An Investigation of Attitudes towards Thai Pre-Service English Teachers to Standard English, World Englishes, Native and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers

การศึกษาทัศนคติของนิสิตครูเอกภาษาอังกฤษชาวไทยต่อภาษาอังกฤษแบบมาตรฐาน ความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษ ครูภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษา และครูภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา

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Abstract

This study explores the attitudes of Thai pre-service English teachers towards Standard English, World Englishes, native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). The quantitative data were collected from 34 students majoring in English Education. The data were obtained by a questionnaire survey adopted from Choi (2007) and Saengboon (2015), which utilized the convenience sampling method. The results revealed that the participants perceived Standard English as either British or American English and had neutral perceptions towards World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. This may have resulted from the limited exposure of the participants to other varieties of English. The results further suggested that both NESTs and NNESTs are a useful resource in terms of enhancing English language teaching. The results of the study implied that the concept of World Englishes

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should be introduced to pre-service English language teachers, who should be aware of the diverse varieties of English and cultural diversity in English language teaching. For future teaching, teachers could set objectives to ensure the acceptance and respect of students for cultural and linguistic diversity in their own classrooms.

Keywords: Thai pre-service English teachers, Attitudes, World Englishes, NESTs, NNESTs

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาทัศนคติของนิสิตครูเอกภาษาอังกฤษชาวไทยต่อภาษาอังกฤษแบบมาตรฐาน ความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษ ครูภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษา และครูภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณจากกลุ่มตัวอย่าง จำนวน 34 คน ซึ่งศึกษาในสาขาภาษาอังกฤษ หลักสูตรการศึกษาบัณฑิต เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลใช้ คือ แบบสอบถามที่ดัดแปลงมาจาก Choi (2007) และ Saengboon (2015) โดยใช้วิธีการสำรวจสุ่มตามความสะดวก ผลการศึกษาพบว่า กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีทัศนคติต่อภาษาอังกฤษแบบมาตรฐานว่าเป็นภาษาอังกฤษแบบอังกฤษและแบบอเมริกัน อีกทั้งมีทัศนคติต่อความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษ ครูภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษา และครูภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ซึ่งอาจเป็นผลมาจากการที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีโอกาสได้พบเจอและเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในรูปแบบอื่นน้อย ผลการวิจัยยังระบุว่า ครูภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษาและครูภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาล้วนมีส่วนช่วยในการพัฒนาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษให้ดียิ่งขึ้น จากผลวิจัยดังกล่าว ชี้ให้เห็นถึงความจำเป็นในการเสริมสร้างองค์ความรู้เกี่ยวกับแนวคิดเรื่องความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษให้แก่นิสิตครูเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ซึ่งเป็นบุคคลที่ควรจะตระหนักถึงความหลากหลายทางภาษาและวัฒนธรรมวัฒนธรรมเรียนรู้เกี่ยวกับแนวคิดเรื่องความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษ เพื่อให้พวกเขาตั้งเป้าหมายในการจัดการเรียนรู้ในชั้นเรียนที่ช่วยให้นักเรียนเคารพและอยู่ร่วมกันในสังคมที่มีความแตกต่างทางภาษาและวัฒนธรรมได้

คำสำคัญ: นิสิตครูภาษาอังกฤษชาวไทย, ทัศนคติ, ความหลากหลายทางภาษาอังกฤษ, อาจารย์เจ้าของภาษา, อาจารย์ที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา

Introduction

World Englishes were introduced to the field of English language teaching (ELT) in 1978 (Bolton, 2005). Many scholars have promoted a paradigm shift from English to World Englishes as native-speaking countries do not have total ownership of English, and that English belongs to all speakers who use it (Jenkins, 2007; Kachru, 1992). This was at approximately the same time that the issues regarding differences between native English-speaking teachers (NESTs)

and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) were raised. In this regard, several studies on attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs were conducted to explore prejudices against varieties of English and their speakers (Choi, 2007; Ma, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2016; Saengboon, 2015)

In Thailand, while several studies have been conducted to explore the issue of World Englishes, there is very little research focused on the perceptions of pre-service English teachers in relation to World Englishes, NESTs and NNESTs. Thus, this study aims to bridge the gap by exploring the attitudes of Thai undergraduate students majoring in English Education towards World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. As they are prospective NNESTs, their perceptions of standard language ideology, second language acquisition and their awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity may affect the self-esteem, motivation, and confidence in the language learning of students. In addition, they are also language learners who may have experienced difficulties in studying the English language from both NESTs and NNESTs. Hence, it is imperative to understand how these Thai pre-service English teachers perceive varieties of English and how they view two different types of teachers (NESTs and NNESTs).

Literature Review

World Englishes

World Englishes is an umbrella term covering the varieties of English used throughout the world (Saengboon, 2015). The concept of three concentric circles (i.e., inner, outer, and expanding circle countries) describing the spread of English worldwide was first introduced by Kachru (1985). The inner circle consists of countries where English is spoken as a native language, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. The outer circle consists of countries where English is a second language and used in different functional domains, such as administration, education, and law. The outer circle countries include Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore, etc. Finally, the expanding circle countries are those where English is considered a foreign language, which include China, Indonesia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Taiwan, etc.

Standard English and Localized English

Trudgill (1999) defined Standard English as varieties of English rather than a single language. Since it is widely used, Standard English has become the most important variety of

English. Moreover, Standard English is not an accent and not associated with pronunciation. While such accents as Received Pronunciation (RP) represent a high status in the UK, it is not Standard English, but rather an exemplar of standardized English and not a widely used accent in the UK. Standard English is not a style nor a scientific register, because speakers can choose to speak in neutral, formal, or informal style, as well as using technical registers in place of Standard English. Also, Standard English is not a set of prescriptive rules since it is evident that some grammatical forms in English are not governed by prescriptive grammar. Accordingly, Trudgill concluded that Standard English is a dialect used among educated native speakers and does not represent all types of English.

In contrast to Standard English, localized English is the language that is used by outer and expanding circle speakers. According to Lin et al. (2018), speakers in these two circles of English use local varieties rather than adhering to normative English. For instance, Black African English established a resumptive pronoun strategy (Rooy, 2013). Singapore English (Singlish) deletes copula (Tan, 2017) and pronounces /I/ and /iː/ as one phoneme (Leimgruber, 2011). Thai English speakers do not produce stress and intonation, dentalize the interdental fricative, and add particles to show politeness (Jocuns, 2021). In this regard, the dichotomy of Standard English and localized English is quite different.

Standard Language Ideology in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Although standard language ideology does not accept the idea of World Englishes and causes prejudices against other non-mainstream varieties among English speakers (Jindapitak et al, 2018), it is undeniable that standard language ideology has influenced ELT (Belibi, 2013; Dewey, 2012; Katchamat, 2017). In terms of English language teaching, English language assessment and evaluation, and English language materials have been based on standard norms (Jenkins & Leung, 2019; Jindapitak et al., 2018; Pikhart, 2015) as an abundance of textbooks have been published in inner circle countries (Bolton, 2006) while video materials are recorded, for the most part, by native speakers (Jenkins, 2007).

According to Jenkins (2009), a strong dominance of standard language ideology has a psychological impact on EFL users, which is considered to be the main factor in causing anxiety about language learning among ESL/EFL learners. Likewise, Boriboon (2011) also stated that an overemphasis on native ideology leads EFL students to low self-esteem, as students are more afraid of making mistakes when teachers emphasize native-like goals, another cause of anxiety

among ESL/EFL learners. Also, Matsuda (2003) reported that standard ideology that exposes students to nativeness designates pressure. The learners are reluctant to use English because they believe that being native-like means to not be non-native speakers, which is almost impossible for someone who was not born and raised in a native English-speaking country. In 2015, a study by Saengboon indicated that Thai university students did not want their English to represent their Thai identity as they were ashamed of their local English and believed that English belongs to inner circle countries only. The underlying reason for this might lie in that Thai English that does not hold the same status as outer circle Englishes, such as Singaporean, Indian, or Philippine English. This implies that Thai students possibly subscribe to a standard language ideology and want to achieve native status as their ultimate goal in English language learning. As a consequence, standard ideology has direct and negative impact on NNESTs that students and parents view NESTs as superior to NNESTs and NNESTs as less credible (Baker, 2012; Canagarajah, 1999; Choi & Liu, 2020; Waelateh et al., 2019; Weerachairattana et al., 2019). When NNESTs encounter such perceptions, they tend to see themselves as glaring defects, expressing low self-esteem, and performing with less confidence in class (Mullock, 2003; Selvi, 2014).

However, scholars of World Englishes try to negotiate standard language ideology (Belibi, 2013). One way to achieve this is for NNESTs to incorporate World Englishes texts in their English language lesson (Arrieta, 2017; Chern & Curran, 2017; Chien, 2018; Jenkins 2006; Jindapitak & Teo, 2013; Lee, 2012; Matsuda, 2003; Rajani Na Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016). As suggested by Rajani Na Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul (2016), integrating World Englishes not only helps learners to acquire linguistic knowledge, but also reduce their anxiety when performing class activities. Lee (2012) also agreed that lessons in World Englishes encourage students to accept their own varieties of English, understand cultural differences in communication, and build a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence. In the same vein, Choi (2007) claimed that students who acknowledge the idea of World Englishes can accept localized English and hold neutral attitudes towards Standard English. For this purpose, teachers should utilize multicultural materials including those of the students as well as international ones, to broaden the understanding of the students in terms of language varieties (Lee, 2012).

Native English-speaking Teachers and Non-native Speaking English Teachers

NEST and NNEST issues were increasingly discussed after the 1990s, as it was previously

viewed as a sensitive topic (Braine, 2018). However, due to the growing presence of cultural and linguistic diversity, several researchers studied the positive and negative teaching attributes of NESTs and NNESTs.

Ma (2012) revealed two major advantages of having NESTs as teachers. First, the participants in her study believed that because NESTs are "native" because they were born and raised in English speaking countries. They developed the English language fluency and pronunciation of the students were more effective. In addition, the time spent with NESTs can help students develop their listening skills because they have to stay focused in order to comprehend what the teachers are saying. On the other hand, the participants also reported the disadvantages of studying with NESTs, such as that they experienced difficulties in understanding since NESTs tend to speak too fast and use difficult vocabulary. The participants also added that it was difficult for students to communicate with NESTs if they were not good at English and some students were also hesitant to ask questions when in doubt. Choomthong (2014) suggested that L1 increased confidence and positive perception towards learning English. Along the same lines, Choi (2007) reported that students preferred NNESTs because these teachers can correct and explain their mistakes and problems. Moreover, the fact that NNESTs share similar linguistic, cultural, and geographical backgrounds with the learners, and the fact that they were once EFL language learners themselves were perceived as the greatest strength of NNESTs. Similarly, Saengboon (2015) reported ambivalence among Thai university students on NESTs and NNESTs. In his study, 46% of Thai university students were agreed with having NESTs as English teachers, but at the same time they also believed that NNESTs could teach as effectively as NESTs. An underlying reason for this was the answers of the students might depend on the ability to teach rather than their nativeness. In contrast, Katchamat (2017) noted that English majors adopted a neutral position on both types of teachers and the study concluded that the preferences of the students towards NESTs or NNESTs depended on the individual. Furthermore, the findings indicated the students had perceptions that they might be able to speak with native-like accent if they studied with NESTs that they believed could provide them with more reliable linguistic resources and answers to their questions. Nonetheless, the students in the same study also perceived the local English of NNESTs as a more realistic learning goal, as well as being more encouraging since NNESTs usually talked about successful language acquisition, which motivated students to study harder. In addition, NNESTs understand the difficulties of the students in terms of learning English since non-native

teachers once experienced the same difficulties. Besides, NNESTs can explain grammar clearly because the language barriers were reduced as they speak the same L1 (i.e., Thai) which helps students understand better.

The review of literature suggests that Thai university students still adhere to the standard myth which leads to a preference over native speakerism. In order to shift away from the traditional paradigm, teachers might introduce the concept of World Englishes to help English learners accept other language varieties, which is the reality of English today, and so that prejudices against NNESTs would diminish and students would accept localized English as having equal status as native English speech.

Objectives

(1) To investigate the attitudes of English Education major students towards Standard English

(2) To investigate the attitudes of English Education major students towards World Englishes

(3) To investigate the attitudes of English Education major students towards NESTs and NNESTs

Methodology

Participants

The participants were 34 Thai undergraduate English Education major students at a public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The researchers utilized a convenience sampling technique to recruit the participants from the entire population of English Education students (N=100). There were 11 male and 23 female students. Their age range was from 19 to 21 and they studied in years 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The participants have been taught by both NESTs (British nationality) and NNESTs (Thai nationality). Almost all (82.35%) reported that they were familiar with the idea of World Englishes. They have studied English for 16 to 20 years, 11 participants visited or lived abroad, and six participants spoke languages other than English. These participants studied a variety of English language-focused content with both NESTs and NNESTs in compulsory courses in the program. Some students had previously studied World Englishes.

The participants were considered to be prospective NNESTs and had studied English as a foreign language (i.e., EFL students). Therefore, their insights and attitudes, based on their direct experience of varieties of English, NESTs, and NNESTs were valuable and could shed light on these important issues, which might have an effect on their future teaching.

Research Instrument

In order to explore the attitudes of the students, the researchers employed a questionnaire to collect quantitative data. It was adopted from Choi (2007) and Saengboon (2015). The questionnaires from these scholars were selected because their research objectives were similar to those of the present research. The questionnaire consisted of two sections with a total number of 30 items: section one (10 items) was to gather background information on the participants; section two (20 items) was designed to investigate the perspectives of the students and were comprised of four sections. The first section was about the attitudes of the participants toward Standard English; the second section was concerned with the attitudes of students towards World Englishes; the third section involved the attitudes of the students towards NESTs, and the fourth section was concerned with the attitudes of the students towards NNESTs. A five-point Likert scale was used as the format of questionnaire, in which 1 means strongly disagree; 2 means disagree; 3 means neither agree nor disagree; 4 means agree, and 5 means strongly agree.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean, SD, percentage, and frequency. The findings were tabulated to make it more convenient for readers. The mean score for each item were as follows: 1.00 to 1.49 means strongly disagree, 1.50 to 2.49 means disagree, 2.50 to 3.49 means neither agree nor disagree, 3.50 to 4.49 means agree, and 4.50 to 5.00 means strongly agree.

Results

This section presents the findings of the present study, beginning with the perceptions of the participants of Standard English (Table 1) and World Englishes (Table 2) and the findings related to attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs); (Table 3) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) (Table 4). Table 1 shows the range of mean scores of the attitudes of the participants towards Standard English, which was between 1.61 and 3.58. The highest mean score showed that the participants agreed that Standard English is British or

American English (mean = 3.58). They were neutral about the idea that English belongs to the UK or the USA. (mean = 2.55). The results also revealed that the participants disagreed with two of the items, "British or American English speakers have the right to decide how English should be" (mean = 2.16) and "If English is used differently from British or American English, it must be wrong." (mean = 1.61). The mean score of 2.84 showed that participants neither agreed nor disagreed that they were ashamed of their Thai accent and tried to fix it.

Ranking	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Standard English is British English or American English.	3.58	1.00	Agree
2	I am ashamed of my Thai (local) accent and try to get rid of it when I speak English.	2.82	1.37	Neither agree nor disagree
3	English belongs to the UK or the USA.	2.55	1.11	Neither agree nor disagree
4	It is British or American English speakers who have the right to decide how English should be.	2.16	1.18	Disagree
5	If English is used differently from British or American English, it must be wrong.	1.61	0.92	Disagree
	Total	2.54	1.12	Neither agree nor disagree

Table 1. Attitudes of the Participants towards Standard English

Table 2 displays the range of the mean scores on the attitudes of the participants towards World Englishes, which was between 2.61 and 3.47. The results showed that participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the following items: "English belongs to those who speak it" (mean = 3.47); "More lectures should be given on World Englishes and Thai English" (mean = 3.29); "Thai English (My local variety of English) should be recognized and stand alongside British or American English" (mean = 3.13); "I am proud of my Thai (local) accent when I speak English because it represents my identity" (mean = 3.00); and "Thai English should be learned by foreigners, especially those who want to communicate with Thais in English" (mean = 2.61).

Ranking	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	English belongs to those who speak it.	3.47	1.33	Neither agree nor disagree
2	More lectures should be given on World Englishes and Thai English.	3.29	1.18	Neither agree nor disagree
3	Thai English (My local variety of English) should be recognized and stand alongside British or American English.	3.13	1.02	Neither agree nor disagree
Ranking	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
4	I am proud of my Thai (local) accent when I speak English because it represents my identity.	3.00	1.04	Neither agree nor disagree
5	Thai English should be learned by foreigners, especially those who want to communicate with Thais in English.	2.61	1.08	Neither agree nor disagree
	Total	**3.10**	**1.13**	**Neither agree nor disagree**

Table 2. Attitudes of the Participants towards World Englishes

Table 3 presents the range of mean scores of the attitudes of the participants towards NESTs, which was between 2.32 and 3.47. The results also revealed that the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the other four items: "Eventually, I will speak native like English if I study with a native speaker teacher." (mean = 3.47); "Native speaker teachers correct me better when I make mistakes." (mean = 3.21); "Native speaker teachers provide more reliable linguistic knowledge." (mean = 3.18); and "English teachers should be native speakers since their English is Standard English." (mean = 2.92). The lowest mean score showed that the students disagreed with the idea that that they did not want NNESTs to teach them English (mean = 2.32).

Ranking	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Eventually, I will speak native-like English if I study with a native speaker teacher.	3.47	1.27	Neither agree nor disagree
2	Native speaker teachers correct me better when I make mistakes.	3.21	1.17	Neither agree nor disagree
3	Native speaker teachers provide more reliable linguistic knowledge.	3.18	1.16	Neither agree nor disagree

4	English teachers should be native speakers since their English is Standard English.	2.92	1.26	Neither agree nor disagree
5	I do not want a Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teacher to teach me English.	2.32	1.04	Disagree
	Total	**3.02**	**1.18**	**Neither agree nor disagree**

Table 3. Attitudes of the Participants towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs)

Table 4 presents the attitudes of the participants towards NNESTs. The results revealed that the participants were satisfied with studying with NNESTs at a medium level. The mean scores were between 3.18 and 3.66. The highest mean score of 3.66 was that participants stated that NNESTs sometimes helped them better understand English (mean = 3.66). They believed NNESTs helped them cope with difficulties in learning English since these teachers had experienced similar difficulties (mean = 3.61). In addition, the participants wanted to learn more with NNESTs since they explained grammar better than NESTs (mean = 3.50).

Ranking	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teachers of English can sometimes help me understand English better.	3.66	1.02	Agree
2	Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teachers help me better with difficulties in learning English since they have experienced similar difficulties.	3.61	1.03	Agree
3	I learn more with Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teachers of English since they explain grammar better than native speaker teachers.	3.50	1.11	Agree
4	Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teachers of English set a good example of successful English learners. That motivates me to study hard.	3.34	1.02	Neither agree nor disagree
5	I want to have a Thai (Filipino, Cameroonian, etc.) teacher as my English teacher since their English is more realistic for me to achieve my learning targets.	3.18	1.09	Neither agree nor disagree
	Total	**3.45**	**1.05**	**Neither agree nor disagree**

Table 4. Attitudes of the Participants towards non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs)

Discussion

This study provides an insight into the attitudes of Thai pre-service English teachers towards Standard English, World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. Firstly, the results indicated that the participants held neutral attitudes towards Standard English. However, both British and American English were equally perceived as Standard English. The underlying reason for those perceptions might lie in their familiarity with only British and American English varieties (Choomthong, 2014; Rajani Na Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016). To measure up to a standard, English teachers in Thailand usually favor Standard English and expose their students to either British or American English (Choomthong, 2014; Rajani Na Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul, 2016). For example, materials such as textbooks and instructional videos are usually produced in inner-circle countries. A similar explanation was given by Belibi (2013), Bolton (2006), Jenkins (2007), and Katchamat (2017). They stated that standard ideology has a strong impact on English language teaching (ELT) and that the standard norm has dominated English language classrooms. Jenkins and Leung (2019), Jindapitak et al., (2018) and Pikhart (2015) pointed out that assessment and evaluation in English language are based on Standard English. As a result, many teachers adhere to the standard norm, which allows students to acknowledge the English used in the inner circle countries, especially in the UK and the USA. However, the participants did not agree that inner circle had any right to govern the English language, and they accepted other varieties of English. These findings were in line with the work of Choi (2007) which suggested that participants who took courses on World Englishes and those who did not disagreed with the following statements: "It is British or American English speakers who have the right to decide how English should be" and "If English is used differently from British or American English, it must be wrong". Similarly, the findings were also consistent with Saengboon (2015), indicating that Thai students might be aware of other varieties than inner circle English. The reason for this awareness might be due to their experiences living in an expanding circle country where English is mainly used as a lingua franca, as well as exposure to other English varieties via the internet and other media. As noted in the study of Weerachairattana et al. (2019), Thai university students reported experiencing varieties of Englishes from their reading and listening to the content via online social platforms and media. In particular, the majority of them were exposed to English written by non-native speakers via Facebook comments as well as the English accents of interviews with non-native English speakers (Weerachairattana et al., 2019).

With regards to attitudes towards World Englishes, the findings reveal that the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with all statements about World Englishes. One explanation can be drawn from the educational backgrounds of the participants, such as the English education program that they studied offering World Englishes course as an optional subject. The demographic data indicated that one group of participants were enrolled in this course, while the others did not, which was evident in the high standard of deviation. Accordingly, the findings implied the different levels of comprehension of the concept. Although almost all participants reported that they had acknowledged the idea of World Englishes, some might not have had a clear enough understanding of the concepts, while some might have grasped the idea to some extent. As noted by Chern & Curran (2017) and Dewey (2012), it was suggested that the pre/in-service English teachers should receive the key message about World Englishes loudly and clearly. However, it was almost impossible to implement the concepts if the standard norms were still prevalent in the English language assessment system, classroom practices, and curriculum. In addition, the World Englishes concept might be contradictory. From the findings, it can be implied that pre-service English teacher students majoring in English Education program were taught to measure up to nothing else but the standard norm. As a result, the perceptions of participants towards non-standard English norms might, to some extent, confuse them. Moreover, the findings of the present study were incongruent with Saengboon (2015). In his study, the respondents subscribed to traditional concepts of English ownership which influenced their beliefs that English belongs to inner circle countries only. Furthermore, the participants expressed a negative view of their local English. This was the reason why the participants appeared to deny Thai English and were ashamed of using it. Also, the participants did not believe that their local English should stand alongside the Englishes used in other outer circle countries, namely, Singapore, Indian, and Philippine English. Jenkins (2000) pointed out that when it comes to pronunciation and accents, it is difficult to change practitioners and beliefs of language learners about so-called standard accents. Although Jenkins believes that raising awareness of the reality of the English language is the right answer to this problem, her findings suggested otherwise. The participants acknowledged varieties of English, but they still choose to subscribe to native norms.

Regarding the results concerning NESTs and NNESTs, the participants expressed a neutral attitude (neither agreed nor disagreed with all of the statements related to NESTs.) However, the findings yielded three important issues regarding NNESTs. The participants agreed

that NNESTs can teach English better than NESTs and they also believed that NNESTs can sometimes help them understand English better. In addition, most of them agreed that NNESTs helped them overcome their difficulties in learning English. These findings were in line with Choi (2007) and Katchamat (2017). Those studies indicated that students sometimes want to study with NNESTs since they can gain so much from those who share the same language, culture, and geographical backgrounds. Therefore, NNESTs may be a better solution to the problems of the students. Katchamat (2017) and Saengboon (2015) explained that this was due to the fact that most students focused on teaching skills rather than the nativeness of their teachers. In summary, although overall attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs were neutral, the participants did not specify if they preferred NESTs or NNESTs. This may be because the participants were prospective NNESTs who were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and NNESTs. Therefore, the participants considered both to be advantageous and disadvantageous in different ways. This study was also in line with Saengboon (2015), which suggested that NESTs and NNESTs provided different benefits to language learners. As a consequence, there should be both NESTs and NNESTs in schools.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to explore the attitudes of Thai pre-service English teachers towards Standard English, World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. The results revealed ambivalent attitudes among Thai pre-service English teachers towards both Standard English and World Englishes. The overall results demonstrated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the concepts of Standard English, World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. This might be due to the fact that some of them took a course on World Englishes, which informed them of World Englishes ideology, while others seemed to have a more standard ideology that favored the norms of Standard English. Although the participants appeared to believe that Standard English is the English used in the inner circle countries, namely, the UK and USA., they did not consider these countries to have the right to govern other varieties of English and did not perceive that other local varieties were wrong. While the participants held neutral attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, they reported the need for NNESTs to be incorporated into language learning and teaching because those teachers could clearly explain grammatical concepts, help their students understand English better, and more effectively overcome their

language learning difficulties. It can be assumed that the belief that NESTs and NNESTs are effective in different ways may substitute for their any of their disadvantages.

Pedagogical Implications

This study was conducted to explore the attitudes of Thai pre-service English teachers towards Standard English, World Englishes, NESTs, and NNESTs. Pedagogically, the findings obtained from this study delivered some useful informative messages to the field of English language teaching, educational institutions, and Thai society. English education programmes should consider incorporating World Englishes concepts because Thai pre-service English teacher students should be equipped with a realistic view towards the current status and landscape of contemporary English. By introducing the concept of World Englishes and raising awareness of both existing linguistic and cultural diversity, these prospective teachers would be able to continue the work in future classrooms. Moreover, this study highlights the important role of NNESTs in terms of grammatical competence and the ability to understand the nature of the students, which is crucial in responding to the needs of students. Thus, the perception of both NESTs and NNESTs is that of useful resources for the students, and despite their nativeness, they may help Thai students make the most of the available resources in their English language learning journey and enhance their learning efficiency.

Limitations

In terms of the limitations of the study, the data generated from the present study may be limited to some extent for three reasons. First, although the data generated purely from the quantitative approach gave an overall picture of the issues, it was not possible to identify any deeper, underlying explanations and might offer only a snapshot of a phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher should employ qualitative data in obtaining methods, such as an in-depth or focus-group interviews to achieve deeper insights into the perceptions of the students for future studies. Second, the small number of participants decreased the degree of generalization among Thai pre-service English teachers. Finally, with the high level of standard deviation, the researchers assumed that the diverse educational backgrounds of the participants significantly affected their attitudes towards the concept of World Englishes. The study may yield more interesting results if further studies compare students who have studied World Englishes and those who have never or hardly ever experienced World Englishes.

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