL learners and speakers in *all* contexts.

Implications for Pedagogy

The first area that would be affected is, understandably, the classroom itself. For an EAL learner, there is nothing more important than the teacher and the classroom environment. An EAL teacher can present curricula in any number of different ways – whether helpful and encouraging or discriminatory and critical. For years the curricula for EAL classrooms have followed a largely prescriptivist viewpoint in that learners are oftentimes presented with a black-and-white language system where it is only right or wrong (Straaijer, 2016). But the needs of EAL learners have changed and effective communication is now valued more highly than perfect grammar (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). Global Englishes push to incorporate a more *international* view of the language in classrooms and have the potential to cause changes in pedagogy. But a simple change in pedagogy would not be enough unless EAL teachers begin to incorporate more Global Englishes into the classroom.

One of the biggest influences that a global viewpoint of English can have is by helping EAL teachers recognize the power of their own perceptions, particularly with regard to L1 accents (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). This was demonstrated by Candice's comment about how their EAL teacher's casual comments about accents impacted their viewpoint on their own L1 accent in a negative way. Or how Adam remarked, "My English teachers taught me that having an accent was an undesirable thing. They did not say [it] to me but their actions and occasional comments made me want to get rid of any trace of an accent and it made me not want to talk in class anymore." A teacher in a classroom holds a considerable amount of power over their learners' perceptions of any given language. If an EAL teacher displays unhappiness or frustration with a particular accent, it is understandable that this can have considerable consequences for the self-esteem of a learner (Pilus, 2013).

But in order to change these more negative perceptions of accents in English, Global Englishes need to be incorporated as a part of TESOL curricula (Galloway, 2017). One way to do this would be to provide EAL learners with exposure to a wide variety of different accents presented through a range of listening materials. Every listening activity does not have to provide an example of SE. Listening to only audio recordings of NESs can create the framework for an EAL learner to internalize the NESS as the only acceptable way to speak English (Kurita, 2012). This leads them to shun or shy away from their L1 accent, which consequently affects their linguistic identity. The internet also provides wonderful sources for many teachers to find reliable material that helps present authentic listening material and helps celebrate a range of accents (i.e. websites such as TED Talks, StoryCorps, News in Slow English, etc). The authentic material that these sources provide EAL learners can help foster deeper conversations and reflections in the classroom, such as having learners reflect or discuss the variation from SE in the listening text they just heard, etc. Recently an English teacher in the United States made the news for bringing this issue to the forefront by endeavoring to shy away from overemphasizing the importance of grammar usage and writing rules (Grossman, 2022). Marta Shaffer, a California teacher, commented, "…I started my school year with a unit honoring how we talk rather than teaching students how to write properly" (Grossman, 2022, p. 1). Even this simple act of recognizing the variations in spoken forms of English can make all the difference to an EAL learner.

It is also important to recognize that mutual intelligibility is the most important goal. It is a fine line that an EAL teacher has to navigate (Van Engen & Peelle, 2014). As discussed previously, the ease of intelligibility for *L1 English speakers* could be harmed by Global Englishes and by EAL learners embracing their L1 accent. L1 English speakers are not used to

hearing a variety of accents and have become accustomed to EAL learners and speakers trying to conform to the English standards. Embracing Global Englishes could lead to the sudden realization that many inner-circle countries are still deeply rooted in prescriptivist ideologies (Reagan, 1984). The more L1 English speakers are exposed to other varieties of English, the greater a potential for increased intercultural competence, and acceptance of accents, and 'non-native' varieties (Shapiro, Farrelly, & Tomaš, 2023). Global Englishes can be extremely beneficial in EAL classrooms as a way to help learners embrace their accents and not develop prejudices regarding L1s. This can help them to understand their linguistic identity through a *translanguaging viewpoint* (Galloway, 2017). The implementation of Global Englishes does come with its fair share of challenges, but it is important to determine if the benefits outweigh the negatives (Coleman, Gulyamova, & Thomas, 2005).

Hiring Practices

The impact of Global Englishes might have to start in the classroom, but its reach can be extremely broad and extend into many different areas of the TESOL community. An extremely important one is in regard to EAL hiring practices - namely the preference for hiring NES teachers (NESTs). While hiring a NEST in an inner-circle country might not require an extensive search, outer- and expanding-circle countries can have an extremely hard time with this (Breshears, 2004). The preference has been, and continues to be, for EAL schools and programs to seek to hire a NEST to teach every EAL class and this leads to non-NESTs being largely overlooked and viewed as if their English is not 'good enough'(Galloway, 2017). This is discriminatory behavior that can even occur when a NEST is hired *without* having any teaching experience; they are hired simply because they are an L1 English speaker (Medgyes, 2001). If a high school physics teacher requires a teaching license to ensure that they understand *how* to

teach, why do English programs hire L1 English teachers who have never taught and, indeed, lack the adequate knowledge of how English works?

This is an issue that has also not been overlooked by non-NEST, who are calling for a reform of the hiring practices of EAL classes, which has led to an interesting dichotomy (Medgyes, 2001). Teacher standards are oftentimes different depending on the language class and program (Santoro & Kennedy, 2015). For English, the majority of countries wish to only hire NESTs, assuming that this will ensure that their EAL learners will develop *better* English than those with a non-NEST (Medgyes, 2001). However, these same countries often do not put the same pressure on finding NESTs for other languages (Santoro & Kennedy, 2015). For example, while they find it good if a teacher of Russian is an L1 speaker of Russian, they do not view it as important as it is to have an L1 speaker of English teach an EAL class. Medgyes (2001) argues, "Language schools which advertise themselves as employing only 'native' English speakers often do so with the excuse that NESTs are better for public relations and improve the business. Oftentimes these NESTs come without qualifications and cannot provide their learners with the support that they require" (p. 432). And this kind of prejudice does not go unnoticed by many EAL learners either, as many elect to attend classes with a NEST over classes with a non-NEST (Breshears, 2004). This opinion was also displayed in the study. "I am more scared to talk when my teacher is a native [English speaker], but I also would rather have a class with them because a native [English speaker] has better English than a non-native [English speaker]" (Anthony).

However, there are advantages to being a non-NEST, as these teachers are typically better in several important categories as opposed to their L1 speaker co-workers - the most critical of which are a) being able to provide a better learner model, b) being better able to anticipate and prevent language difficulties, and c) being able to be more sensitive to their students (Medgyes,

2001). But these ‘bright sides’ do not address the root of the issue: the assumption that NESTs have a degree of ‘ownership’ over the language and display the only ‘correct’ way of speaking the language (Galloway, 2017). This opinion overlooks the fact that English is an international language that stretches far beyond the borders of inner-circle countries (Seidlhofer, 1999).

Final Thoughts

No matter what you call it, Global Englishes, English as an International Language, World Englishes, or English as a Lingua Franca, the reality remains the same: English is a *global* language. And as a global language, it is naïve for anyone to try and claim ‘ownership’ of it. What helps make English thrive as an international language is not its prescriptivist language standards, but the fact that it allows learners to show their unique linguistic identities and backgrounds. It is high time for Global Englishes to be recognized as a necessity in EAL classrooms because language should be about effective communication and not ownership or adherence to tradition. English is neither a perfect language nor is it the *only* language that should influence a learner’s linguistic identity. All languages, not just English, are part of the same interwoven system, whose main purpose is to allow us to communicate with one another.

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