

## **Beyond the Binary: Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers' Cognitions and Practices Corresponding to the EFL and EIL Approaches**

ข้ามกรอบความคิดแบบทวิลักษณ์: ความคิด ความเชื่อและการปฏิบัติการสอนของ  
ครูผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาต่อแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ  
ในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ

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### **Abstract**

Acknowledging English's role as an international communicative tool, scholars have called for a paradigm shift in ELT from the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) approach to the English as an International Language (EIL) approach. Despite much discussion on EIL in theory, teachers' voices are severely underrepresented and little is known about the impact such discussion has on teachers' cognitions and practices. To address this gap, this study explored four non-native English-speaking teachers' (NNESTs) cognitions and practices that corresponded to EFL and EIL approaches. Observations, stimulated recall interviews and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect the data. It was found that the teachers exhibited both monocentric (EFL) and pluricentric (EIL) conceptions of English. Although native English speaker (NES) norms serve as dominant pedagogical norms, EIL principles were drawn on to redefine non-native features in a positive light and build confidence of teachers as competent English users in their own right. EFL principles and practices were found to be held and practiced by these teachers alongside EIL principles and practices. While theorists often present binary EFL/EIL models, this study has shown that local enactments destabilize such binaries by incorporating elements of both. EIL models, therefore, should be viewed not as prescriptions but rather as options within teachers' repertoires.

**Keywords:** teachers' cognitions, teaching practices, EFL approach, EIL approach

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## บทคัดย่อ

ตระหนักถึงบทบาทของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะเครื่องมือสื่อสารในระดับนานาชาติ นักวิชาการหลายท่านได้เรียกร้องให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนกระบวนทัศน์การสอนภาษาอังกฤษจากการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศไปสู่การสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ แม้จะมีการอภิปรายเกี่ยวกับแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติอย่างกว้างขวางในเชิงทฤษฎี เสียงของครูกลับได้รับการนำเสนออย่างจำกัดและยังมีข้อมูลน้อยมากที่แสดงให้เห็นว่าการอภิปรายดังกล่าวมีผลต่อความคิด ความเชื่อและการปฏิบัติการสอนของครูอย่างไร เพื่อปิดช่องว่างด้านข้อมูลดังกล่าว งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาความคิด ความเชื่อและการปฏิบัติการสอนของครูผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาจำนวนสี่คนที่มีความเชี่ยวชาญการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ โดยใช้วิธีการสังเกตการณ์ การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ความจำและการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลวิจัย ผลการวิจัยพบว่าครูผู้สอนมีกระบวนทัศน์ทั้งแบบศูนย์กลางเดี่ยวตามแนวคิดการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและหลายศูนย์กลางตามแนวคิดการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ แม้ว่าการยึดตามมาตรฐานภาษาของเจ้าของภาษาจะเป็นบรรทัดฐานหลักที่ครูผู้สอนยึดถือในการสอน แนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติก็มีส่วนต่อการมองลักษณะการใช้ภาษาที่ไม่ตรงตามมาตรฐานเจ้าของภาษาในเชิงบวก และช่วยเสริมสร้างความมั่นใจในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของครูผู้สอนอีกด้วย นอกจากนี้ ยังพบว่าการปฏิบัติการสอนของครูสอดคล้องกับทั้งแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ ในขณะที่นักวิชาการมักนำเสนอแนวคิดการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและแนวคิดการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติในลักษณะทวิลักษณ์ที่แยกขาดออกจากกัน งานวิจัยนี้ชี้ให้เห็นว่าการปฏิบัติการสอนจริงในบริบทท้องถิ่นได้สั่นคลอนกรอบความคิดแบบทวิลักษณ์ดังกล่าวด้วยการผสมผสานองค์ประกอบของทั้งสองแนวทางไว้ด้วยกัน ดังนั้นแนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติจึงไม่ควรมองว่าเป็นข้อกำหนดตายตัวที่ครูต้องยึดถือ แต่ควรมองว่าเป็นทางเลือกหนึ่งในแนวทางการสอนของครู

**คำสำคัญ:** ความคิดและความเชื่อของครู การปฏิบัติการสอน แนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ แนวทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ

## Introduction

The global spread of English and its status as an international language has prompted scholarly calls for a paradigm shift from the English as a foreign language (EFL) approach to the English as an international language (EIL) approach. The term EFL approach refers to instruction that sets the idealized native English speaker (NES) as the ultimate target and pedagogical model, whereas the term EIL approach refers to instruction that questions the exclusive use of NES models and promotes linguistic and cultural diversity embedded in English uses (Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011). While much discussion about EIL has taken place, little is known about the impacts such discussion has on language teachers' cognitions and practices. This is because "the voices of teachers remain severely underrepresented in this movement" (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018, p. 88). A number of scholars

(e.g., Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018; Young & Walsh, 2010) have called for pedagogical-situated studies that examine teachers' perspectives on the issues raised by the EIL approach. To bridge this research gap, the present study explores four non-native English-speaking teachers' (NNESTs) cognitions and practices that correspond to the EFL and EIL approaches in Thai tertiary contexts. Investigating teacher perspective is important not only because teachers are key stakeholders, but because they are in a better position to determine the relevance of the EFL and EIL approaches to their local classroom contexts (Berns, 2006; Brown, 2012; Jenkins, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011).

### **Literature Review**

This section first describes the EFL and EIL approaches. It then summarizes existing research exploring teachers' cognitions on the two approaches.

#### **1. The EFL and EIL Approaches**

English is truly an international language and its global spread is unprecedented and unparalleled in terms of geographical spread and various purposes it serves (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010), with non-native English speakers (NNESTs) now outnumbering native English speakers (NESs) (Crystal, 2012; Selvi & Yazan, 2017). In light of the changing sociolinguistic profile of English where learners are more likely to engage in communication with English users from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds rather than NESs, many scholars have called for a move away from the EFL approach based on NES models towards the EIL approach that acknowledges and represents to learners linguistic and cultural diversity embedded in English in today's globalized world. Unlike the EFL approach which promotes a monocentric view of English based on the inner circle varieties, the EIL approach promotes a pluricentric view and an egalitarian philosophy towards English variations with assumptions that "English no longer has one single base of authority, prestige and normativity" (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p.3); that English belongs to anyone who uses it; and that hybrid and dynamic uses of English are as legitimate as the conventional stable norms. In short, "the literature of EIL, however diverse in opinion, is united in the desire to move away from teaching for native-speaker competence" and towards bi-/multilingual competence (Alsagoff, 2012, p.116).

Principles of EIL have been proposed (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; Brown, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Kubota & Ward, 2000; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012). Unlike the EFL approach which relies on the idealized NES models, the EIL approach sets the competent bi-/multilingual English user as the target and pedagogical models. Therefore, the ability to negotiate meanings and communicate successfully across Englishes and cultures is emphasized over the mastery of a single NES norm (Marlina, 2014, 2018). Relevant non-native English speaker (NNEST) varieties and NNEST-NNEST interactions are included alongside NES counterparts to represent the diversity of English, which benefits learners who can improve their receptive skills in processing different varieties, learn communication strategies employed by NNEST users, and have realistic expectations of their English interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). While the EFL approach exposes students to NES cultural norms, the EIL approach exposes students to relevant NES and NNEST cultures, and intercultural communicative competence is the goal. That is, learners should be encouraged to express their

cultural identities and critically reflect on both their own and others' cultures to foster mutual cross-cultural understanding, rather than being pressured to conform to NES cultural norms (McKay, 2003). Lastly, the political and social dimensions of language use need to be acknowledged in the EIL approach. This ranges from a questioning of a teaching approach at odds with multilingualism and local cultures of learning; an awareness-raising that fosters a tolerant and egalitarian attitude toward English and cultural diversity; and a critical appraisal of the discourse of native speakerism.

Various explanations have been offered as to why the EFL approach is problematic. The EFL approach treats language and cultures as monolithic entities and is therefore culturally and socially insensitive, since diverse communicative competence in different socio-cultural contexts exists in today's globalized English communications (Alptekin, 2002; Berns, 2006; Leung, 2005). The standard NES norms not followed by all NESs are a partial representation and may foster stereotypes (Alptekin, 2002; Leung, 2005). The NES model is largely irrelevant to L2 users who use English for instrumental reasons (mainly with NNEs) and downplays bi-/multilingual competence (Alptekin, 2002). Limitations of the EIL approach have also been suggested. Unlike NES models, there is a scarcity of teaching resources (Galloway & Rose, 2014) and insufficient codifications of NNE English norms (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Moreover, the nature of classroom context is prescriptive (Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). That is, learner identity overrides other social identities, and learners are committed to acquire proficiency in given standards, unlike English uses outside class where other social identities are foregrounded (Mauranen, 2012).

## **2. English Language Teachers' Cognitions Regarding the EFL and EIL Approaches**

While teachers have long been regarded as central figures in the classroom, teacher cognitions have only been recognized as a significant factor in shaping teaching practices within the past few decades (Burns et al., 2015). Teacher cognition is defined as "what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg, 2015, p.1). The term teacher cognition is an inclusive term that subsumes various constructs such as teacher knowledge, beliefs and thinking. Based on this literature, teachers are no longer viewed as implementors of external prescriptions, but as thinking and decision-making individuals (Borg, 2015; Freeman, 2002; Johnson, 2006). Several studies have examined English language teachers' cognitions about their preferred English varieties and EIL approaches.

A recent systematic review on teachers' beliefs about varieties of English has identified 44 related studies conducted between 2000 to 2023 (Manzouri et al., 2024). Due to space limitations, a number of studies examining teachers' views on pedagogical norms are included here, with participants ranging from native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and NNESTs from 45 countries (Timmis, 2002), NNESTs from different European, African, and Asian countries (Young & Walsh, 2010), Chinese NNESTs (Hall et al., 2015; He & Zhang, 2010) and Iranian NNESTs (Tajeddin et al., 2018). Questionnaires and/or interviews were employed in these studies. A shared finding of all studies is that participants expressed clear preference for NES norms as pedagogical models. The most cited reason was that NES norms served as a standard benchmark with perceived desirable characteristics such as "standard", "perfect" and "pure". These norms were believed to

have high prestige and granted more access to education and careers (Tajeddin et al., 2018; Timmis, 2002; Young & Walsh, 2010). Some participants believed that NESs were owners of the language (Tajeddin et al., 2018). Contextual factors were also reported. That is, these norms were presented in textbooks they used, endorsed by language institutions they worked at, or gained political influences in their local contexts (Tajeddin et al., 2018; Young & Walsh, 2010).

However, participants in the above studies also pointed out the limitations of NES models, stating that they were unrealistic and unattainable targets (He & Zhang, 2010; Timmis, 2002). They expressed similar views that effective communication could be successfully achieved without adherence to NES norms (Hall et al., 2015; He & Zhang, 2010; Tajeddin et al., 2018; Young & Walsh, 2010). Local NNES varieties were perceived as legitimate expression of identity (He & Zhang, 2010; Timmis, 2002), and students would feel more confident and relaxed if they were allowed to use their own localized varieties (He & Zhang, 2010). These findings resonate with Hall et al.'s (2015) conclusion that participants exhibited a mixture of monolithic (EFL) and pluricentric (EIL) views of English. The recent systematic review by Manzouri et al. (2024) arrived at the same conclusion that “English teachers show positive attitudes toward the legitimacy of the non-native varieties of English, while they still prioritize native varieties of English” (p.12).

A few studies explored teachers' cognitions on EIL or ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) approaches and the challenges in implementing them. Through focus-group interviews with Malaysian educators, Ali (2014) found that the vast majority had positive attitudes towards the teaching of EIL. However, there is some resistance due to the need to rely on a NES variety as a model and benchmark during assessment. A challenge in EIL implementation is that the existence of standard Malaysian English has not been recognized. Luo (2016) used interviews and a questionnaire survey with Taiwanese university English language teachers. It was found that most of the respondents agree that their approach is based on NES norms. However, they are aware of the concept of ELF and the communicative values of ELF-related skills. The teachers also think that teaching ELF-related skills is challenging due to their lack of knowledge of ELF, students' preference for standard English and lack of teaching materials. Through in-depth joint autoethnography, Rose and Montakantiwong (2018) identified factors that lead to successful implementation of EIL practices, ranging from teacher education that forms impetus for change, collaboration among teachers, and autonomy to implement innovation to reflective practice that nurtures growth.

### **3. The Current Study**

In their recent systematic review, Manzouri et al (2024) point out that studies exploring teachers' cognitions on English varieties relied heavily on interview and questionnaire data without incorporating direct observation of actual teaching practices. Examination of teaching practices is crucial because, as Pajares (1992) points out, teacher beliefs must be inferred from what teachers “say, intend and do” (p.314). Borg (2017) adds that what teachers do (i.e., teaching practices) can reveal teachers' enacted beliefs in addition to their espoused beliefs. To address this research gap, this study draws on interview and observational data to investigate four tertiary

NNESTs' cognitions and practices with regard to the EFL and EIL approaches in Thai EFL contexts. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What cognitions do language teachers have that correspond to the EFL and EIL approaches?
2. What teaching practices are guided by their cognitions regarding the EFL and EIL approaches?

### **Research Methodology**

This study is part of a larger study that explores four NNESTs' cognitions and practices in Thai tertiary EFL contexts. The interpretivist, qualitative research method therefore suited this enquiry because the aim is to discover the subjective meanings individuals place onto their actions and the social world they exhibit through the eyes of these individuals (Bryman, 2004; Cohen et al., 2011). Case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) was adopted to study the particularity and complexities of cases that took place in real-life contexts. Observations, stimulated-recalled interviews and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for this study. Multiple case studies were employed to gather intensive, holistic and complex descriptions of each teacher's cognitions and practices regarding the topic of interest, which, for this study, their cognitions and practices corresponding the EFL and EIL approaches.

#### **1. Participants and Context**

Four NNESTs from two public universities in the south of Thailand participated in this study. Convenience and purposeful sampling strategies were used to recruit participants as the researcher had access to the teachers and that the participants met minimum criteria including self-identification as NNESTs, having a postgraduate degree related to language teaching and teaching credit bearing courses with prescribed syllabus. These criteria reflected typical portrayal of NNESTs (Anderson, 2016). A maximum variation sampling strategy was also employed to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives from participants with different experiences and backgrounds (Dörnyei, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 2014). Table 1 shows participants' personal information, qualifications and teaching experience. The participants varied in their first language, teaching experience and country of origin. All hold MA degree related to English language teaching or education. All names are pseudonyms.

**Table 1**

*Participant Profile*

Participant	Sex	Age	Nationality	Languages	Degree	Experience
Pimchanok	F	Early 30s	Thai	Thai (L1) English	MA	7 yrs
Fadel	M	Late 20s	Thai	Malay (L1) Thai English	MA	2 yrs
Sok	M	Late 30s	Cambodian	Cambodia (L1) English	MA	14 yrs
Ranjit	M	Late 30s	Indian	Aphung (L1) Tangkhol Muripuri Hindi English	MA	16 yrs

Different courses were selected for this study. Most of the courses emphasized listening and speaking skills, except one course with the focus on intercultural communication. The course syllabuses were prescribed to the teachers who taught around 30 to 40 freshmen or sophomore students of mixed English abilities per section. Table 2 provides an overview of these courses.

**Table 2**

*Courses Selected for the Study*

Participant	Course	Lesson length	Textbook
Pimchanok	English 2	3 hours/week	Four corners: Level 2
	English conversation	3 hours/week	Teacher's own compilations
Fadel, Sok, Ranjit	Foundation English: Listening and speaking	1 hour/week	Talk Time 2
Sok	English conversation 1	2 hours/week	Speak Now: Level 3
Ranjit	Intercultural communication	1.30 hours/week	Teacher's own compilations

**2. Instruments and Data Collection**

For the most part, data were drawn largely from several classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews which elicited teachers' cognition underlying their teaching practices. Three to five video-recorded observations (OB) of actual lessons lasting between one to three hours were conducted with each participant, which allowed direct concrete evidence of the participants' teaching practices to be elicited and this allowed the study to move beyond perception-based data (Borg, 2015; Cohen et al., 2011; Patton, 2002). The number of observations were negotiated with the participants based on their willingness and availability and therefore saturation was not the aim of this study. To elicit teachers' cognitions that guided their observed teaching behaviors, three to five stimulated recall (SR) interviews of 30-50 minutes each were

conducted immediately after observations. Participants watched the video recording of their lessons and were freely allowed to choose any teaching episode they wanted to discuss. Questions were used to elicit participants' reflections on the cognitions influencing their actions. When it was found from the first stimulated recall interview that participants' views on NES models also influenced their practices, this became one of the emerging themes the researcher followed up in subsequent stimulated recall interviews. The decision to employ stimulated recall interviews was influenced by development in language teacher cognition research, which highlights the importance of teachers' reflections upon actual instances of teaching practices to capture the cognitions that closely guided their actual practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Breen et al., 2001; Borg, 2015). Lastly, a semi-structured interview (SS) was conducted once with each teacher to explore participants' self-perceptions as NNES and their experience as English learners and users.

### **3. Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Mann, 2016; Roulston, 2010), which included four main steps including data preparation, coding, theme generation and interpretation. To prepare the data, all interviews were transcribed in full. For observational data, the researcher wrote the narrative summaries (Barron & Engle, 2007) summarizing what happened in the classroom and transcribed portions of what the teachers said that conveyed their cognitions. The data analysis was primarily inductive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview transcripts and narrative summaries were read several times to increase familiarity with the data. Portions of interviews and narrative summaries related to NES norms and the EIL and EFL approaches were first identified. Open coding was then applied to analyze the data without any pre-determined codes. Coding was done manually and with *Nvivo (Version 11)*. Codes were then organized into potential themes that captured the essence of the data set. Four themes were derived: EFL cognitions, EIL cognitions, EFL practices and EIL practices. Coded interviews were repeatedly compared with narrative summaries to find the connection between teachers' cognitions and observed teaching practices. Cross-case analysis was performed to compare and contrast between cases. To ensure trustworthiness, a peer with a PhD in applied linguistics was asked to perform blind coding based on a developed coding scheme and some samples of interview and observation data. At the end, it was found that the coding scheme adequately captured the essence of the sample data sets. Throughout the research processes, ethical guidelines as approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee were followed.

## **Findings**

This section compares teacher cognitions associated with the EFL and EIL approaches. It then explores how these principles underpin teaching practices.

### **1. Teacher Cognitions Regarding EFL and EIL Approaches**

All participants held cognitions corresponding to both EFL and EIL approaches, which suggests eclecticism rather than a rigid adherence to a single paradigm. It can be seen as evidence of contradictions or tensions between monocentric and pluricentric views of English language.

#### ***1.1 Teacher Cognitions Associated With the EFL Approach***

All participants believed that a NES norm could serve as a model for learners. For instance, Ranjit asserted that “it’s their mother tongue. They [NESs] should be the right person to modelize [be the accepted model for accuracy and fluency]” (SR1). Sok added that “we cannot avoid native speakers. They can serve as a model” (SR3). All teachers also implied they held this view when they reflected that they perceived their own English to be deficient to some extent in relation to some NES norms. For example, Pimchanok stated that “it’s not 100% native-like. I am not as fluent, and sometimes I do not place my tongue and so on 100% correctly” (SR3). Likewise, Fadel believed that teachers should aim for “80 to 90% accuracy”, but stated that “there may be some aspects that I fall short in because I do not speak English all the time” (SR1). Participants also revealed a belief that English and the native language should not be integrated. For example, Sok stated that some of his past NNESTs’ pronunciations were not good because of L1 interference, while Ranjit believed that most Asian speakers had “mother tongue weaknesses”, and that a good language teacher should know the main L1 versus L2 differences in order to effectively address L1 negative transfer (SR1). Ranjit and Sok both were of the opinion that those who were able to speak English with a high degree of accuracy made a better impression on listeners. Ranjit stated that inaccurate grammar and accent could be a source of mockery (SR3), while Sok believed that making a lot of grammatical mistakes might cause listeners to think: “Oh, you don’t really learn much English” (SR4). All participants viewed NES varieties as more “natural”, “original”, and “authentic” than NNEST varieties. Ranjit was most explicit when he argued that NES varieties should be selected as pedagogical norms because of their originality and accuracy:

We have to respect and admit native are native; non-native are non-native. We should not act smart and take the credit for the native speakers... We have to consider that native speakers are the original speakers of English... We have to first look or check out those pioneers so as to learn the originality. It’s important for us to direct students to the native speakers because that’s how they should learn. When you learn, learn it right in the first place... (SR1)

Pimchanok and Ranjit revealed that they did not consider NES norms to be monolithic. Pimchanok raised the issue of selecting a standard accent as a model: “There are various accents. I am not sure which one should be a standard. Even in England, there are northern and southern accents, right?” (SR3) Ranjit made the same point: that NESs spoke differently due to different geographical locations and cultures and stated that NNESTs “should aim for the best option, but not just focus on only one” (SR4). This option could be both a personal and political choice. Ranjit

and Pimchanok expressed personal preferences for certain NES norms due to their exposure to these varieties through media or NES friends. For instance, Ranjit reflected that he preferred American English when it came to speaking because “I feel more receptive to their way of communicating” when he listened to his American friends and Christian sermons, but he preferred British English for writing due to his past experience as a learner in the Indian educational system (SS). Pimchanok stated that she particularly liked Hilary Clinton and Oprah Winfrey’s accents because “it is clear and easy to understand” (SS). Politically-speaking, Ranjit preferred American English because “Americans have kind of globalized when it comes to language and business so I think their English stands out from the rest” (SS). Likewise, Sok believed that most Cambodian teachers preferred American English over British English because of American influences on Cambodia: “In Cambodia, Americans now try to influence. They send a lot of Peace Corps [and] the team to train people, and they fund some organizations, and get students to study” (SS). Ranjit went on to caution against the sweeping generalization that NNEs were always less proficient than NESs: “I’m not saying all. Even there are many Asians who can speak native-like English. Even some are clearer and better than native speakers” (SR1). This statement shows that the NES can be an idealized construct. In other words, teachers may use the term NES to represent an ideal standard English norm from an ideal NES based on their personal preference, even though some NESs may not achieve that level of accuracy and fluency. If this is true, teachers may view some NESs’ English competence as somewhat deficient to this standard norm the same way they did with regard to some NNEs.

### ***1.2 Teacher Cognitions Associated With the EIL Approach***

All participants suggested the need to go beyond NES models. Sok was most explicit, reflecting that NNEs had agency in decisions about to what extent they wanted to approximate a NES model:

This is a kind of model students can choose to follow or not. We cannot avoid the native speakers’ voices, conversation features, or accents...[but] we cannot depend on it all the time. We cannot follow 100%...I could say that native speaker is a model, but we can choose to follow or not follow. It’s our choice (SR3).

Prioritizing intelligibility over accuracy in speaking, Sok (SR2; SR3), Pimchanok (SR2; SR3; SR4) and Fadel (SR2; SR3) all believed that successful communication could be achieved without adherence to NES norms. Pimchanok stated that “it is unnecessary to pronounce like native speakers” as long as “it is mutually understandable” (SR2). Similarly, Sok was of the opinion that “we are non-native speakers – no need to follow 100%, but make sure it’s intelligible” (SR3). Sok and Ranjit suggested that accuracy was relative. That is, Sok believed that NNE variations were not wrong, but different (SR5), while Ranjit stated that “English is a funny language. We don’t say this is the only way – the absolute way. Maybe [it’s correct] for me, but maybe not for the Thais, the Latins, the Philippines and the Singaporeans” (SR4). For Pimchanok (SR3) and Fadel (SR3), acquiring an NES accent was an unrealistic goal for their students and themselves. Fadel

added that having a localized NNES accent was a natural process of L2 acquisition and was now quite acceptable:

It [accent] may play some roles [in maintaining intelligibility], but I think it does not matter much now because everyone has their own unchangeable accent like Singlish, Tenglish [accents]. This is acceptable in a global context. This is natural (SR3).

Referring to the current globalized world, Fadel stated that “it’s the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are English speakers from different countries and races”. Sok drew on this same view to legitimize his Cambodian English. He argued that since NNESs had become the majority of English speakers, NESs no longer had the sole ownership of the English language (SR1; SR2; SR3), and “English is a global language so it belongs to anyone” (SR3). He also asserted his right to maintain his Cambodian identity in English: “I still maintain my identity – my [Cambodian] accent. I don’t want to follow any native speaker accent” (SR3). While Ranjit believed NNESs should respect NESs as English speakers from birth, he viewed that excessive admiration of NES norms could lead to NNESs’ self-marginalization:

...some of us, especially the Asians, we thought that, oh, native speakers. Then, we become small, you see? We look up to them, and we can’t speak like them...we should not build a wall by saying that we are not native speakers and so we cannot (SR1).

## **2. EFL and EIL Influenced Teaching Practices**

Some teaching practices were underpinned by the participants’ cognitions regarding the EFL and EIL approaches. This section integrates observed practices with participants’ interview statements to show how specific practices were guided by the participants’ cognitions.

### ***2.1 Practices Associated With the EFL Approach***

Teachers believed that the prescribed textbooks represented an NES norm. Sok (SR1) and Fadel (SR1) considered that the English language used in these textbooks was accurate, and served as a good model for learners. Pimchanok commented: “I made use of this teaching material. We are not native speakers, right? We may not pronounce correctly and clearly” (SR1). Ranjit (SR4), Sok (SR2), and Pimchanok (SR3) pointed out that listening tasks familiarized students with NES varieties. Ranjit maintained that “when they’re used to listening to native speakers, it will help them in understanding”, while Pimchanok added that these texts gave students opportunities to listen to NES accents. Pimchanok brought in the feature film *Rio* (OB3; OB4) because she believed that its language was authentic, natural, and real. She also stated that “they [characters] don’t speak like a teacher in the classroom. *Farangs* (a Thai word for European foreigners) speak quite fast. I want them to get used to those accents”. Her allusion to NESs (i.e., *farangs*) was confirmed by her definition of authentic material: “some people define authentic materials as those created not for a teaching purpose, made in the native speakers’ countries, and using natural language in real situations” (SR3).

All participants revealed having made attempts to adhere to NES norms when they modelled the language themselves, especially pronunciation. For instance, Ranjit reflected on listen-and-repeat and said that “I want them to know that even I, the teacher, should pronounce like, if not close, just near the native speaker” (SR1). It is within this context that participants expressed the view that they believed their own English was deficient compared to that of native English speakers as these quotations from Pimchanok and Sok show:

They [students] imitate our pronunciations because they don't know any other source. I try to pronounce as correctly as possible so they can learn from my pronunciation ....students may not hear real native speakers' accents, but I tried to pronounce correctly (Pimchanok, SR2).

I was trained in teaching pronunciation and I know [how I should pronounce]. But sometimes, I cannot pronounce correctly in the exact same ways as native speakers do. But I try to (Sok, SR2).

Ranjit (SR3) and Pimchanok (SR2) believed that, as teachers, they could at times model spoken English better than teaching materials because they could adjust features of their speech to be more intelligible to learners. Sok expressed his confidence in modelling NES pronunciation when he reflected that “I'm positive when I can pronounce them [target words] well so no need to listen to native speakers [from the recording]” (SR1). Interestingly, Pimchanok reported intentionally adding a stronger Thai accent to her English to help low-proficient Thai students understand better (SR2). All participants did not explain explicitly what NES varieties they were teaching except in one episode where Sok compared the American word “soccer” with the British word “football” (OB3). Only Ranjit and Sok were observed to explicitly endorse NESs as a model in the classroom once. Ranjit wanted to inspire students to overcome the fear of public speaking, while Sok taught reduced vowels:

Slowly and surely, you can skip script, and you learn how to speak with eye contacts without any fear, alright? Thai people; Thai country, you need such people who can turn up and speak without script just like a native speaker, right? (Ranjit, OB2)

Because we are non-native speakers of English, we often have problems with pronunciations. So here, normally, we pronounce let me. Ok? But native speakers tend to reduce it to lemme...we find it confusing. We cannot understand it so now you know (Sok, OB5).

Sok reported that he consulted dictionaries and elicited feedback from a NES colleague for conversation models he wrote himself and believed that he lacked pragmatic competence: “For me as a non-native speaker, I have this problem. I lack pragmatic competence. Some words I cannot use in the right situations. I often ask her [the American colleague] if I can use these words” (SR3).

## ***2.2 Practices Associated With the EIL Approach***

In comparison to their view of NNEs being in some respects deficient in their proficiency in English, all participants legitimized their own NNE features by describing them as different rather than errors. Fadel (SR1), Pimchanok (SR1), and Sok (SR3) believed that they represented varieties of NNE English, and that it was beneficial to expose students to different English varieties – that is, NES varieties used in teaching materials, as well as NNE varieties from their own speech. For instance, Fadel explained that students should be exposed to different accents as the first quotation shows, while Sok argued that NNEs especially from ASEAN nations were the main interlocutors for his students, and therefore his Cambodian English varieties/ variations were relevant as the second quotation shows:

I think that both sides are needed – from teachers themselves and from tapes [recordings from the textbooks]...we can compare them to colours...Today, they listen only to native speakers. They collect the purple colour. If they listen to teachers, they get the red colour. When we can understand different accents, it's like we have collected different colours. British people speak one accent. American people speak with another accent. Japanese people speak with another accent (Fadel, SR1).

English has become a global language and it belongs to everyone. It's the right time for students to change their mindsets. They have to listen to non-native speakers like me...I represent one of ASEAN accents and students have to get accustomed to ASEAN, non-native accents (Sok, SR3).

Ranjit, Sok, and Fadel reported raising students' awareness of English diversity, including telling students that NNEs outnumbered NESs and were main interlocutors (Sok, SR5) and that English variations were normal and not incorrect usage (Sok, SR5; Fadel, SR2; Ranjit, SR4), as well as showing a video clip with English speakers from different linguistic backgrounds to demonstrate that intelligibility could be achieved with different accents and to deter learners' negative views toward accent variations (Fadel, SR2). However, only Ranjit was observed to express these beliefs explicitly to students. He pointed out NNE variations for the word "director" and told students not to judge the variations: "People may say dʌɪ'ɪektə. It's okay. It depends on a country where they belong like the Philippines. Don't judge them, but the right way is dʌɪ'ɪektə" (OB3). His reflection reveals the interesting interaction between a monocentric belief that there was a "correct" and "near best" way to pronounce the word, and a pluricentric belief that there was no absolute correctness in English, and that different English speakers spoke the word differently "based on the country where they belong". He therefore wanted to deter students from judging others based on their own accuracy criteria (SR3). Prompted by the textbook (Stempleski, 2006) mentioning a film depicting the life of Gandhi, Ranjit told a story of Gandhi who overcame the fear of public speaking and challenged British colonizers. He first portrayed Gandhi as "such an introverted shy person" who was afraid of public speaking until, determined to overcome his fear of public speaking, he practiced alone in the jungle and finally became a great orator. He ended with "a moral lesson", which challenged the students' fear of speaking with NESs:

My point here is if you think you are weak and cannot speak, I can't practice, my talking is wrong, [and] I'm afraid, you are like Mohatma Gandhi. Practice. Don't be afraid. Don't worry about *farangs*... When the westerners, native speakers come, don't be afraid. You face them and talk... Practice. Practice makes perfect...(OB3)

Ranjit revealed his intention was to inspire weak students who were scared to speak and worried by relating “their weaknesses to the worst [weakness] of Gandhi” who overcome his fear with “hard work, dedication, and commitment”. He also wanted to challenge the NES–NNE demarcation so that students “should not look up to people too high” (SR3). In addition, Ranjit reported using a project that was video recorded and required students to interview foreigners, especially NESs, about their cultures. His emphasis on NESs arose from his beliefs that cultural and racial differences could create fear:

We have Singaporeans, Malaysians, and Indians who speak English. But they're closer to us like you and me, right? So, we talk in a much more relaxed way. When we have a real native speaker, we would check our words our cultures... Not only cultures, but your skin and my skin. We are Mongolian, right? So even though I speak good English as good as, say, westerners, you feel close to me so you feel like speaking to your brother than when you speak with those from Europe, Australia or the US. We need to break through that (SR2).

All teachers localized parts of taught content by setting it in the Thai or ASEAN context. They often based their decisions on the principle of relating to students' background knowledge. For instance, Pimchanok asked students to compare Singapore and Thailand due to learners' familiarity with these countries (OB2; SR2), and pointed out a disadvantage of authentic material that it might contain unfamiliar cultural content (SR3). It was not uncommon for teachers to mention local places such as local beaches and parks; for instance, to explain vocabulary and set up role-play scenarios. Sok explicitly stressed the need to adjust the textbook produced in other sociocultural contexts to suit the local context as the first quotation shows, while Ranjit complimented the same textbook for having characters from the Expanding Circle Countries (e.g., Thailand and Japan) as the second quotation shows:

Every textbook has bright sides and bad sides. We cannot assume that this book is the best... because this book is published in England [and] in America, how can we use it in Thailand effectively? We can, but we have to supplement it – add content to spice it up. It's like food. American taste is like this, but we have to (re-)cook it and put more favours to make it more interesting... Some parts match the Thai context, some don't. (Sok, SR2)

When it comes to the first part of every unit, it's a native speaker, but you find in the conversation [sections] they mix up with any speaker so I think it's a good idea that they mix up with any speaker from the outside circles [the Outer and Expanding circle countries]... They mix up to encourage students who are not native speakers, but who can be part of those in the expanding circle (Ranjit, SR4).

For most observed lessons, teachers rarely taught students about specific cultures, but when they did, they discussed areas of pragmatic knowledge such as politeness and formality. Unlike other teachers, Ranjit's intercultural course lessons discussed cultures of different nation states (OB2; OB4). Ranjit reflected why he put much emphasis on Thai, Vietnam, and other ASEAN nations' cultures: "it's important that they understand very well their culture – Thailand, and the rest of the countries beside Thailand, that is, ten ASEAN nations" so that they were accustomed to these cultures. He also reported contrasting Eastern and Western cultures in the first lesson to ensure students had "comprehensive ideas about the world cultures" (SR2). Ranjit added that he brought in Vietnam War to highlight cultural and political conflicts, and to foster moral values of sympathy, love and care. He believed that "cultural understanding" helped ease conflicts in today's globalized world where different cultures came into contact. His view corresponds to the aim of intercultural communicative competence:

Unless you accept other cultures, you will have cultural clashes or conflicts... .accepting doesn't mean that I become one of them. Accepting means you let them do as they like in their cultures. You don't disrespect them...It will let us have a broad mindset about the world cultures so wherever you go, you need to adapt. We wouldn't be surprised or shocked because we learn it [other cultures]...we need to accept other people as who they are as you want others to accept you as who you are (SR2).

### **Discussion**

The study has provided detailed evidence of teacher cognitions and practices with regard to the EFL and EIL approaches. It was found that teachers exhibit both monocentric (EFL) and pluricentric (EIL) conceptions of English. Their teaching practices seemed to be based primarily on the NES models as dominant pedagogical norms. However, EIL principles were drawn on to redefine NNEs features in a positive light and to argue for the relevance of exposing students to NNEs varieties/ variations present in teachers' speech.

With regard to a monocentric (EFL) view of English, the teachers regarded NES varieties favorably, to which NNEs English variations were compared negatively to a varying degree. NES norms were associated with higher social prestige, wider social acceptance and increasing political influences observed in their local contexts. Therefore, this study echoes past studies which found that participants expressed clear preference for NES norms as pedagogical models (Hall et al., 2015; He & Zhang, 2010; Luo, 2016; Tajeddin et al., 2018; Timmis, 2002; Young & Walsh, 2010). However, the teachers also expressed views corresponding to a pluricentric (EIL) view of English. This adds to emerging evidence that the questioning of NES models in EIL scholarship may have begun to take root in the minds of NNEs. Their views, which echo previous findings, ranged from the acknowledgement of NES models as unrealistic targets (He & Zhang, 2010; Timmis, 2002), an awareness that comprehensibility and intelligibility can be achieved without strict adherence to NES norms (Hall et al., 2015; He & Zhang, 2010; Tajeddin et al., 2018; Young & Walsh, 2010), an emphasis on learners' and users' agency to approximate NES models and to retain their NNEs identities (He & Zhang, 2010; Timmis, 2002), and the conceptualization of

accuracy as relative and plural to the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of NNES varieties (Hall et al., 2015). This echoes the main finding in the recent systematic review (Manzouri et al., 2024) that teachers can hold both monocentric and pluricentric beliefs regarding English varieties.

Some plausible explanations can account for the co-existence of monocentric and pluricentric conceptions of English. In a sense, this may be viewed as a manifestation of conflicting belief systems (Ellis, 2012). Another reason may lie in the perceived purpose of language teaching within an educational EFL context. That is, participants' support for NES norms reflects a norm-bound orientation in language teaching that sets language accuracy and standardness as an important component of language competence. This echoes the scholarly view that the classroom context is prescriptive since learners are committed to acquire proficiency of given standards (Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). In the EFL context of Thailand where there are no other alternative localized norms, NES norms then serve as norm-providing pedagogical models to such an extent that Sok viewed them as unavoidable. This may be true in ELT globally as Jenkins (2012) observes: "the prevailing orientation in English language teaching and testing, and ELT materials remain undoubtedly towards ENL [English as a native language] with correctness and appropriateness still widely driven by NES use" (p.487). With this wide acceptance and gate-keeping roles of NES norms, it is unsurprising that participants still view these NES norms as relevant. Nevertheless, they also showed support for a pluricentric view of English by acknowledging the limitations of NES models to a varying degree. Their views then concur with a weak version of EFL or EIL approaches, which endorse that localized (NNES) varieties are presented to learners in addition to, not in a replacement of (NES) standard norms.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the participants' teaching effectiveness, it is evident from the findings that the participants are English language teachers with complex cognitions that shape their practices in complex and dynamic ways. One source of dynamism and complexity came from the teachers' eclecticism (Hall, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2006a; Widdowson, 2003). That is, the cognition and practices that seemed contradictory could co-exist side by side. As can be seen, teacher cognitions and practices regarding EFL and EIL co-existed, which led the participants to endorse and oppose the relevance of NES models and to negotiate their professional credibility. While EIL theorists often present binary EFL/EIL models, this study shows that local enactment destabilized these binary models by incorporating the elements of both. EIL models therefore should be viewed not as prescriptions but rather as options in teachers' repertoires. Teachers should have the autonomy to determine the extent to which EFL and EIL models are relevant to their learners within their specific contexts.

### **Conclusion**

This study explores four NNESTs' cognitions and practices corresponding to EFL and EIL approaches. It was found that the teachers held both monocentric (EFL) and pluricentric (EIL) beliefs that influenced their practices in complex ways. Corresponding to the EFL approach, all participants saw their roles as facilitators and role models who helped learners gained access to NES norms. As facilitators, participants exposed learners to NES norms through commercial and authentic teaching materials. As role models, they exemplified NES norms themselves and

provided instruction. Although participants reported attempts to model English as closely as possible to their NES targets, they were conscious of NNEs features especially in their speech. Their cognitions corresponding to the EIL approach helped redefine these features in a positive light. Not only were these NNEs features deemed legitimate differences, but also exposure to them was regarded as beneficial to learners since it facilitated English communication with English users from various linguistic backgrounds.

This study therefore provides several implications. First, this study argues that unlike theorists that often present binary EFL and EIL models, the teacher participants destabilize such binaries by combining both approaches. EIL models, therefore, should be viewed as options within teachers' repertoires rather than prescriptions. This position corresponds to that of Jenkins (2012) who argues that "we do not believe that it is our place to tell teachers what to do, but that it is for ELT practitioners to decide whether/ to what extent ELF is relevant to their learners in their context" (p.492). Second, participants' cognitions and practice in this study can be described as eclectic. Therefore, one way to develop language teachers' autonomy might be to promote discourse around the post-method condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b) or enlightened eclectic approach (Brown, 2007), which encourage teachers to theorize their own practices. Therefore, exposure to both EFL and EIL approaches during teacher education would be beneficial and would serve as a knowledge base for teachers to draw on when making eclectic pedagogical decisions. Third, language teacher education should include EIL approaches in their curriculum. As this study has shown, the non-native teacher participants drew on EIL models to build their professional credibility and negotiate the roles of NES models.

The study has two limitations. First, this study was based on a relatively small number of observations and interviews. Future studies can incorporate a greater number of observations and interviews so that more breadth and depth of data can be obtained. Second, stimulated recalled interviews might encourage the teachers to provide post-hoc rationalizations of their teaching behaviors (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2015). Despite these limitations, it is hoped that this study shed light on the limited relevance of NES models in the Thai EFL context and how EFL and EIL models play out in local enactments. Future research that investigates the impacts of teachers' knowledge about EFL and EIL approaches on actual teaching practices would be a fruitful research endeavor, given that existing research has rarely examined teaching practices.

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