

## **Exploring Teachers' Attitudes towards Pronunciation Issues and Varieties of English in Three Circles of World Englishes**

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**Abstract:** Drawing on the literature on the emergence of different varieties of English in the globalized world, current debates surrounding English as an international language (EIL), and more orientation towards intelligibility and mutual understanding in international communication, this article reports the findings of a quantitative and qualitative research study with 112 native American and British, 120 Indian and 120 Iranian teachers as members of Inner Circle (IC), Outer Circle (OC) and Expanding Circle (EC) (Kachru, 1992) to explore their attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy within the framework of English as an international language and how they see their role in relation to different varieties of English. The findings demonstrate the extent to which teachers' acceptance of pronunciation and varieties of English differs. In particular, the Iranian teachers' norm-bound orientation was found to be the greatest among the three groups. Native English teachers' replies were also indicative of their acceptance of different varieties of English. Teachers' preferences will be discussed with consideration of their attitudes towards varieties of English which might have influenced the construction of English teachers' identity and the educational policy of each country. The findings also highlight the localization of L2 language planning and policies in an EIL pedagogy. This article argues that together with encouraging and valuing different varieties of English, it is important to acknowledge and promote ways to raise awareness of teachers and learners towards global spread of English and the realities of English today which can be really helpful to be more realistic and not just blind followers of a particular model.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation, Intelligibility, English as an International language, Language Awareness, Identity.

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## Introduction

With the rapid growth of English as an international language much interest has been stated in the status of Native Speaker (NS) norm, especially in the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) which has created serious challenges to the traditional conceptualization of English language teaching. This global spread can have many different political, historical, economic and scientific reasons but one distinguished implication of it is the emergence of multiple varieties of English which has given new names to English such as “International English” (e.g., McKay, 2002; 2012), “World Englishes” (e.g., Jenkins, 2003; Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2010, 2011) and “English as a Lingua Franca” (ELF) (e.g., Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2011). This globalization and glocalization of English in turn has sprouted many new concepts such as the acceptance of varieties of English, Nativism and non-nativism, cultural appropriateness of pedagogical materials, language and identity, ownership of English, etc. As McKay (2012, p.10) puts it “traditionally L2 pedagogy and research have been dominated by the assumption that the goal of bilingual users of English is to achieve native-like competence in English. However, for those individuals who use English essentially as a language of wider communication alongside one or more other languages they speak, achieving native-like competence is often not necessary or desired”. Cook (1999) refers to this as “the comparative fallacy” of relating the L2 learner to the native speaker. English now as a global lingua franca serves to connect the world (Crystal, 2003) and ease cultural understanding across societies but the problem is imposing communication norms and creating divisions between haves and have-nots (Phan Le Ha, 2008).

Undeniably, the term EIL as an umbrella term to characterize the use of English between any L2 speakers of English (McKay, 2010, p. 91) has changed all attitudes towards English. As Kachru and Nelson (2001) state, “today, English is spoken and taught worldwide and the language is used primarily by non-native speakers to communicate with non-native speakers”. So, the challenging issue is the acceptability of NS model, a monolingual and mono-cultural norm, as an ideal model in the realm of ELT.

Considering the above mentioned issues, it would seem that the English, globalization, Standard norm and varieties of English across the globe is indeed a complex issue. One of the most challenging issues in the realm of EIL is the matter of pronunciation in EIL pedagogy. Jenkins (1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004) puts emphasis on ELF pronunciation and pedagogical issues. Jenkins (1998, p. 124) mentions that “while approximation to the native model is probably essential for intelligibility in non-bilingual EIL contexts as regards core sounds,

nuclear stress, and relevant articulatory setting, local non-native norms are likely to be both acceptable and intelligible in many other phonological areas". The significance of pronunciation issue can be for two main causes: First, constructing intelligibility which refers to creating a comprehensible discourse among participants within a communicative framework. Second, taking into consideration the principal role of pronunciation in EIL and the way that it shapes learners' awareness towards their sociocultural identity.

Although a number of studies have been accomplished on teachers' and learners' attitudes towards EIL, there are fewer studies that are concerned with the perceptions of teachers regarding pronunciation and different varieties of English from an EIL perspective. The present study investigated the developing picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of multiple varieties of English from the perspective of teachers from three circles in the globalized world.

## Review of Literature

### English as an International language: A new Paradigm

Undoubtedly, in the past 20 years or so, the phenomenon of globalization has had a profound effect on the profusion of English in the world (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). Modern technological and demographic growths have also added to the continuing internationalization of English language, finally changing both in the way it is used and conceptualized. Like any other language, English is included in natural way of change; but the situations under which these presently happen in English have increased as it comes into more interaction with other languages and is spoken by progressively diverse users and learners across many different communities. Sharifian (2009, p. 2) in his book English as an International Language defines EIL as a paradigm shift in TESOL and SLA, partly in response to the complexities that are associated with the tremendously rapid spread of English around the globe in recent decades. Sharifian writes,

As a paradigm, EIL calls for a critical revisiting of the notions, analytical tools, approaches and methodologies within the established disciplines such as the sociolinguistics of English and TESOL, which explored various aspects of the English language. One of the central themes of EIL as a paradigm is its recognition of world Englishes, regardless of which "circles" they belong to. (p.2)

According to Matsuda (2003), EIL paradigm also emphasizes the relevance of world Englishes to ELT. In EIL contexts, speakers come from different national and cultural backgrounds. Canagarajah (2006) believes that because of the rapid spread of Outer Circle

and Expanding Circle Englishes into the Inner Circle countries, no longer world Englishes should be considered as three circles proposed by Kachru. He defines that now vast majority of speakers from the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries live in the Inner Circle countries, even “native speakers” of English are more exposed to world Englishes. Canagarajah (2006, p. 233) continues that, “in a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex . . . one needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication”. This can also refer to revising the notion of “proficiency” even for native speakers of English.

### **Internationalization of Education: A time for Change**

The outgrowing number of users of English has led to the emergence of world Englishes (Kachru, 1986). In the globalized world, nativisation (Kachru, 1986), appropriation (Canagarajah, 1999) and re-nationalization (McKay, 2012) are the primary factors for a language to be accepted by the members of a community. Recently, scholars (Canagarajah, 2006, 2007; Sharifian, 2009) believe that because of the spread of Outer Circle and Expanding Circle Englishes into the Inner Circle countries no longer world Englishes should be divided into three circles proposed by Kachru. They clarify that now vast majority of speakers from the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries live in the Inner Circle countries, even native speakers of English are more exposed to world Englishes.

In terms of English language teaching, the goal of teaching English today from an EIL perspective is to prepare the learners to use English to develop intercultural communication (Sharifian, 2009), focus on mutual intelligibility ( Yano, 2001) and become part of the globalized world, which is linguistically and culturally various, and thus both teachers and EIL courses should prepare learners for such diversity and to represent English as a pluralistic and dynamic component rather than a monolithic and static one. Kumaravadivelu (2012, p. 9) believes that the on-going process of cultural globalization with its incessant and increased flow of peoples, goods, and ideas across the world has created a novel “web of interlocution” and the teaching of English as an international language (EIL) cannot remain insulated and isolated from globalization’s impact on the formation of individual identities of English language learners, teachers, and teacher educators around the world. He furthers considers that that nothing less than an epistemic break is required in order to help EIL professionals meet the challenges of teaching English which is marked by globality as well as coloniality and suggests the following principles in the realm of EIL:

- Breaking the dependency on western terminologies,

- Breaking the dependency on western knowledge production (finding an alternative model of SLA that is not constrained by western-oriented epistemes),
- Breaking the dependency on center-based methods (such as audiolingual, communicative) and striving to design context-specific, locally-generated instructional strategies,
- Breaking the dependency on center-based cultural competence, and
- Breaking the dependency on the center-based textbook Industry which just presents western cultural values.

Following Kumaravadivelu, McKay (2012, p. 42) believes that principles such as the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism, localization of L2 language planning and policies, developing awareness of students to language variation and equal access to English learning for all who desire it should be considered in an EIL pedagogy.

In terms of EIL pedagogy, there are a number of studies which support the acceptability and approval of other varieties of English (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Liu & Zhang 2007; Lo et al. 2009; Prodromou, 2006). Kirkpatrick (2006) argues pros and cons of three different pedagogic models in East Asia and Australia which were native speaker model, nativised model and lingua franca model. He finally mentions that lingua franca model is the best one in a context where English is used between non-native speakers of English. Prodromou (2006, p. 52) also believes that “the nonnative teacher’s authority suffers in the native-dominated scheme of things because it is precisely in the area of learners’ culture that non-native teachers are at their best”. A number of studies also support the legitimacy and acceptance of other varieties of English (Liu & Zhang 2007; Lo et al. 2009).

### **On the Issue of Pronunciation and Accent**

The outgrowing numbers of “native speakers” of English in the world and the establishment of ELF in the field of linguistics raise this question whether all non-native users of English should follow native speakers’ norms. Cooks (1999, p. 189) explains this challenging issue in this way:

In practice, however, SLA [second language acquisition] research has often fallen into the comparative fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983) of relating the L2 learner to the “native speaker”. This tendency is reflected in the frequency with which the words succeed and fail are associated with the phrase native speaker, for example, the view that fossilization and errors in L2 users’ speech add up to “failure to achieve native-speaker competence.

Particularly, in terms of pronunciation, it would be more difficult to sustain the norms of the “native speaker”. The concept of pronunciation has been enormously discussed by

many scholars in the past few years (Derwing, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 1997, 2005, 2013, 2015; Jenkins, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2009; Munro & Derwing, 2011, 2015). Jenkins' (2000) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) can be considered as an efficient feature to the training of pronunciation to non-native speakers. Jenkins (2002) believes that the intuitions that are taken into account for pronunciation are those of native speakers and little consideration is given to the intelligibility for non-native speakers, in spite of the fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers by a significant margin. Jenkins (2000) in her book 'the phonology of English as an international language' insists on a non-native model for English as an international language. In this book, she emphasizes more on communication rather than nativism and regards intelligibility and learnability as the two most important features in pronunciation training to non-native speakers. Therefore, She elucidates by saying that EIL teaching should concentrate the productive focus of pronunciation teaching on the three areas that seem to have the greatest impact on intelligibility in EIL, i.e. certain segmentals, nuclear stress (the main stress in a word group), and the effective use of articulatory setting, to the extent that it supports the first two areas. Furthermore, LFC model can be really supportive in keeping uniformity of ELF as non-natives with different mother tongues would have a common and more achievable goal for pronunciation. It can also help to raise awareness of learners towards the global spread of English and the realities of English today which can be really helpful to be more realistic and not just blind followers of a particular model.

Derwing and Munro (1997) found that intelligibility does not correlate closely with "accentedness" (as measured by Inner Circle speakers), recommending that learners of English from Japan or elsewhere do not need to mimic Inner Circle pronunciation in order to be understood by speakers from countries such as America or the UK. Smith (1992) defines intelligibility "as the speaker's awareness of a variety or accent of English: the greater the familiarity, the more likely the user will understand, and be understood by, speakers of that variety". In fact, Intelligibility constructs a comprehensible discourse among participants within a given communicative framework.

## **Research Method**

### ***Objectives***

This study aimed at investigating the developing picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of multiple varieties of English from the perspective of teachers from Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles in the globalized world. To explore this area of interest further, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1- What are Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle teachers' beliefs about the significance of NS accents and their functions in pronunciation standards?
- 2- What are Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle teachers' preferences and expectations in relation to pronunciation norms?
- 3- To what extent do Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle teachers take an EIL perspective in response to the ownership of English?

### **Participants**

There were altogether 352 English teacher participants, who were all self-selected by responding to an email invitation to participate in this study. The email invitation was linked to a website where details of the study including research goals, what participants were expected to do could be found. Of the 352 participants, 112 were native teachers from the USA and Britain as members of Inner Circle community; 120 were from India as members of Outer Circle and the last 120 were from Iran as participants of Expanding Circle community. Table 1 gives an overview of the general profile of all participants.

**Table 1.** General profile of participants

<b>Participants' general information</b>	<b>Indian Teachers</b>	<b>Iranian Teachers</b>	<b>British and American Teachers</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	56	52	60
Female	64	68	52
<b>Educational Background</b>			
BA degree	32	28	12
MA degree	72	64	60
PhD	16	28	40
<b>Age</b>			
21-30	45	32	48
31-40	32	48	32
41-50	20	25	12
50 +	23	15	20
<b>Teaching Experience</b>			
0-1	12	12	8
1-5	44	28	44
5-10	28	32	32
10+	36	48	28

### **Instrument**

The data of this study were elicited using a survey questionnaire (Appendix 1). The questionnaire was a modified version adopted from Sifakis and Sougari (2005) and Li (2009).

The questionnaire contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Moreover, interviews were conducted with 20 Native English teachers, 20 Indians and 20 Iranian teachers who had previously answered the questionnaires and had volunteered for the interviews. Basically, the interviews aimed at supplementing the findings of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire had two parts: firstly, teachers' background information (age, gender, teaching experience and educational background) and secondly, attitudes towards pronunciation and accent-related matters. Items 2 to 7 asked about respondents' views regarding accent-related issues. Items 8 and 9 asked about teachers 'attitudes towards students' and non-native teachers' accents. Item 10 asked about oral communication teaching practices and the last item looked for the ownership of English.

### ***Data collection and Analysis***

Before the actual administration of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 44 English teachers in order for the purposes of content validity. Six researchers were also consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire and the interview were clear and the scales were appropriate. Based on the feedback obtained, several modifications were done.

The questionnaire seems to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.75 that is a reasonable value for Social Sciences. Regarding the open-ended sections, teachers' responses were coded to yield quantitative data. An independent rater was also requested to code these sections to ensure reliability. The interrater reliability was .93; the questionable parts were reconsidered until reaching a point of agreement. The data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Concerning research ethics, the teachers were informed that they can withdraw at any time during the process of the study. Participants were assured that all the data collected were just for research only, and their confidentiality was protected during the study. All the data collected through interview was recorded with the participants' permission. Researchers considered credibility and dependability by collecting data from as many contexts and situations as possible and by using two methods of data gathering which helped to credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability.

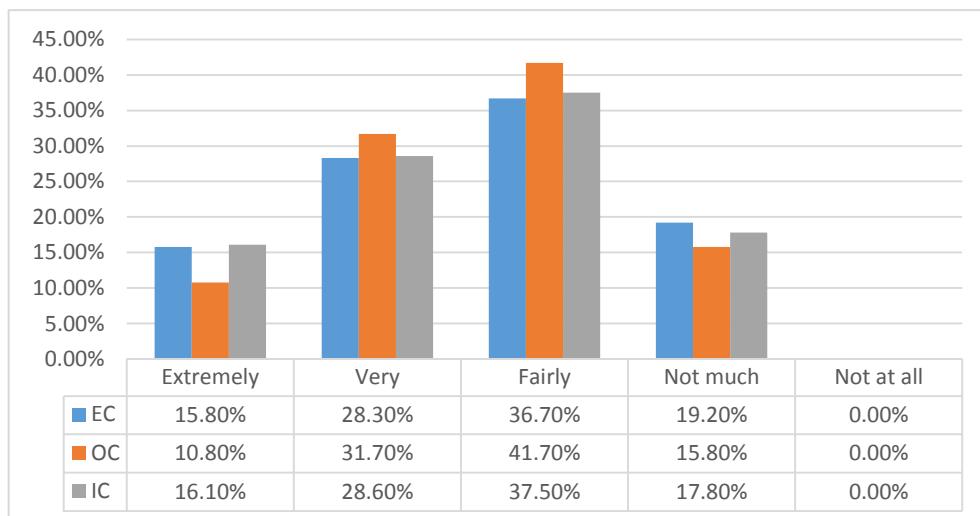
## **RESULTS**

### ***Accents***

In order to illuminate how pronunciation was important for IC, OC and EC participants, their ratings for questions 2 and 3 were examined. At first sight, the patterns of responses to

question 2 seemed to be fairly consistent. More than 80 per cent of teachers in all three groups (See Figure 1) pointed to the importance of pronunciation in communication. Upon closer scrutiny of the participants' responses to question 3, however, a number of apparent inconsistencies were detected.

Based on the results displayed in Figure 1, it can be claimed that pronunciation was important for majority of participants in all three groups. The total percentage of positive responses was more than 80 per cent in all three groups.



**Figure 1.** Importance of pronunciation in communication by nationality

Participants in question 3 were asked about the importance of having a native-like pronunciation or attaining a clear and intelligible pronunciation in communication. According to Sifakis (2004), there are two main approaches in communication, cultural bound (C-bound) approach and norm-bound (N-bound) approach. C-bound perspective highlights the process of cross-cultural comprehensibility between learners as a communicative goal in itself rather than on notions of accuracy and standards while N-bound perspective focuses on accuracy and standardness. The fact is that teachers should raise students' awareness that the interaction that takes place between interlocutors in reality is far from the ideal norm taught inside N-bound classrooms. The responses to question 3 indicated that majority of teachers (68.20 %) from three circles believed in communication and comprehensibility. However, the percentage of Iranian teachers who believed in accuracy-oriented manner standarndness was substantially greater than Indian and native teachers (56.70%). Native and Indianan teachers had a more cultural-oriented tendency with more emphasis on comprehensibility and intelligibility.

**Table 2.** The importance of having native-like or intelligible pronunciation

Nationality	Intelligible pronunciation	Native-like pronunciation	Total
Iranian	52 (43.30%)	68 (56.70%)	120 (100.00%)
Indian	96 (80.00%)	24 (20.00%)	120 (100.00%)
Native	92 (82.10%)	20 (17.90 %)	112 (100.00%)
Total	240 (68.20%)	112(31.80%)	352 (100.00%)

Chi-square= 51.94, p <.05

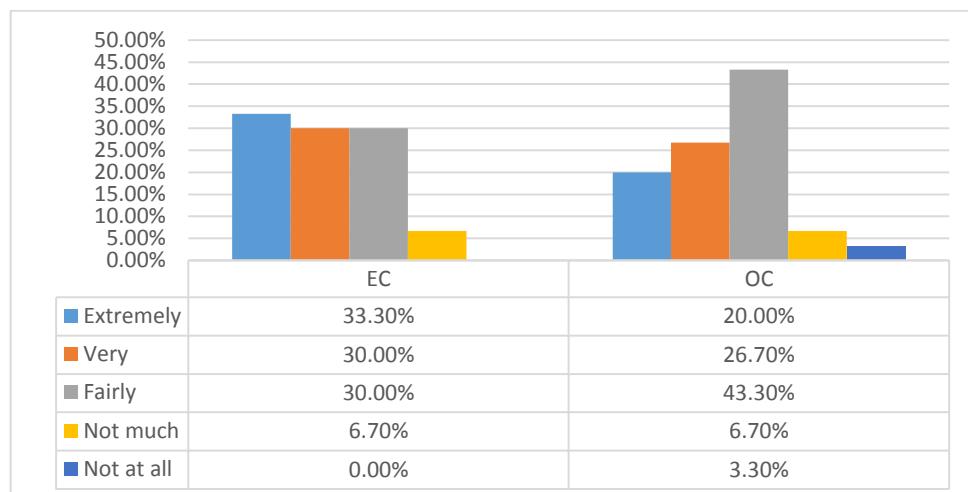
Interviews by participants also proved this conflict of attitudes. Iranian interviewees showed somehow more orientation towards having a native-like accent for their learners in comparison with Indian and native teachers. Here are some remarks by teachers regarding their perception of pronunciation in communication:

**EC12:** Pronunciation is just native one. Because it is always nice to listen to good English. A language loses its flavor and charm if spoken improperly. Non-native accent is highly unaesthetic.

**OC8:** By pronunciation, I mean intelligibility and communicative aspects of language which are more important than native accent. Accent is a matter of personal taste.

**IC4:** You should be understood in communication - it is not necessary to speak like a native. Accent has nothing to do with producing meaning. Meaning is of key importance not if a person has a "native-like accent".

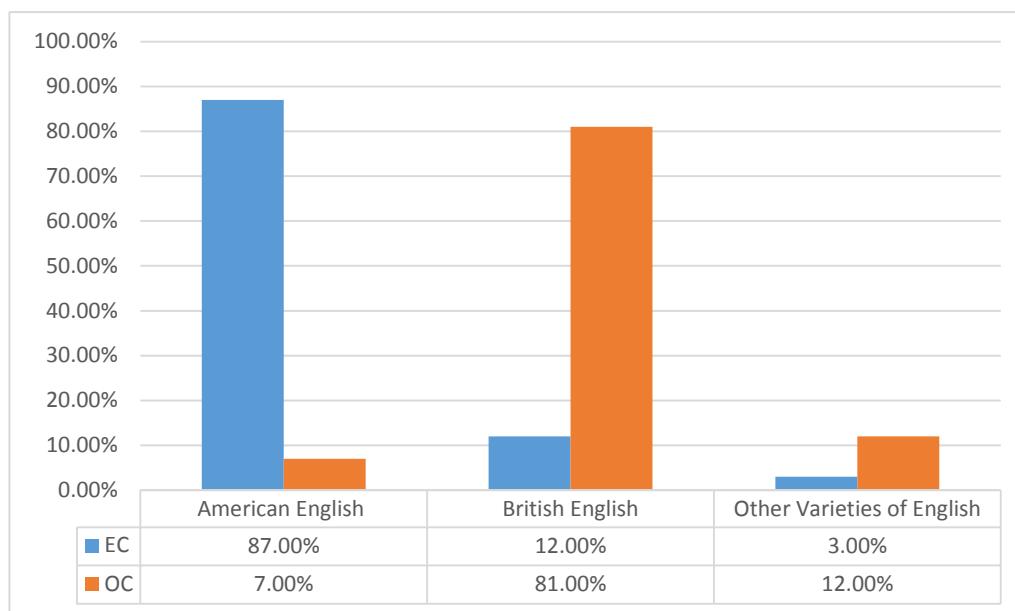
Q.4 asked EC and OC participants about their satisfaction with their own accents. Iranian teachers were highly satisfied with their own accents, with 76 (63.30 %) who claimed to be "very proud" or "extremely proud" and 36 (30.00 %) who were fairly satisfied. In contrast, a total number of 52 Indian teachers (43.30 %) were fairly satisfied and there were about 56 participants (46.70 %) who were "extremely proud or "very proud" of their own accents.

**Figure 2.** Teachers' satisfaction with their own accents

Q5. Iranian and Indian participants were asked about their view towards the best pronunciation accent for their learners in English classes. Answers to this question demonstrated that American English was favored more positively among teachers as a linguistic model for Iran (more than 85 per cent). Conversely, British English was favored more positively among Indian teachers (more than 80 per cent). Interviews with some native teachers revealed this interesting point that clarity and intelligibility and not American or British accent should be the focus of attention for English teachers:

**IC2:** They main thing is intelligibility. Here in the US, obviously Standard American English (SAE). In the UK, RP, in Australia, Australian English, and so on and so forth. Actually, if a NNSE intends to stay in particular region of one of those countries, then of course, he/she can and should learn the regional accent. Here, I am talking about the mode of instruction. It is completely fine that some learners speak with a less native-like accent.

**IC6:** In short, I think the preference of one accent type over another is highly contextual. Accent preference seems to be determined by the presumed economic future of the students and the reasons they are learning the language.



**Figure 3.** The best pronunciation accent for learners

Q.6 asked participants about the provision of immediate or delayed feedback on their learners' performance regarding English pronunciation. The responses to question 6 indicated that the percentage of Iranian teachers who believed in the provision of immediate feedback

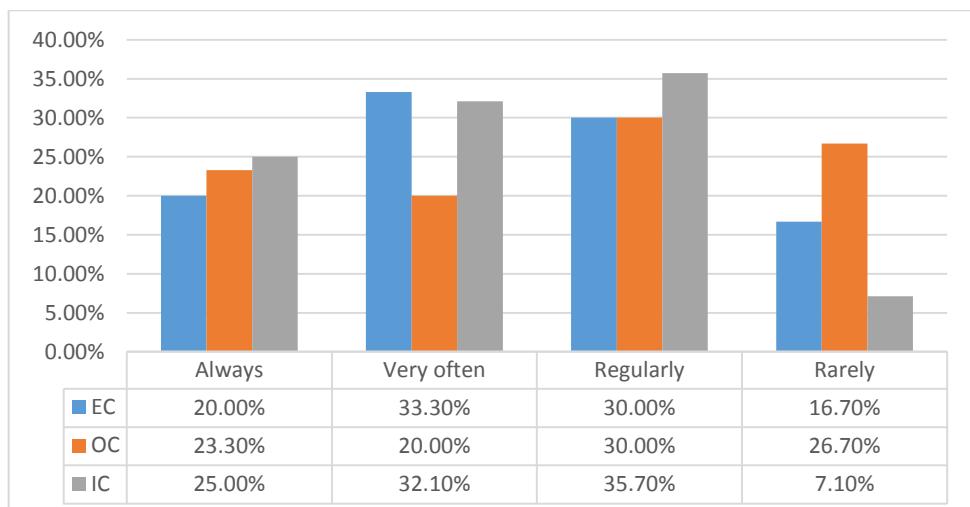
was substantially greater than Indian and native teachers (65.00%). Indian and native teachers were more in favor of providing delayed feedback in their English classes. (See Table 3)

Based on the results displayed in Figure 4, it can be claimed that following norm-bound approach with a focus on accuracy in communication is common among all teachers from three circles but the percentage of Iranian teachers who very often provide feedback (33.30%) was substantially greater than Indian teachers (20.00%).

**Table 3.** Provision of immediate or delayed feedback by teachers

Nationality	Immediate feedback	Delayed feedback	Total
Iranian	78 (65.00%)	42(35.00%)	120 (100.00%)
Indian	45 (37.50%)	75 (62.50%)	120 (100.00%)
Native	30 (26.80%)	82 (73.20%)	112 (100.00%)
Total	153 (43.50%)	199 (53.50%)	352 (100.00%)

Chi-square= 37.06, p <.05



**Figure 4.** The extent to which teachers provide immediate or delayed feedback

Q.8 asked participants about their attitudes towards their students' accents in ELT contexts. Results on teachers' attitudes towards their students' accents indicated that there was no significant difference between teachers from the three circles in this matter. Majority of the teachers in all three groups (72.70%) believed that as long as communication is not adversely affected, we shouldn't insist on native-like communication. Apart from these positive attributes, there were some teachers in all three groups (27.30 %) who insisted on standard American or British accent as "proper pronunciation" for their learners.

**Table 4.** Teachers' attitudes towards their students' accents in ELT context

Nationality	As long as communication is not adversely affected, we shouldn't insist on native-like communication	Students should follow standard American or British accent as "proper" pronunciation	Total
Iranian	80 (66.70%)	40 (33.30%)	120 (100.00%)
Indian	84 (70.00%)	36 (30.00%)	120 (100.00%)
Native	92 (82.10%)	20 (17.90 %)	112 (100.00%)
Total	256 (72.70%)	96 (27.30%)	352 (100.00%)

Chi-square = 7.67, p > .05

Some of the reasons for teachers' respective preferences towards native-speaker model for their learners are as follows:

**EC:** Pronunciation is just native like accent. Native accent gives my students more confidence and makes their speaking more attractive to other people.

**OC:** The final goal of learning one language is speaking like its native speaker. This is an advantage in contemporary competition. My learners sound more professional; they will have more selections in their future jobs.

**IC:** Native accent has great influence throughout the world.

Q.9 asked participants about their attitudes towards non-native teachers' accents in ELT context. EC participants' responses mirrored a strong norm-bound approach with more focus on accuracy and standardness. Most of Iranian teachers stated that teachers should demonstrate native-based accent (66.70 %) while there were some who prioritized non-native accent with more focus on meaning (33.30%). Most of Indian and Native English teachers (70 per cent or more) supported non-nativism with more focus on comprehensibility and intelligibility which has a cross-cultural-norm (C-norm) orientation. (See Table 5)

**Table 5.** Teachers' attitudes towards non-native teachers' accents

Nationality	It's fine teacher speak with non-native accent	Teachers should demonstrate native-based accent	Total
Iranian	40 (33.30%)	80 (66.70%)	120 (100.00%)
Indian	84 (70.00%)	36 (30.00%)	120 (100.00%)
Native	80 (71.40%)	32 (28.60 %)	112 (100.00%)
Total	204 (58.00%)	148(42.00%)	352 (100.00%)

Chi-square= 45.43, p <.05

Here is one interviewee's comment in supporting non-native teachers' accents:

**IC 12:** Learning English is not important because it is English, learning English is important because it is the world's lingua franca--for better, or for worse. Frankly, I don't care if the air traffic controller directing the airplane in which I am flying has an accent from the American Deep South, East London, Cameroon, India, or Bangkok. I want that individual to give clear, concise, and understandable directions to the cockpit.

### ***Methodological practices in English classes***

Question 10 asked teachers how often they use certain methodological practices. Five practices including real conversations among NSs, real conversations between NSs and NNSs, role playing assuming NS roles, role playing assuming NNS roles, and authentic videos with NSs and NNSs were considered in this part. Regarding implementing authentic conversations among 'native speakers', majority of Iranian teachers claimed to use them always (33.30%) or very often (26.70 %). In case of Indian teachers, most stated to incorporate authentic conversations regularly (36.70%) or rarely (24.30%). Results showed no significant differences for real conversations between NSs and NNSs. Regarding role playing activities, a greater percentage of Indian teachers stated that they regularly implement role plays assuming NNS roles (40.00 %) while majority of Iranian teachers were more likely to provoke their students to assume NS roles regularly (43.00%). Teachers from both Outer and Expanding Circles claimed to implement authentic videos with NSs and NNSs very often (36.70 %) or regularly (40.00 %). One of the interviewees indicate that conversations should include speakers from different cultures and different varieties of English:

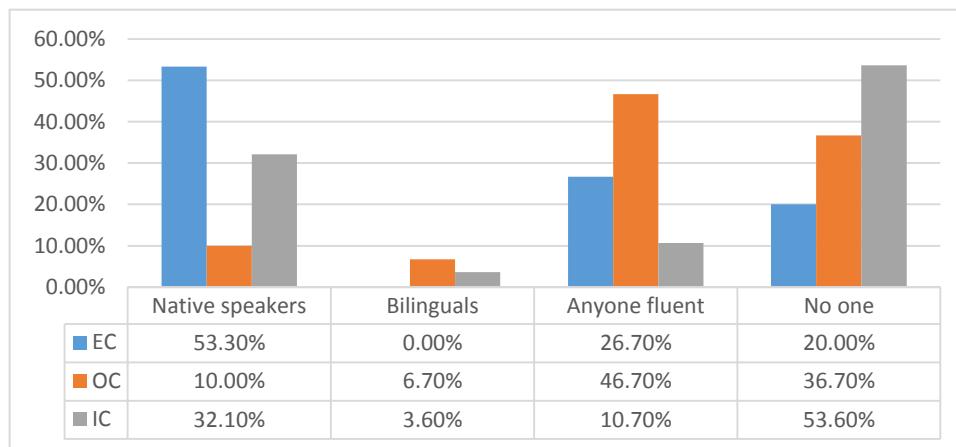
**IC 7:** English is now a world language, and has evolved through the British colonization process. There are several varieties of English in addition to American and British, such as Indian, Australian, and South African, as well as numerous "pidgin" Englishes. Many of these have unique words and grammar formations useful for the communication situations and things they encounter in their environments. Therefore, conversations in ELT books should include both natives and non-natives.

### ***Ownership of English***

Teachers of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles were also asked about the ownership of English, an important subject in an EIL attitude to pronunciation.

As shown in Figure 5, more than half of Iranian teachers indicated that English belongs to native speakers (53.30%). In case of Indians, most of them selected "anyone fluent enough to speak the language without major problems"(46.70 %) and "no one" (36.70%) as the

rightful owner of English. The interesting point is that more than half of Native teachers (53.60 %) believed that “no one” is the real owner of English. Selecting “no one” as the rightful owners of English reflects a strong cultural-bound perspective that supports the stated views of some teachers that they should promote intelligibility rather than accuracy when teaching accent.



**Figure 5.** Teachers' attitudes towards ownership of English

## Discussion

Listening to teachers' opinions in the three circles of the world Englishes contexts of four countries, we found a need for language program providers and teachers to encourage the learning of relevant and appropriate varieties of English and also consider the communicative needs of the learners. The study chose representative countries based on Kachru's (1992) three concentric circles. The United States and England were chosen as demonstrative countries for the first diaspora. Then the study selected India as an example country of the second diaspora for the spread of English, which was the result of the colonization of Asia by Great Britain. In this country, English is used as the official second language. Finally, Iran represents a country where English is primarily learned nationwide and actively used for international communication.

Upon closer analysis of those participants who were in favor of English accent based on a native speaker norm, it can be realized that it looks more beautiful for most Iranians to have American accent while most Indians like to have British accent. Considering the context of Iran, there are no official rules declaring which variety (-ies) of English is the norm in the ELT context. More than 50 years, Iranian teachers and L2 learners of English have been reluctant to speak English with Persian accent and have attempted to imitate a “native” accent (Monfared & Safarzadeh, 2014; Sadeghi & Richards, 2015) mostly American accent.

Sadeghi and Richards (2015) in a study elicited that about 70 per cent of Iranian students favored American English, 20 per cent favored British English and a small amount (about 10 per cent) favored a localized version of English as spoken by an educated Iranian. Teachers' orientation towards norm-based approach and standardness can be under the effect of (a) teachers' lack of awareness towards this tacit assumption that native-norms are superiors to cultural norms in the globalized world (McKay, 2012); and (b) also the language system of the English centers which follow native-based standards and teachers should follow these standards without bearing any relevance to their affiliation. This finding aligns with previous studies that English language teachers and learners in Expanding Circles prefer to model Inner Circle standards (Coskun, 2011; Timmis, 2002).

On the contrary, British English was preferred more positively among Indian teachers as a pedagogical model. Hohenthal (2003) observed that 70 per cent of the Indian participants felt that British English would be the best model for Indian English, 10 per cent were in favor of American English as the best model, and 17 per cent preferred the Indian variety of English. Despite this preference towards a native model, this does not mean by implication that Indian speakers of English do not have a positive attitude towards Indian English. (See Hohenthal, 2003; Monfared & Safarzadeh, 2014). Bernaisch and Koch (2016), in supporting Hohenthal's study, elicited that although British English is the variety which is rated most positively among the Indian participants, it conveys with it a "colonial baggage" and Indian speakers of English have a more positive attitude towards their own local variety compared with a native model.

Native teachers' responses towards pronunciation and varieties of English were also indicative of their acceptance of different varieties of English in the globalized world (Kirkpatrick, 2008). Most of them prioritized comprehensibility and mutual communication in the globalized world. The data collected through the interviews also yielded similar results.

The results of the study also showed that participants are aware of the fact that clear and intelligible English should be the goal of a pronunciation class as long as communication is not adversely affected. However, most of them perceived that the ideal pronunciation class is to speak like a native speaker, and this implies the issue of language and identity. English teachers' identity in Outer and Expanding Circles is under the effect of the ideology of "native-speakerism". English teachers in both circles shape multiple identities based on pedagogical and social contexts which reflect the different social and linguistic groups they belong to (Norton, 2000; Petric, 2009).

Dealing with the ideology behind the privileged status of the native speakers over non-native speakers, English teachers try to illustrate an identity which is linked to a native speaker in order to be accepted by the private centers and by their students. The course books used in the classroom are also indicative of zero tolerance of non-native varieties of English, mostly with highly positive characteristics of native-speaker models. So, it would not be surprising to see English teachers' struggling to assimilate those identities by imitating NS accent in their classes.

Despite these barriers, English teachers are well-prepared to teach EIL. EIL pedagogy is more in favor of comprehensibility and mutual understanding rather than sticking to tacit norm-based concepts. EIL can professionally help students to be aware of the pluricentric nature of English, recognize all varieties of English, and develop the ability to communicate successfully across different cultures in international encounters. Jenkins (2002) believes that the intuitions that are taken into account for pronunciation are those of native speakers and little consideration is given to the intelligibility for non-native speakers, in spite of the fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers by a significant margin. Jenkins (2000, p.207) also points out, "a native-like accent is not necessary for intelligibility in ELF interaction". Jenkins' (2000) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) might be considered as a functional feature to the training of pronunciation in the beginning. This model helps educators and learners to know problematic areas and not blindly follow a particular pronunciation version. While sustaining all the most key traits of phonology, Jenkins' model notifies learners about those aspects which are less important for global intelligibility than is presently educated to non-native learners in native-like educational circumstances.

Llurda (2009) mentions that by actively engaging English teachers in discussions regarding the role of EIL and the renationalization of the language (McKay, 2003), we can develop the idea that English is not limited to one single country and promote a new paradigm in ELT and have an effective presence in the model of language taught in English language classrooms around the world. Raising teachers' awareness and confidence towards varieties of English can be really helpful to encourage learners' confidence in their own varieties of English and in turn it can help them to believe that native model is not the best pedagogic model to be followed.

## Conclusion and Implications

This paper investigated the language attitudes of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle teachers towards pronunciation issues and varieties of English. It provided data from the three circles of world Englishes. The analysis of the data showed that EFL teacher participants were more prejudiced against other varieties of English and indicated their preference for Native American English pronunciation. On the other hand, Indian teachers who have been exposed to Indian English and native variety of English in their society highly valued their Indian English while they were in favor of British English.

The other important issue which has received attention, and has in fact sparked much controversy, within the general paradigm of EIL is the NS-NNS accent, specifically its link to identity and the implications of this for the choice of a pedagogic model. The results of this study also showed that English teachers' identity in Outer and Expanding Circles is under the effect of the ideology of "native-speakerism". English teachers in both circles shape multiple identities based on pedagogical and social contexts which reflect the different social and linguistic groups they belong.

It is important to promote ways to raise awareness of teachers and learners towards global spread of English and the realities of English today which can be really helpful to be more realistic and not just blind followers of a particular model. Teachers' voices should be heard and not assumed. Users of EIL need to be aware of issues like acceptance of varieties of English, comprehensibility, cultural appropriateness of pedagogical materials, language and identity and ownership of English in the globalization and glocalization of English. The role of English as an International language makes it necessary to revise the existing pronunciation curriculum language. More important, teachers, as pioneers in ELT, should be aware that the goal of mutual intelligibility and expanding a comprehensive understanding of accent varieties is more significant than blindly following a single model for pronunciation instruction.

Considering pedagogical implications of this study, Jenkins (2006, p.174) considers that rather than sticking to NS-based norms, teachers should try to raise learners' awareness of different varieties of English and help them to improve their confidence. Following Jenkins, McKay (2012) puts emphasis on language awareness among all users of English, including both L1 and L2 speakers. He believes that EIL users should be aware of notions such as language innovation, varying linguistic and pragmatic norms, negotiation strategies, and social sensitivity in language use.

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## Appendix A

Dear Colleagues:

I greatly appreciate you completing the following short questionnaire which seeks to investigate your opinion regarding Pronunciation Instruction and Varieties of English.

Name:

Age:  21–30  31–40  41–50  51

Gender:  Male  Female

Years of teaching experience:  0–1       1–5       5–10       10+

Professional qualifications:

BA in English Language and Literature

MA in \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality:

1. Are you a native speaker of an English dialect?

Yes (which one?.....)  No (I am: .....

2. Do you think pronunciation is important for communication?

extremely     very     fairly     not much     not at all

3. Which of the following is more important when communicating in English?

(a) English is just for communication and it is not important to follow standard British or American accent-as long as you can be understood.

(b) following standard American or British accent is important in communication and other accents look somehow irritating when speaking with those accents.

(c) other (please specify)

.....

4. Are you proud of your English accent?

extremely     very     fairly     not much     not at all

Briefly give reasons for your answer:

.....

5. Which pronunciation accent would be best for your learners, in your view?

6. Which type of feedback do you provide on your learners' performance regarding English pronunciation?

(a) immediate feedback

(b) delayed feedback

7. To what extent do you provide immediate or delayed feedback on your learners' performance regarding English pronunciation?

always     very often     regularly     rarely     never

Briefly give reasons for your answer:

.....

8. Your attitude toward your students' accent when listening to them (tick one):

as long as communication is not adversely affected, we shouldn't insist on native-like pronunciation.

- Students should follow standard American or British accent as “proper” pronunciation.  
 (c) other (please specify)
- 

9. Your attitude towards non-native teachers accents when teaching English (tick one):

- (a) it's fine when teachers speak English with non-native accent and they should focus more on learning than imitating the accent of Native American or British Speaker.  
 (b) English teachers should demonstrate native-based pronunciation in the class.  
 (c) other (please specify)
- 

10. Do you use any of the following in your class?

Real conversations among native speakers

- always       very often       regularly       rarely       never

Real conversations between native and non-native speakers

- always       very often       regularly       rarely       never

Role-playing assuming roles of people from other countries

- always       very often       regularly       rarely       never

Role-playing assuming roles of native speakers of English

- always       very often       regularly       rarely       never

Authentic videos with native and non-native speakers

- always       very often       regularly       rarely       never

11. Who do you consider to be the ‘rightful owner’ of the English language?

1- the native speakers (independently of nationality).

2-those whose mother tongue is another language, but have grown up using English as well (i.e. they're bilinguals).

3-anyone fluent enough to speak the language without major problems.

4-anyone who attempts to speak the language (independently of problems)

5-no one.

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions

1-Do you believe it is appropriate to retain your L1 accent in your English or that you should attempt to sound ‘native-like’?

2-Are you concerned to be intelligible to listeners when you speak English?

3- In view of the fact that most of our communications are with non-native speakers from other countries, don't you think we should get familiar with varieties of English accent?

4- Who do you think is the real owner of English?