Revisiting Chinese English learners' perceptions of English as a global language: A qualitative case study

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ABSTRACT: The increasing growth of English as an international language has resulted in many changes in sociolinguistic realities. As a consequence, the complex sociolinguistic landscape of the English language has led to diverse attitudes toward English as a global language and generated various concerns and debates on how the language should be taught and learned in various contexts. Therefore, there are calls for a pedagogical paradigm shift from the traditional native-oriented approach to Global Englishes (GE)-informed pedagogy to facilitate students' communication in international settings. However, GE-informed teaching in the English language classroom is rarely incorporated in contexts where English is used as a foreign language (EFL). The present study employed a semi-structured interview and student diaries to unpack Chinese university English language learners' perceptions of GE. Findings showed that although Chinese English learners perceived English as a linguistic capital and held that mutual intelligibility as a goal of communication, ambivalent views on varieties of spoken English and ownership of the English language and culture were still displayed. The findings suggest that the ambivalent views of the studies may be influenced by GE and the native-speakerism ideology. The study proposes the importance of incorporating GE-informed pedagogy in the classroom and calls for a more critical approach to moving beyond the ideology of native-speakerism in English language education.
Keywords: Global Englishes, English as a foreign language, English language teaching, English as a global language, perception

Revisando las percepciones de los aprendices chinos de inglés sobre el inglés como lengua global: Un estudio de caso cualitativo

RESUMEN: El crecimiento continuo del inglés como lengua internacional ha generado diversos cambios en las realidades sociolingüísticas. Como resultado, el complejo panorama sociolingüístico del inglés ha dado lugar a varias actitudes hacia el inglés como lengua global, generando preocupaciones y debates sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del idioma en distintos contextos. Por lo tanto, se han hecho llamados a un cambio de paradigma pedagógico, pasando del enfoque tradicional orientado al hablante nativo hacia una pedagogía basada en Ingleses Globales (GE) para facilitar la comunicación de los estudiantes en entor-

nos internacionales. Sin embargo, la enseñanza basada en GE en el aula de idioma inglés rara vez se incorpora en contextos donde el inglés se utiliza como lengua extranjera (EFL). El presente estudio utilizó entrevistas semiestructuradas y diarios de estudiantes para explorar las percepciones de los aprendices de inglés en universidades chinas sobre GE. Los hallazgos mostraron que, aunque los aprendices de inglés chinos percibían el inglés como un capital lingüístico y consideraban la inteligibilidad mutua como objetivo de la comunicación, todavía mostraban visiones ambivalentes sobre las variedades del inglés hablado y la propiedad del idioma y la cultura inglesa. Los hallazgos también revelaron que las suposiciones detrás de las visiones ambivalentes podrían ser Ingleses Globales y la ideología del hablante nativo. El estudio propone la importancia de incorporar la pedagogía basada en GE en el aula y aboga por un enfoque más crítico para ir más allá de la ideología del hablante nativo en la educación del idioma inglés.

Palabras clave: Ingleses Globales; Inglés como lengua extranjera; Enseñanza del idioma inglés; Inglés como lengua global; Percepción

1. Introduction

The wide spread and use of the English language has led to the new sociolinguistic reality of English and English speakers. Indeed, today, the number of non-native English speakers has surpassed that of native English speakers by around four times (Jenkins, 2015). At the same time, the emergence of post-colonial varieties of English (e.g., Singapore English, Indian English) leads to the complexities of the use of English in various contexts. In regard to English language education, this has generated a debate in terms of how English should be taught in contexts where English is used as a foreign language (EFL). For example, in China, there is a long tradition that the native speaker model is regarded as the golden pedagogical model in English language teaching (ELT) especially in teaching pronunciation (Adamson, 2004; Bolton, 2003). However, the majority of Chinese students cannot express themselves well for intercultural communication in a globalized platform with interlocutors from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. From a traditional language learning target, some students would show negative attitudes toward non-native English pronunciation and even claim it as a barrier of intercultural communication (Lu & Buripakdi, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019). With English as a global language, many communications of the English language only happen among non-native speakers of English (Matsuda, 2017), which indicates that the traditional ELT approach targeting the Anglophone English pronunciation (particularly British or American English) cannot meet the communicative needs of students and teachers where mutual intelligibility should be the norm of successful intercultural communication.

Given this situation, previous studies have proposed approaches to incorporating concepts of Global Englishes (GE) into ELT (Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway, 2017; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Matsuda, 2012). Although several studies (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022; Fang, 2020; He, 2015; Pan & Block, 2011; Ren et al., 2016) have examined students' perceptions of learning English from linguistic aspects including pronunciation, accents, lexicon, grammar, and discourse, they did not consider students' perceptions of GE. Furthermore, little has been done so far to incorporate GE concepts into ELT in order to influence students' attitudes toward linguistic diversity of the English language (Boonsuk et al., 2022; Galloway & Rose, 2014, 2018). This is especially meaningful in China given that Chinese students' overt favor of standardized English pronunciation has impeded their awareness and com-

petence in intercultural communication. Armed with the GE concept, students' confidence might be enhanced, which could be conducive to spreading the Chinese traditional culture and intercultural communication. Thus, there is a need to bridge this gap between theory and practice by providing an alternative approach to classroom discourse and practice. This can be facilitated by helping teachers to explore ways to integrate GE into English language classrooms to meet students' communicative needs in a globalized context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Global Englishes in English Language Teaching

GE is regarded as an umbrella term that covers the concept of World Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as an international language (EIL), and translanguaging (Galloway, 2017). This umbrella term brings the fields of WE, ELF, EIL, and translanguaging together and focuses on "the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and English users in a globalized world" (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 29).

The development of GE challenges the traditional native speaker (NS) norms in ELT. Previous studies have proposed approaches to incorporating GE concepts into ELT practice through various classroom activities (Boonsuk et al., 2022; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Sert & Özkan, 2020). For instance, in the context of Japan, Rose and Galloway (2017) designed a pedagogical task to raise students' GE awareness and challenge the standard ideology in the English language classroom. Employing the "Speak Good English Movement" as a focal point for classroom debate, students were divided into two groups, one in favor of the movement and the other in opposition to it. In the course of the debate, students were instructed to articulate their convictions and evaluate their level of acceptance of Singlish.

The result demonstrated that the activity was a useful way to raise awareness of the diversity of English where students were encouraged to reflect on the complexities surrounding standard language beliefs from a critical perspective. Such activity challenges the dominant concept of "native speakerism" in the language curriculum in Japan and also demonstrates the possibility of incorporating GE into the English classroom. A similar study was conducted by Galloway and Rose (2018), who explored the GELT approach to raise students' awareness of GE and challenge the traditional ELT approach. They investigated whether this approach can affect students' perceptions of English and ELT through presentations. It was found that students expressed positive attitudes toward different varieties of English. In addition, Sert and Özkan (2020) implemented ELF-related activities in an elementary level classroom within a norm-based educational setting. Employing a mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and two statement lists. The study revealed students' greater confidence in their own variety of English in Turkey and less attachment to British and American standards.

Moreover, some endeavor has also been made to implement GE in English language education through out-of-class learning activities (Galloway & Rose, 2014; Sung, 2018). For instance, Sung (2018) designed an activity in which students engaged in a real-life ELF communication to examine the impact of such an activity on students using English in a globalized context. It was found that out-of-classroom tasks increase students' critical

awareness of ELF and lead to their own positive identity development as legitimate users of English. In a similar vein, through an out-of-class compulsory listening task with Japanese students, Galloway and Rose (2014) exposed the students to different varieties of English, the result of which indicated that students gained increased awareness of inner, outer, and expanding circles of English and that speakers from the expanding circle were ranked as the most popular (Rose et al., 2021). In addition, research has been done to explore the effects of teaching GE to students (Fang & Ren, 2018; Lu & Buripakdi, 2022; Tardy et al., 2021), providing powerful pedagogical evidence that supports the positive advantages of implementing innovative changes based on GE proposals (Rose et al., 2021).

2.2. Studies on Students' Perceptions of Global Englishes

Previous studies have addressed students' attitudes toward varieties and accents of English (Fang, 2020; Galloway, 2017). For instance, in Japan, Galloway (2013) examined the impact of Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) on attitudes among students using a quasi-experimental method with questionnaires and interviews and found that students were in favor of NS norms in ELT, although their perceptions were significantly influenced by familiarity with native English and stereotype. In the study, Galloway (2013) emphasized the vitality of awareness and experiences on students' attitudes, inviting further opportunities for using ELF. For example, it is a possible means of building up students' self-confidence (Öztürk & Öztürk, 2021), which will enable them to claim ownership and competence in this global language. Moreover, in a survey conducted by Wang and Jenkins (2016), a small number of students expressed their desire to use English with non-native speakers. Yet, most would still prefer to communicate with native English speakers. In a similar vein, Fang (2020) found that many students in Chinese universities were not satisfied with their English accents due to their non-native pronunciation. Hence, the participants regarded themselves as English learners but not as legitimate ELF users. This finding echoes Kirkpatrick and Xu's (2002) study, where students did not accept the existence of a Chinese variety of English and did not want to have a Chinese accent when speaking English.

Further studies are required to pursue the application of GE and GELT in the language classroom, given that many students still prefer to continue following NS norms. Further investigation will empower students to delve into their conceptualization of English, how NS norms in ELT influence their perceptions, and how new approaches to ELT would influence their understanding of English. In addition, more experiences of exposure to different English speakers will increase students' GE awareness and prepare them better for achieving successful communication in international encounters. However, previous research mainly focuses on examining the effects of the GE-oriented approach (Boonsuk et al., 2022; Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rose et al., 2022; Widodo et al., 2022), including GE-related practices and activities that can raise GE awareness of students, but the underlying assumptions around students' attitudes toward English as a global language are seldom touched. To address this research gap, this study proposed two research questions:

RQ1: What are Chinese university students' perceptions of the use of English as a global language and the application of GELT?

RQ2: What are the underlying assumptions in these perceptions from these students?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Setting and Course Instruction

As a qualitative case study (Merriam, 2001), this research was conducted at a provincial public university in Eastern China, where the first author instructed a university-wide elective course entitled *Introducing Global Englishes*. This course lasted for 12 weeks, 2 hours each week, with English as the main working language in the 2020–2021 academic year. This course had an enrollment of 100 students. The course mainly introduces the spread of English from its historical origins to colonial and post-colonial contexts and, further, to current global contexts. It also explores sociolinguistic issues and debates related to the spread of English. From the broader perspective of GELT, the course also engages in the understanding of English from different aspects: World Englishes, English as a lingua franca, English as an international language, and translanguaging, as well as in the understanding of English language teaching from a critical perspective. Students are required to take part in the activities in class and complete diaries once every two to three weeks after class.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

From the 100 students taking this course, 15 volunteer students were used as participants, including 5 males and 10 females. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the 15 interviewees (Patton, 2002). All of the participants were second-year students and aged from 18 to 20 years old. They had studied English for more than ten years and were from 11 different programs with a CET4 score between 426 and 560, which is aligned with B1–B2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Among them, 4 students had ELF experiences. Table 1 shows the details of the interviewees (all the names are pseudonyms).

Each interview lasted 20 to 30 minutes and was audio-recorded (see Appendix 1 for the interview guidance). Either Chinese or English were chosen as the appropriate language by the participants in the interview. All audio recordings were transcribed and translated (if the answer was given in Chinese) verbatim later before the formal data analysis. The data were sent to a university professor majoring in translation for accuracy checking before being sent back to the participants for another round of peer checking to ensure that the interview data were correctly transcribed and translated. Student diaries (see Appendix 2 for the writing guidance) allows learners to "write out their learning experience" or understandings about some concepts "without the constraints imposed by specific questions" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 17). Four students (S2, S8, S9, S13) volunteered to write diaries to record their activities (e.g., discussions, debates, and presentations) on how they view English and ELT, the factors that may have affected their conceptualizations, and whether the course had brought any change in their attitudes toward learning and using English. The length of each diary was 1000–1200 words in English. At the end of the course, a copy of each of the four student diaries was also collected to be analyzed.

Table 1. *Profile of participants*

No.	Age	Gender	Years of learning English	Program of study	CET-4 Scores	ELF Experiences	Length of Interview
S1	19	F	12	Biotechnology	426	Yes	29'28"
S2*	19	M	11	Plant Protection	538	No	20'39"
S3	20	F	14	Intellectual Property Right	486	No	20'21"
S4	18	F	11	Financial Management	560	Yes	21'39"
S5	19	M	10	Marketing	495	No	29'18"
S6	20	F	11	Agriculture	542	No	23'34"
S7	19	M	11	Animal Science	468	No	33'01"
S8*	20	F	12	Pharmacy	479	No	20'52"
S9*	20	M	10	Computer Science	536	No	23'06"
S10	19	F	11	Biotechnology	488	No	20'17"
S11	20	F	12	English	524	No	25'22"
S12	18	M	12	Computer Science	539	No	21'20"
S13*	20	F	12	Pharmacy	478	Yes	24'48"
S14	19	F	10	Landscape Architecture	532	Yes	24'27"
S15	19	F	10	Marketing	489	No	24'04"

*Volunteers who wrote a diary

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were coded by the first author based on content analysis with the help of NVivo 12 software. According to Taylor et al. (2015), content analysis is a procedure for categorizing or organizing verbal or behavioral data with the purposes of classification or summarization. Interrater reliability was ensured through readings by the second author and an experienced university professor in applied linguistics. The researchers tried to familiarize themselves with the data by a detailed reading to identify keywords and topics. To start the coding process, the researchers read through the interview transcripts. Next, a careful examination of all the interview transcripts was conducted to construct a coding system that might be employed to elicit the participants' conceptualizations of English and English learning and teaching. After that, the keywords and topics were organized, coded, and re-categorized. Subsequently, the connections between categories were explored, and themes were identified. Finally, the categories and themes were summarized and interpreted. Apart from the two themes in terms of the assumptions of their perceptions, namely, native-speakerism ideology and GE awareness, the bottom-up themes generated from the data related to students' perceptions of English as a global language were: English as a linguistic capital, ownership of English, mutual intelligibility as a goal of communication, and acceptance of varieties of English.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Students' Perceptions of English as a Global Language

4.1.1. English as a Linguistic Capital

The interview data revealed that all the participants considered English a linguistic capital to establish their "legitimate competence." As Bourdieu (1991) points out, "language forms a kind of wealth" (p. 43), and this linguistic capital has numerous manifestations both in individuals' lives and within surrounding social systems. For example, S1 articulated: "English was used as an international language. When you travel around the world, you can communicate with people who have different first languages." S5 confirmed that: "English can be used for communication with friends and used as a means of communication for studying abroad."

Moreover, some students (S1, S4, S13, and S14) who had ELF experience claimed that English has taken up a role as a lingua franca. Notably, S4 shared her ELF experience in a high-speed railway station:

> *In a high-speed railway station, I met with some foreigners in the waiting room. They missed the train but could not communicate with the staff there because the staff could not speak English. I helped them change the tickets for another train. I think knowing English is important in understanding foreigners.* (S4, interview, 2021/01/06)

In addition, many students (S4, S5, S7, S11, and S12) believed that English is vital in obtaining jobs and wanted to do the course to help their knowledge of English, which is mandatory for some careers. As S12 noted:

> *Learning English helps me with more employment opportunities. I want to work at an international company in Qingdao. However, nowadays, most companies require a certificate of English proficiency. There will be a better opportunity for you to find a good job if your English is good, especially if you have got the certificate of English proficiency or a prize from participation in the National English contest.* (S12, interview, 2021/01/06)

In general, students believed that English is a linguistic capital for their intercultural communication and future career.

4.1.2. Ownership of the English Language and Culture

A few students (S7, S8, and S15) believed different varieties of English have some distinctive sociolinguistic characteristics, and all English users have the right to use those varieties of English in their own way. For instance, S15 expressed that:

> *In my opinion, English belongs to all English users. Non-native English speakers use English differently from British and American speakers. However, their use of English has some own characteristics for communication within their speech community.* (S15, interview, 2021/01/10)

In contrast, more students (S1, S2, S4, S6, S9, S10, S11 and S14) believed that English belongs to only British and American people, as their use of English is regarded as standard English globally. For example, S10 claimed:

I think only British English and American English can be regarded as standard English. Other Englishes such as Canadian English, Australian English, and New Zealand English are varieties of English, in which the local cultures are reflected. (S10, interview, 2021/01/06)

S14 also confirmed that:

In my opinion, only British English and American English can be regarded as standard English. English originated from Britain, and American English was developed from British English. More importantly, both the UK and the US are powerful countries. (S14, interview, 2021/01/10)

Regarding the students' attitudes toward English-speaking cultures, all the interviewed participants believed that English-speaking cultures are diverse and complicated. In their opinion, it is difficult to know whom they might meet or where they might come from in international encounters. S11, for example, said:

I think English-speaking cultures are various nowadays. With the spread of English, English was used as a tool for international communication. However, you may not know who you are going to talk with or where he or she comes from until you meet him or her. (S11, interview, 2021/01/06)

In summary, the majority of students believed that the ownership of English belongs to people who use English. However, English-speaking cultures are diverse and complicated. In international communication, it is rather difficult for non-native speakers to know where the interlocutors are from or what varieties of English they speak.

4.1.3. Mutual Intelligibility as a Goal of Communication

The results of the interview data demonstrated that all the interviewed participants acknowledged that mutual intelligibility is essential in international communication. For example, S2 noted:

I believe pronunciation or grammar is important for communication. It can facilitate our understanding of communication. But I think the meaning it conveys is more important. If the interlocutors can understand each other, successful communications can be established. (S2, interview, 2021/01/05)

In terms of how students can facilitate communication in international encounters, communicative strategies such as "gestures" and "drawings" were provided. For example, S3 mentioned: "Sometimes if the interlocutors cannot make themselves understood, they can use some strategies such as gestures or drawings." Furthermore, some students (e.g., S13, S10, S14, and S15) reported that it is necessary to adjust their language according to the settings they are in rather than speaking standard English. For instance, S13 wrote in his diary:

In my opinion, we speak China English in China, and it is intelligible to all of us. However, in countries like India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, they can speak their local English. But if you go to some international platforms, for instance, a conference in the US or business activity in the UK, I think you should adjust your way of English speaking to speak standard English. (S13, student diary)

To sum up, the majority of students recognized mutual intelligibility as a goal in international communication. In achieving this goal, communicative strategies and accommodation skills are necessary.

4.1.4. Ambivalent Views on Varieties of Spoken English

The data indicated that all the participants accepted the existence of different varieties of English along with British English and American English. However, they all preferred either American English or British English. They asserted that American English and British English are standard English, representing fluency and accuracy. Also, one might be laughed at for speaking English with a Chinese accent. For example, S8 wrote in his diary:

> *Many varieties of English do exist alongside British English and American English. However, I want to speak like an American or British speaker because a native speaker can speak English fluently with accurate or standard pronunciation. Moreover, you may be laughed at if you speak China English with a strong accent.* (S8, student diary)

Furthermore, some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with some English accents such as Indian English or Malaysian English. As S2 opined: "I think Indian English and Malaysian English are confusing or annoying. Their pronunciation is difficult for me to understand."

In summary, students showed an ambivalent view on varieties of spoken English. The students acknowledged the different varieties of English, and some even regarded Chinese English as an acceptable variety; however, most students expressed positive attitudes toward native-like speech rather than non-native-like accents.

4.2 Students' Assumptions Toward Their Perceptions

4.2.1. Global Englishes Awareness

The data show students' awareness of many varieties of spoken English in the world, along with British and American English, such as Australian English, Singapore English, Malaysian English, Indian English, and Chinese English. For example, S7 states:

> *Of course, there are many varieties in the world. People from different countries such as Japan, India, Indonesia, and Singapore speak English with different characteristics regarding accents, grammar, and cultures. In international communication, if people can achieve mutual intelligibility by using localized English, they do not have to comply with standard English norms all the time.* (S7, student interview, 2021/01/06)

Thus, the students acknowledge the diversity of English and are aware that the primary goal of communication is to achieve mutual intelligibility. To achieve this goal, students can use communicative strategies or accommodation skills to facilitate understanding. Therefore, mutual clarity rather than adherence to native speaker norms is more important in ELF encounters.

The data from the student diaries also confirmed the interview results. Two students (S8 and S13) believed that English language learning and teaching do not happen in a

vacuum. Instead, they are closely related to local cultures, knowledge, and values. Students acknowledged the diversity of the language and cultures and claimed that all varieties of English should be treated as equal and be respected. Communicative strategies, accommodation skills, and translanguaging are effective ways to communicate. For example, the students wrote in their diaries:

> *Language cannot be separated from culture because it is deeply rooted in culture. When non-native English speakers learn English, they mainly focus on British and American English and cultures, but their Englishes will be unavoidably mixed with their ways of thinking, speech, and behavior. Some countries were once colonies of the British empire. The contact of British English with local languages formed many varieties of English, such as Singapore English, Malaysian English, Brunei English, Burmese English, and so on. These varieties of English have their own characteristics and can still play an important role in serving social functions in their speech communities.* (S8, student diary)

> *It is a fact that there are many varieties of English, such as Singapore English and Malaysian English. Each variety of English has its own characteristics, and we need to acknowledge and respect their varieties of English. If interlocutors speak slowly and clearly, they can get their meaning across to each other. After all, mutual understanding is the purpose of communication.* (S13, student diary)

To sum up, the above analyses of the qualitative data indicate that university students in China to some degree have raised their awareness of GE.

4.2.2. Native-Speakerism Ideology

The data showed that students held a native-speakerism ideology in their minds. At first, 14 out of 15 interviewees, except S8, wanted to sound like native English speakers, often British or American speakers, and this influences their English conceptualizations. In their opinion, native-speaking English is a sign of fluency and accuracy and is labeled as "authentic," "pure," "natural," and "real" English that is easy to understand. For example, S8 commented that "I think native English speakers can speak fluent and accurate English. They can use English appropriately to communicate with others."

In addition, the data revealed that some students (e.g., S6, S9, S10, and S11) wanted to sound like a British or American English speaker because they considered it reflected their proficiency. As S6 put it: "I expected to sound like a British and American speaker because the criteria for assessing one's English proficiency are based on British English and American English – standard English." Furthermore, it should be noted that S2 believed that proper pronunciation and correct grammar are also important. He argued: "Sometimes speaking with good pronunciation and correct grammar can help you make yourself understood, which is helpful to get messages across."

S2, in his diary, also reported his dissatisfaction of a non-native English accent, such as the Indian English accent and Malaysian English accent.

> *Both Indians and Malaysians speak English fluently; however, I feel confused and sometimes annoyed about their speaking. In my opinion, their English is a sort of deviation from standard English. It is hard for me to understand them due to their unique characteristics*

related to local language or cultures that we may not know. I do not like these Englishes.
(S2, student diary)

It has been observed that S2 took it for granted that varieties of English deviated from standard English and were not easy to understand. In his mind, standard English and other types of English are not equal. Standard English enjoys superiority.

Moreover, the data showed that the students had a negative self-perception of their own English. Students expressed several reasons linked to their lack of competence including "low scores in test," "difficulties in understanding English films without subtitles," "small vocabulary size," "poor pronunciation," "influence of L1," "dumb English," "bad grammar," and "inappropriate use of English." Thus, it can be interpreted that students self-evaluate their English proficiency based on NS norms, which might influence their lack of self-confidence in learning English.

The evidence from the student diaries also supported this belief about the ideology of native-speakerism:

I prefer standard English. I think to learn English, you should learn standard English because standard English is used more widely. It is like when you learn Mandarin, you can communicate with more people all over the country. (S2, student diary)

In my view, it is difficult and impossible for learners to be familiar to all the varieties of English. Standard English is the most formal English, and English speakers can understand it easily. Therefore, we need a standard English for each non-native English-speaking country to follow; otherwise, we will be in a mess. (S9, student diary)

In summary, the above analyses indicate that although most of the students acknowledge the diversity of English and cultures, the concept of native-speakerism remains embedded in their minds.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the first research question, "What are Chinese university students' perceptions of the use of English as a global language and the application of GELT?", indicated that all the participants realized English as a linguistic capital and most of the students acknowledged the diversity of English. This aligns with previous research into Chinese university students' understanding of ELF (Fang & Ren, 2018; Lu & Buripakdi, 2022). Students are aware of today's sociolinguistic landscapes of English where people have more opportunities of communicating with others from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. As suggested by Pan and Block (2011), English is now regarded as a capital investment that helps to increase job opportunities and obtain social status. More importantly, ELF users communicate with other English speakers in their own ways. This is in line with a growing number of Chinese people adopting English to communicate with others in their professional lives (He, 2017). In addition, ELF experiences enhanced students' understanding of the importance of mutual intelligibility in international encounters (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2018). This reinforces Marlina's (2014) explanation that the effects of globalization have resulted in an increase in advanced information technologies and human

mobility around the world and caused some uncertainty about the linguistic background of the speakers one needs to speak to in English.

It was also found that most of the participants believe that English language and cultures belong to native speakers of English and, thus, prefer British English or American English. It was observed that 10 out of 15 (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13) interview participants supported the use of standard English as a pedagogical model, while 8 out of 15 (S2, S3, S4, S6, S9, S10, S11, S13) also explicitly regarded native-speaking culture as a vital target culture in ELT. This indicates that variation of English was not considered equal compared to the elusive notion of standard English, which reflects the ideology of native speakerism in the preference for native speaking in English learning and teaching (Boonsuk et al., 2021; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020; Pan & Block, 2011).

The findings of the second research question, "What are the underlying assumptions in these perceptions from these students?" showed that the ideology of native-speakerism is still rooted in students' minds. The main reason is the remarkable influence of the UK and the US in terms of their historical, military, political, and economic power (Jenkins, 2015), which lead to a monolingual ideology (e.g., English-only policies) prevalent in English learning and teaching in EFL context due to the promotion of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English Medium Instruction (EMI). Consequently, native English and English teachers are preferred in English teaching classroom in EFL contexts. Another reason might be related to an overwhelming view of English learning and teaching, which is that "native speaker teachers represent a Western culture from which springs the ideals both of the English language and English language teaching methodology" (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). The definition of a native speaker as "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly" (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3) resulted in the native speaker ideal being a central part of ELT practice. Theories about language learning typically regard native speakers as the ultimate goal at the theoretical level, especially English learning and teaching focus on learning the Western (e.g., British or American English) forms of the language.

However, some students embrace the GE paradigm in learning English. They are equipped to some degree with an awareness of GE and an awareness of the diversity of English (Boonsuk et al., 2021, 2022; Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2019). This may be related to students' ELF experiences and exposure to the linguistic and cultural diversity of English because they realize that mutual intelligibility is more important than conformity to NS norms in ELF communication.

For instance, Wang and Jenkins (2016) found that the participants with little ELF experience attributed the intelligibility of their accents to conforming with NS models. In this study, although several students had traveled abroad, people's mobilization and the development of technology provided students with more opportunities to gain exposure to diverse Englishes and cultures in daily life or by watching videos and browsing the Internet. Also, the students emphasized the need for training in communicative strategies and multi-modal literacy (e.g., paraphrasing, repetition, gestures, drawings) for successful international communication. They held the view that native English speakers are still needed to improve communicative strategies in order to achieve successful communication. They also suggested that when native English speakers communicate with non-native English speakers, it may

be necessary to use accommodation skills (e.g., speaking slowly, reducing the use of slang, etc.) to benefit their communicative partners. This may indicate that multilinguals would benefit a lot in that they can adjust the social and cognitive activities through using the strategies of various "semiotic resources to act, to know, and to be" (García & Li, 2014, p. 137). According to Galloway (2017), translanguaging highlights the use of one integrated communication system and various language in a dynamic way. It is crucial to notice that students also emphasized the role of their mother language, because the use of the mother language could sometimes facilitate the understanding of some complicated or abstract ideas (Fang et al., 2022; Li & García, 2022). They suggested that learners should develop an awareness of how to make use of their mother language inside and outside the classroom. This is in line with "a multilingual approach" proposed by Jenkins (2015), who believed that the multilingual resources are effective communications in English.

In sum, many participants revealed their receptive attitudes toward GE with the possibility that they developed an awareness of the diversity of English and cultures through exposure to the media or the Internet or their ELF experiences in real life (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2019). However, many students still showed their preference for British English and American English as standard language ideology is ingrained in the minds of students through teaching and learning materials, and various standard examinations (Jenkins & Leung, 2019).

6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study has some implications for English learning and teaching in China and possibly in other similar contexts. The GE-informed pedagogy challenges the traditional ELT approach. Firstly, the goal of teaching and learning needs to "shift from native-like proficiency to the ability to communicate successfully in international contexts" (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2019, p. 3). Some previous studies have argued that English learners in Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries are likely to interact with all English users rather than with only native English speakers (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022; Jenkins, 2015; Kohn, 2022; Seidlhofer, 2011). As such, the NS model may no longer provide the best model for international communication (Biricik et al., 2020; Boonsuk et al., 2022; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Sert & Özkan, 2020). For instance, some idiomatic usages in British or American English may be meaningless to a non-British or non-American person, which may make one's English less intelligible when using idioms, grammar, or pronunciation of one specific variety of English (Jenkins, 2015; Ren & Liu, 2021; Sert & Özkan, 2020).

Furthermore, in a globalized context, students should go beyond merely focusing on NS norms to mutual intelligibility for the purpose of intercultural communication. They should use translanguaging multimodal literacy (Fang et al., 2022; Gacia & Li, 2014; Li, 2022; Li & García, 2022; Shan & Xu, 2023) more in English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to make the use of English more effective in successful communication with people from different lingua-cultural backgrounds rather than merely imitating the forms used by native speakers of English. In addition, ELF users can employ various communicative strategies to facilitate their understanding when communicating effectively in an international context, for instance, ways of paraphrasing, gesturing, or miming that interlocutors can employ to help to convey their intended meanings (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). These strategies include a

pre-emptive strategy, which uses discourse markers and repetition, co-creates the message, and checks or paraphrases comprehension (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). Other strategies used are to borrow words from the interlocutors' language, guessing words from context (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2019), listening carefully to interlocutors and then adjusting their language appropriately. They may also use simpler vocabulary or grammar, change their pronunciation slightly, or use non-verbal communications (e.g., gestures and drawings). Sometimes L1 is used to make themselves understood, as well as occasionally adding more pauses to their speech or using shorter sentences.

In sum, the present study examined students' perceptions of English among Chinese university students and explored the underlying assumptions that students have toward these perceptions. In general, students have developed an awareness of GE, but the concept of native-speakerism is still prevalent in many students' mindsets (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2019). Moreover, students were also aware of different forms of English as standard English ideology and GE awareness. Three rationales might account for the findings. Firstly, the existence of the hegemony of British English and American English had a significant impact on the perception of native-speakerism between students. Secondly, the co-existence of standard English and local English in ELT may clarify the GE awareness that students have. Thirdly, research and practice of GE as well as students' international ELF experiences allow them to understand today's sociolinguistic landscapes, which helps to facilitate the development of their awareness of GE.

In terms of the limitations of this study, it would be beneficial to suggest potential ways to address the limitations in future research. The proactive approach can provide valuable insights for researchers and readers (Derakhshan et al., 2023). As a case study, it may not be appropriate to generalize the present study to the larger population of Chinese university students. However, it is hoped that these findings could be applied by conducting in-depth interviews with different studies in other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, the first author plays a researcher-practitioner role as both researcher and classroom teacher, which may generate researcher bias. This might be avoided in future study if the author could find another classroom teacher as a practitioner. In addition, the progression of students' understanding of GE could be not investigated due to the fact that this study only interviewed students after the course. In the future, researchers may examine the dynamic development of students understanding of GE by interviewing student before, during, and after the course. Finally, it is hoped that innovative research approaches such as Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) could be provided to investigate English learners' perceptions of English as a Global language in the future study, for "CDST approaches help researchers evaluate the dynamic and non-liner associations" (Derakhshan et al., 2023, p. 6).

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you tell me something about your English learning experiences (Probe: age to start learning English, struggles, motivation, opportunities, exams, teaching methods)?

Questions about Perceptions of English

2. In the questionnaire, do you agree/disagree with the statement that English is used as an international lingua franca? What makes you think that way?

3. What do you think a native speaker of English is (Probe: native speaker English accent, Br. E./Am. E., varieties, standard English)?

4. Do you want to sound like an American or a British speaker? Why or why not?

5. How would you describe or evaluate your own English (Probe: satisfaction/dissatisfaction, influence of L1, understandable/intelligible, identity/recognizable, talking with a foreigner)?

6. How do you feel about one's English with a Chinese accent (Probe: attitudes, personal identity)?
7. What do you think about Western culture?
8. Do you think there are different varieties of English, along with American English or British English? Why or why not?
9. Can you predict how you will use English and with whom in the future (Probe: further study, workplace, English as an international language)?
10. In international or intercultural communication, which is more important—mutual understanding or proper pronunciation or grammar? Why?

Beliefs about English Teaching and Learning
11. It is often said that the best or ideal teacher is a native English speaker. Do you agree? Why or why not?
12. It is usually said that the best teaching methods come from native English-speaking countries. Do you agree? Why or why not?
13. In your opinion, what should the content of teaching materials be based on American/British cultures or cultures from diverse countries? Why?
14. Which variety of English do you think teachers should teach to Chinese university students to meet their needs in the future? Why?
15. What is the role of the Chinese language in your English learning?

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT DIARY WRITING GUIDANCE

Students were required to write a diary of 200–300 words once every three weeks, according to the following four topics:
01. My experience of learning English
02. My understanding of English
03. Attitudes toward standard English and varieties of English
04. My perceptions of Global Englishes