

# English Language Teachers' Perspectives on the Notion of the World Englishes Paradigm, and the Varieties and Standards of English

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**Abstract:** With the current global context of English language teaching, the non-native speakers as teachers of English hold a key role in teaching a language which is the world's most taught, learned and used second or foreign language. The awareness of educational practitioners concerning the concept of the World Englishes paradigm, the varieties of English existing around the world today and the standard or model for teaching the language is an area that is essential to be investigated into and not merely assumed. This study is an inquiry into the notions and beliefs of non-native teachers of English and their attitudes towards the concepts of World Englishes and the varieties of English. Additionally, it probed into what the teachers think the standards for English to be taught are and their implications to their teaching of the language.

**Key words:** world Englishes, varieties of English, language teaching, teachers' beliefs

## 1. Introduction

Kachru (1996), whose work has concentrated on laying down the groundwork for new paradigms for teaching English as an international language (EIL), believes that "the universalization of English and the power of this language have come at a price; for some, the implications are agonizing, while for others they are a matter of ecstasy" (p. 135). For Kachru, "the success story of English, its alchemy, and the resultant ecstasy, have unleashed a variety of issues related to identity, elitism, and attitudes toward and perceptions of its users" (p. 150). Indeed the global spread of English language use is phenomenal. Presently, there are more speakers of English as a second language than as a first (Crystal, 2003). These speakers come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These speakers' use of English varies depending on their purpose for learning it: for international trade, tourism, business, technology, education and so on. Because English is recognized as the lingua franca for communication across countries and cultures, the percentage of non-native speakers are growing rapidly. Way back in 1985, Kachru suggested that native speakers of English have become a minority. Crystal (1997) intimated that linguistic scholars estimated that by the 20th century, 80% of English speakers are non-natives. Graddol (1997) held that this trend would continue for the next 50 years. Indeed, the trend doesn't seem to show that it is letting up.

In the midst of all these events, the role of the native speakers being at the core of this unfolding in history is

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being challenged (Graddol, 1997); it is now the non-native speakers who find themselves in center-stage, especially the non-native speakers who are teachers of English. The non-native teachers' instrumental role in contributing to the global spread of the language is undeniable. Resultantly, the ways in which English is used in everyday communication around the world need to be considered. The ambiguities as to what varieties of English are extant worldwide brought about by the phenomenal global explosion of English language use, bears an implication to teaching pedagogy especially significant to non-native teachers of English.

The Philippines, although belonging to the outer circle in Kachru's Concentric Model (1985) is norm-dependent (Kachru, 1996). It is such because the Philippines is mainly dependent on American English as the norm provider in English language teaching as a result of post-colonial education by the Americans. The fact that more than 80% of English speakers worldwide are non-natives is of little significance and possibly bears little impact on the Filipino teachers' preference for teaching American English. It is apparent that the preference for the General American (GA) model does not come from any policy but is a result of the educational practice that developed from the colonial American education system to the present times. With the nations of the world coming together to speak English, this becomes an issue because it would seem that the Filipino learners too, would prefer a standard patterned after the (GA) model. With this attitude how then does language instruction facilitate multicultural communication? However, even if there is a match between the kind of model or standard the learners would want to learn and what the non-native teachers teach, the English language proficiency of Filipino learners seem to be in decline (Martin, 2012). With the reality of varieties of English proliferating within the purview of World Englishes, there is a need to rethink how language teaching can catch up with the fast spread of English as an international language. The question of what the non-native teachers' contribution and role are in this changing landscape deserves to be inquired into.

Except for bigger universities in metropolitan Manila, the higher education institutions in the provinces have little exposure to other varieties of English due to the limited contact with other foreign nationals who speak or are learning to speak the language. This limited exposure to other varieties of English leaves the non-native teacher so much room to improve on in terms of language instruction for international use. Similarly, an awareness of teaching pedagogy is indispensable to be able to produce learners who are more accommodating of other cultures, such that they facilitate multicultural communication for them to eventually become global workers. In the local setting, a state education in Negros Occidental, State College A, has teachers whose exposure to other varieties of English is quite limited. To be specific, it is only mostly Koreans finding the province of Negros Occidental, with its laid back atmosphere, an ideal place to study English that the local teachers are exposed to. Resultantly, the time is ripe to investigate whether or not the English language teachers in State College A, a state college in the province of Negros Occidental, are aware of the World Englishes paradigm and whether or not they are aware of other varieties of English.

### **1.1 World Englishes and Language Variety: Concepts and Developments**

The concepts of language variety and variation lie at the heart world Englishes enterprise, not least because many researchers in this field have identified their interests as the study of "varieties of English", "localized varieties of English", "non-native varieties of English", "second-language varieties of English", and "new varieties of English" (Bolton, 2006). The eminent reality of the globalization of English carries with it the complexity of linguistic variation that is an apparent consequence of World Englishes (WEs). Because the spectrum of varieties represented by the term WEs is so wide, the WEs viewpoint on English language teaching

and assessment issues is one which values the richness in diversity of English and affirms the validity of every variety (Davies et al., 2003). It is therefore imperative, based on these affirmations that an awareness of these varieties is compulsory among language teachers.

## **1.2 The Concentric Model of World English**

It was British colonization in the 19th century and the rise of the United States as the leading economic and political power that led to the spread of English as the global lingua franca (Crystal, 1997). With regard to the spread of English, Kachru proposed a concentric model of world English, representing “the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages”, (Kachru, 1985). This model specifies the following circles in greater detail:

(a) *The inner circle*: In the inner circle countries, English is the primary majority language of the country or its native language. Typical countries include the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. In these nations, the varieties of English spoken are referred to as English as a *native language*, *native speaker English*, or *mother tongue English*. Inner Circle varieties hold a position of prestige in the world, and have been described as “norm providing” (Kachru, 1986, cited in McKay, 2002). There are about 320-380 million English users in these countries, accounting for about 20–28% of the total English users (Crystal, 2003).

(b) *The Outer Circle*. The Outer Circle comprises those countries that once had strong commerce or colonial ties with Great Britain, and the USA, in the case of the Philippines, and now use *English as a second language*, usually as the official language. Besides the Philippines, the outer circle includes India, Kenya, Nigeria, Singapore, and parts of South Africa. The years of contact with native speakers prompted these nations to adopt their own conventions which are now considered acceptable indigenized norms of valid English varieties. It is in these outer circle countries which are multilingual that varieties of English, including standard, pidgin, and creole, emerged and developed as the local language (Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1985). There are about 300-500 million English users in this circle, constituting about 26% of the total English users (Crystal, 2003).

(c) *The expanding circle*: In the expanding circle countries, English continues to expand in usage as the preferred lingua franca in international business, political, and education, hence the term Expanding Circle. It is in these contexts, described by Kachru (1986) as “norm-dependent” because the countries in this circle have traditionally looked to Inner Circle varieties of English for models, that *English* is used as a *foreign language*. They include most European, Middle Eastern, South American, Francophone African, and Asian countries. There is however a blurring of boundaries between Outer and Expanding Circle varieties. This was brought about because as a greater number of students from the Expanding Circle have been studying English in the Outer Circle, they have internalized some indigenized Outer Circle norms and carried them back to their own countries, thereby resulting in *Expanding Circle Englishes* with features more characteristic of *New Englishes* than of Inner Circle varieties as spoken by non-native speakers (Lowenberg, 2002). Many expanding circle countries have more English-speaking bilinguals than the countries in the outer circle. There are about 500-1000 million English users in this circle, which covers almost half of English users (Crystal, 2003).

**Table 1 The Distribution of English Users in the World**

	Number of English speakers	Percentage
Inner circle	320–380 million	About 20%
Outer circle	300–500 million	About 26%
Expanding circle	500–1000 million	About 53%

Source: (from Crystal, 2003).

The numbers display a strong contrast between the distribution of native speakers (mainly in inner circle countries) and non-native speakers in the world. In this context, it is crucial to look into how countries in different circles respond to the spread of English, particularly from the perspectives of English teachers and learners.

### **1.3 Teaching English as an International Language (EIL)**

This study proceeds from the framework of McKay (2002) and Pakir (1999). McKay (2002) in her article argues that the teaching of English should be altered in view of the developments that are taking place: the dramatic increase in the number of second language speakers of English; and a shift in the cultural basis of English which have significantly altered the nature of the language. Likewise, Pakir (1999) in her commentary suggests the links that exist between teaching English internationally and preparing for the next millennium. To Pakir, the research and teaching paradigms for SLA, ELT, and TESOL have to change in the face of the language shift that will be taking place within the circles of English. Accordingly, to prepare themselves for a world in which English occupies a firm position as a global language, individuals and organizations involved in the ELT profession must help the connected community internationalize with English, that is, through English and as equal partners in the company of English.

“In conclusion, English must not fail the test. Nor should teachers of English, whether from the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, or the Expanding Circle, because internationalization is no longer optional but inescapable.”  
(p. 113)

The growth, spread and dominance of the English language across domains has implications for everyone concerned with English language education. However, nomenclature about how it should be named whether WEs or EIL, is beside the point. What is more pressing is that English language pedagogy should be informed with the recent development of events, i.e., the spread of English, and that the events should come to the awareness of those who are non-native speakers and are teachers of English. This discussion comes under the heading EIL just so to introduce the term to emphasize international use for English rather than as a name for a specific variety. McKay (2002) enumerated various implications to EIL pedagogy that should reshape the way English should be taught:

- (1) a recognition of the diverse ways in which bilingual speakers make use of English to fulfil their specific purposes;
- (2) that many bilingual users of English do not need or want to acquire native-like competence;
- (3) a recognition of the fact that English does not belong to any one culture, and hence there is a need to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used. Thus, it is her view that the traditional view of an effective English teacher requires new definition.

McKay's observations are noteworthy in the sense that it puts the non-native teacher of English in a strategic position to promote multicultural communication and encourage a natural sharing of ethnic identities among individuals with the use of English.

“Source culture content can encourage learners to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture so that they can share these insights when using English as an International Language with individuals from different cultures.” (p. 19)

McKay reiterated the fact that,

“given the shift in the nature of English, it is time to recognize the multilingual context of English use and put

aside a native speaker model of research and pedagogy.” (p. 19)

In view of the diversity of local cultures arising out of the global spread of English use, it is unrealistic to imagine English as only one variety. Local teachers must therefore be aware of the World Englishes paradigm and the different varieties of English that are borne out of this phenomenon so that their teaching methodology would be culturally sensitive, putting the language into international use and placing importance too, on the source culture of the learner. In the light of this probing into teachers' notions of WEs, it is at the same time important to find out how they would view standards/model for teaching and how this notion influences their teaching of English.

#### **1.4 Teachers' notions/beliefs**

There is a growing body of research literature which has suggested that teachers' beliefs and or notions directly affect both their perceptions and judgements of teaching and learning interactions in the classroom, and the different behaviours which ensue (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1987). Shavelson and Stern (1981) discuss the notion of teachers' beliefs, reporting on a number of studies which hypothesised that beliefs played a role in teachers' decisions, judgements and behaviours. Specifically, Pajares (1992) points out that teachers' beliefs heavily influence the ways in which they plan their lessons, the decisions they make in the teaching process and their behaviour in the classroom. According to Williams and Burden (1997), teachers' beliefs about language learning “affect everything that they do in the classroom” (pp. 56–57), guiding and prompting classroom actions much more strongly than the use of a particular methodology or course book. Woods (1996) points out the relationship between teachers' belief systems and their decision-making, whereas both Yim (1993) and Ng and Farrell (2003) found evidence that what teachers say and do in their classrooms are governed by their beliefs.

Breen et al. (2001, pp. 471–472) outlined four main reasons why studying teachers' beliefs are necessary:

(1) Identifying the guiding principles that teachers articulate in relation to their classroom work can complement observational studies by enabling research to go beyond description towards an understanding and explanation of teacher actions.

(2) Teachers' beliefs provide a source of experientially based professional “know how” that may serve as a focus both for initial teacher education and to promote reflective practices in ongoing teacher development.

(3) Any educational innovation has to be accommodated within teacher's own frameworks of teaching principles. Increased awareness of such frameworks in specific contexts can inform curriculum policy and planning in relation to any innovation.

(4) Conversely, beliefs may result in the emergence of new teaching principles which produce grounded alternatives to the “accepted wisdom” passed on by methodologists who may be far removed from actual classrooms (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992).

The present study is designed to inquire into the belief system of teachers specifically on the implication of the notions of WEs and the varieties of English by way of a focus group discussion to arrive at a subset of data that could be built upon for a study of a larger scope. It is significant because as Donaghue (2003) puts it, “teachers' beliefs influence their acceptance and uptake of new approaches, techniques and activities”. Essentially, the paper seeks to address the following questions:

- (1) What are the English language teachers' notions of the World Englishes paradigm?
- (2) What specific target model/standard of English do they teach and why?
- (3) What other varieties of English are they aware of?

(4) What are the implications of their awareness of the notions to their teaching the English language?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The study is qualitative in nature. It made use of a focus group discussion to generate data for analysis. A focus group discussion is a form of group interviewing but is distinguished by the fact that the researcher relies not on questions and answers between the participants and the researcher, but rather on group interactions and their ensuing ideas and insights. According to Gibbs (1997), focus groups allow researchers to access the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions of participants in ways that observations or surveys could not.

### **2.2 Participants**

There were ten participants in the focus group who are all teachers of English in the School of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education of Carlos Hilado Memorial State College-Main. All held at least the minimum qualification to teach English, having passed the Licensure Examinations for Teachers. Four are full-fledged Master's Degree holders, two are studying for their Master's, another is studying for a PhD degree while the rest are considering taking their Master's the coming school opening. Classroom experience ranged from three to 15 years while ages ranged from 24 to 38 years old. The number of participants was determined to be at least 75% of the total number of English teachers in State College A. The original plan was to include the whole population of English teachers in the FGD, however this was not practicable as there was not a single time schedule that could gather all the English teachers in the campus whose total number is 13. Five volunteers were individually interviewed shortly after their participation in the focus group. These interviewees were participants who felt they would like to say more about the research questions and who were readily available when needed.

### **2.3 Procedure**

The research was conducted with due approval from the deans of both departments, the School of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. After verifying with the respective departments regarding schedule availability, the exact time and day for the focus group discussion was set. For this study, the focus group interview was felt to be a suitable methodology to address the research questions.

During the discussion, ground rules were established that created an emotionally safe environment for discussion in which all voices could be heard. The researcher acted as a neutral moderator, avoiding giving personal opinions that might influence participants' comments. The moderator ensured that all participants had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion of all questions. When everyone has had a chance to respond to a question, the discussion was moved to the next point. The sharing of ideas and discussion between participants was encouraged, and occasionally, the moderator would ask subsidiary questions, for clarification or for further details. The focus group lasted for an hour and 20 minutes; it was audio recorded, and the recording was then transcribed and subsequently content analyzed.

The purpose of the follow-up individual interviews was to try to ensure that the views expressed in groups were not unduly influenced by group pressures. Perspectives, beliefs and experiences related to the main research questions were explored in depth with individual participants. Findings from the individual interviews confirmed the general pattern of views expressed in groups, indicating that these views were very probably genuinely held, and they also added depth and texture to some of the opinions expressed. The focus group and the individual

interviews are subsequently reported together.

### 3. Results

The responses to each research question are presented below.

#### **Research question 1: What are your notions of the World Englishes paradigm?**

It took a long time for the majority of the participants to give a response; a number of them found the idea of World Englishes to be synonymous with accent, or versions of American and British English. One of the participants said that it has something to do with varied rules of language and how it is unacceptable to a native speaker if the language is used with faulty grammar. When asked what he specifically means with what he said, this is what he said:

“Like for example when you say to an American erase the board, he would probably not understand because that’s not quite right. He would rather understand it had you said, please erase the writings on the board.”

The participants noted that the WEs paradigm is a change of perspective; that there is now a change in how words are used in English and that there are many different kinds of English and how they have become acceptable. They also made mention that English has now become more global,

“It is okay to use the English language even if we use English to refer to the Filipino context”.

This was affirmed by another participant when she made mention that in fact, some of our Tagalog words made it to the dictionary: the word boondock for example when checked in the dictionary is of Tagalog etymology. Another one said that in recent international tests of English, other kinds or versions of English are also used like Indian English and even Australian English. There is a paradigm shift because in the past it was only American English and British English that are supported but now other kinds of English are recognized as well. In fact, one of the seminars attended by one of the participants was actually on World Englishes and the speakers were from Hongkong and England, and that from what she gathered, that there is now a recognition of the other “versions” of English all over the world. However, there was an interjection from one speaker when she said that with this paradigm, English teaching would become more complicated because it seems that there is a language war that never ends and this is in relation to standards. According to another, there are now more speakers of English as a second language than as a first. With the WEs paradigm, world literature would now be inclusive of not only the classics but also of other works from the Asian region like Hongkong or Japan.

On the whole, views were at best ambivalent. There was no one view about the World Englishes paradigm that any one of them very passionately supported or negated.

#### **Research question 2: What specific target model/standard of English are you teaching? Why?**

The participants were all of one mind that the target model/standard that they are teaching is American English and when asked why,

“because Filipinos are familiar with it”, “because we were colonized by the Americans”, “most of our textbooks or almost all are modelled after American English.”

According to one there is no standing policy on which particular standard is to be followed in their teaching. One of them said she mixes some British words because of the possibility that someday the students would go abroad and go to the UK. She was supported by another when she agreed with the mixing of both American and

British English in her teaching because of its utilitarian use when one travels.

“Like for example the word lift in Brunei or Malaysia, is used to refer to an elevator.”

One very passionate stand about models or standards was offered by another when he said that he does not impose a specific standard even the American English standard because to him it is not helpful:

“It is not very appropriate in the context of our school, and I’m not saying this as a derogatory remark but as a realistic assessment of our school setting” (which is a state institution, and where the student population mostly come from the below middle income level households).

To him, from what he learned from his ethnolinguistics class, teachers must understand learners’ ethnicity that is why according to him, he discourages his students from laughing at someone in class who speaks English with a Hiligaynon intonation. He added that imposing the American and British standards is in reality colonialism because the language in turn “enslaves” the learners. He is in fact proud of Manny Pacquiao (a world renowned Filipino boxer) with his Philippine accent, because Manny is being true to himself and supported his statement that in other parts of the world,

“other peoples too, like the French, have their regional accent, and yet the Frenchmen who have accents, who act on movies were not looked down upon; as a matter of fact this particular movie won in the Oscar’s.”

This was countered by another teacher who said that in subject areas such as Speech Communication, there really is a need to adhere to standards otherwise it would be compromising learning,

“It is not proper when a teacher would be the one to adjust to the learners and not the other way around.”

To her it is a sorry state to see that in the intercampus beauty competitions, the odds are stacked against the contestant who speaks with a Hiligaynon intonation but that it is almost unacceptable to let one with such win. She added that it is important that the American English standard should be adhered to because the possibility of misunderstanding one another or is great. A strong justification, she felt, was the perceived learner needs and expectations which teachers would need to address. At this point, the discussion has become divided, others supported the notion of following an American standard as model for teaching while, there are those too, who said that they would adhere to a standard depending on the context with which it is used. Another interesting point was raised by another teacher when she said that formerly when she was teaching English as a Second Language she finds it really weird that her Korean students would want to listen to her speak with an American accent when she is in fact Filipino and not a native speaker.

“Now, after years of training to approximate the accent, my students here would look at me in a strange way as if I come from the outer space.”

It is during the discussion of number two question that the issue of the mother tongue based education (MTBMLE) was raised. This is from the perspective of how the real mother tongue should be defined. According to one teacher, MTB is a contradiction in that instead of facilitating the acquisition of a full comprehension in the second language by perfecting an education in the first, what is happening is that the learners are actually learning a new language which is not in reality their mother tongue. The term for come here is not “dali di” as almost everybody in the group translated but instead “kari”, and that eleven is not “onse” but “napulog-isa” which elicited a reaction. Everybody was united in their stand against mother based education in the primary grades



reiterating that it has become a contradiction.

**Research question 3: What other varieties of English are you aware of?**

The participants seem to have a vague idea what “varieties” meant because when asked about what they know about World Englishes earlier, they were not able to use the term “varieties” although they are aware of “versions” and “kinds” of Englishes, (those were their terms) like American English, British English, Australian English, Indian English, Canadian English, Philippine English, Singaporean English, Korean English, etc. One pointed out however, that people tend to laugh at people who speak non-standard English,

“beyond language, we should consider relationships or persons.”

This remark was agreed by the group to be true based on their observations.

“We are bound to look down on people when they don’t speak our standard. It ruins other contexts of life. Beyond language, we should consider relationships or persons. If we constrain ourselves with the standards of language, we don’t look too far.”

This was commented on by one of the discussants as he stressed his point about how speaking in the standard English, such as American English, could be constraining to students. The group further discussed how language proficiency is equated with IQ.

“We have this notion that when you speak fluent English with American pronunciation (despite the content), it’s already okay.”

The participants discussed that there seems to be condescension with regards to those who cannot speak standard American pronunciation. They traced the condescension from the all years that the Filipinos experienced colonialism. One discussant stated,

“Three hundred years under Spanish rule and almost 30 years under the Americans is quite sizeable for the condescension to sink in.”

With these realities, the group came up with the notion of tolerance. One participant openly pushed for “tolerance among all peoples of the world.” He explained that people should be tolerant of other peoples’ accents or intonation. With the concept of World Englishes, he explained that our culture should push for more understanding.

“Don’t force but encourage.”

“It’s not always grammar; there are a lot of things to consider...”

Aside from the group’s consensus on the notion of tolerance, one participant posed a question,

“Will it be better if we could establish our own Philippine English standard?”

The group however was not able to come up with a concrete answer to this question.

**Research question 4: What are the implications of your awareness of the notions of these varieties to your teaching pedagogy?**

The group had a passionate discussion on the implication of an awareness of the concepts of WEs and the varieties and standards as models for teaching, but they seem to entertain the idea that the best way is for them to keep an open mind.

“You’re not very particular with the grammar, what is important is that they can express themselves.”

They showed a willingness to accommodate other varieties of English as well as incorporate other cultures in their lessons, although there are reservations that some participants offered particularly about teaching the right kind of English the way the native speakers would speak it. One participant remarked on considering individual differences among students. Another one added,

“You don’t laugh at the person but probably with the words inappropriately used...”

The group then proceeded to share their classroom experiences. One participant shared,

“There are students in my AIT program who are fluent in English but the way they speak, the way they deliver mayuhumka (one could only smile) because anona man (what are they saying)? But I understand kun anoangbuotsingganon (what they meant) peroanonasa..anona di maigo (but they just can’t seem to get the accent) ang accent.”

They have observed that students are more willing to share their ideas when they are encouraged to speak in the way they are comfortable in and not restricted by the standards. Students hesitate to participate in classroom discussions when told that they are to speak in English.

“My awareness of including my learners’ culture in my teaching made me realize that maybe they’re hesitant because they are ashamed of possible errors they could commit.”

One participant said that the awareness of the concepts of Wes added by his knowledge about ethnolinguistics reinforced his college experience that students should not be forced to speak in the American accent. Now instead of his students squeezing themselves to fit the standard, now he gets more ideas from them and ultimately derives productive discussions with them. My only rule with them is,

“To speak English, no matter what the intonation is, just force yourself to speak English...”

Furthermore, the group observed that students are better with writing activities rather than speaking. They also raised a concern regarding students asking if they could speak in Hiligaynon in answering the teacher’s questions; like one teacher who share this experience with a student who asked,

“Can I speak in Hiligaynon, I’d like to answer your question but I cannot express myself in English.”

According to them, answers in Hiligaynon are accepted if it would answer the question even if that question is in English. After all as what one of them pointed out,

“you would like to have an answer to the question. Grammar is just a vehicle for them to answer it.”

Half of the group suggested a translation of the students answer in English, but they can also be told that an answer in English is much appreciated:

“This is how it would sound if it was in English.”

Another issue raised by the group is on modeling of the standard by the teacher. One pointed out,

“It doesn’t mean that you’re teaching Humanities you could just use Hiligaynon, you could actually use your American accent to make them also realize that this is the American way or standard way of speaking. But it doesn’t mean that you also have to force them to speak, but just by you modelling how to speak could also teach them that this is the correct way.”

To this the other discussant clarified that it is okay to use the standard as long as it is used in context.

What is quite clear from the above discussion is that the English teachers couldn't seem to agree solidly on how the standard American model should be applied and when it should strictly be imposed. They are of one mind however, in admitting that they need training for more information on the practicability and applicability of the varieties of English. This is an area in research that needs to be explored more because the educational practitioners themselves are placed in a situation where more knowledge and input are needed for them to capture the concept of Wes more and concretize its applicability.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study investigated the interface between notions about World Englishes as a concept, which varieties they are aware of, which standard should be taught, and the response of educational practitioners in terms of their beliefs about, attitudes towards and knowledge of the applicability and implications of these concepts. There was an interesting insight into the realities of the teachers' professional lives and their orientations towards the language they work with that emerged. What is inconsistent is that with the realities of the global spread of English of which the English language teachers seem to know about, with scholars advancing their different conceptualizations of this spread, i.e., Kachru (1985) and Schneider (2012), there still remains an ambivalence as to what this concept really is, as far as they are concerned. There was also, in most instances, a striking unanimity of beliefs and experiences which transcended gender, religion and teaching experience. Specifically, none of the 10 participants are aware of the term "variety of English" as no one really used it in their responses. There was a uniform and unanimous agreement that they are teaching the American English standard as model, but were divided as to whether this standard should duly be imposed. American English was seen by all participants as having an increasing importance in the local context. One finds the idea of a "standard" American English as being colonizing.

The main findings therefore do not strongly support the concept of teaching English for international use which is currently being advocated (Mckay, 2002; Pakir, 1999). This is probably brought about because of the ambivalence borne out of the "unequal footing" so to speak of the participants, who are not similar in terms of their academic backgrounds. Those who have advanced academic advantage find the notions of WEs and the recognition of varieties an attractive idea, while those who are quite younger in terms of tenure and education seemed pretty solid in their adherence to the American English standard. It is clear though that most teacher participants adopted what they felt to be a very practical and pragmatic perspective on varieties of English, suggesting an equivocal belief in a "standard" form of the language. This perspective was upheld by the majority even when some participants acknowledged that it does not really correspond to the reality of Englishes which are in use worldwide. It is interesting to note too that one teacher participant showed resentment to the concept of standards and felt that it is actually a way of "erasing cultures" once a standard is to be adhered to in blind obedience. He felt that such a concept is a threat to the identities of nations given that non-native speakers who teach English might be categorized as outsiders teaching other peoples' language. The concerns related much more to local circumstances and the practicalities of the local context. Any comment on learner needs emphasized the fact that needs are not negotiated; instead, teachers are concerned to focus more on clarity and utility: the extent to which learners are able to use the language for very practical purposes, such as employment, or surviving in a foreign land.

The implication for future research is clear: the awareness and understanding of the concept of World Englishes and varieties of English and most importantly the notion of standards need to be inquired into more and should be related closely to developing an understanding of the local contexts. Global realizations of the international use for English will only emerge from fine grained understanding of local contexts achieved by key participants who hold the most crucial role: the English teachers and the learners they teach who constitute that context.

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