The influence of standard language ideology on evaluations of English language variation in the domain of English language teaching

Naratip Jindapitak
Faculty of Liberal Arts,
Prince of Songkla University
Email: naratip.jin@psu.ac.th

Adisa Teo
Email: adisa.s@psu.ac.th

Kristof Savski
Email: kristof.s@psu.ac.th

Abstract

Research into social-psychology of the English language has been carried out worldwide, as researchers have been interested in knowing what social information do language varieties carry. Research has also uncovered people's different attitudes toward varieties of English and their speakers, with the more mainstream (native-like) English is perceived, the more favorably the speakers are evaluated. Standard language ideology is thought to play a major role in people's prejudices against particular varieties of English. This paper adopts Lippi-Green's (1997) model of language subordination process to discuss how standard language ideology influences evaluations of English language variation in general and how it prevails in English language teaching (ELT) in particular. The paper examines arguments and assumptions made to value the mainstream English varieties and devalue non-mainstream English varieties in the domain of ELT. Reviewing some recent work on bridging the gap between world Englishes theory and practice, this paper suggests that the notion of world Englishes be adopted in English language education in order to raise language learners' awareness of linguistic diversity.

Keywords: standard language ideology; world Englishes; English language variation

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, social-psychological research into people's attitudes toward English language variation has revealed that "people tend to evaluate language varieties in a hierarchical manner" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 70). Combinations of specific linguistic features (e.g., lexico-grammar and phonology) employed in different forms of speech "allow listeners, whether correctly or incorrectly, to index information about and attach social meanings to the perceived speakers" (McKenzie et al., 2016, p. 538). In Cavallaro and Chin's (2009) words:

Like it or not, we all judge others by how they speak, and at the same time are judged by them. The way we speak, the words we choose, and the way we sound all carry information that tells our listeners a lot about us and our background. (p. 143)

Empirically, the mainstream English varieties (e.g., Received Pronunciation and General American English) tend to be evaluated more positively than non-mainstream varieties (e.g., regional inner-circle and non-native English varieties) in terms of status, integrity and solidarity (Jenkins, 2007; Jindapitak & Teo, 2012; Jindapitak, 2015; McKenzie et al., 2016; McKenzie & Gilmore, 2017). It is precisely for this reason that research into language attitudes has been increasingly conducted in various parts of the world, with an aim to uncover people's prejudices against varieties of English and their speakers, whether consciously or unconsciously (Jenkins, 2007; McKenzie et al., 2016).

The fact that varieties of English have been treated differently or associated with different social attributes or stereotypes can possibly be explained by the standard language ideology in linguistics, which is defined as a system of belief that there is an inherently or intrinsically powerful and prestigious "standard version of the language, the learning of which can act as a panacea for all sorts of social ills … coupled with a sociological naivety that learning a standard version of the language will bring about social and economic advantage" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 48). Standard language ideology is a crucial sociolinguistic concept for understanding the politics of language in contexts where speakers of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are present (Garrett et al., 2003). Jenkins (2007) maintains that many non-native English speakers (NNSs) or English as a lingua franca (ELF) speakers have been affected by the standard language ideology "by virtue of the fact that their Englishes are (still) designated as 'performance' varieties that should look to Britain or North America for their norms" (p. 33). Standard language ideology has influenced people's evaluations of English language variation in various domains of language use, such as judgments of candidates' levels of credibility in job interviews (Rakic et al., 2011), judgments of defendants' innocence and guilt in the court (Dixon & Mahoney, 2004), locals' perceptions of immigrants (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010) and immigrants' access to housing provided by the municipality (Zhao et al., 2006). Standard language ideology also has impacts within education contexts. For instance, it influences school teachers' perceptions of students' language abilities (Seligman et al., 1972) and students' judgments of native speaker (NS) and NNS teachers' credibility (Buckingham, 2014; Chun, 2014).

This paper aims to discuss how the standard language ideology influences evaluations of English language variation in the domain of ELT by

examining arguments and assumptions which are used to value the mainstream and devalue non-mainstream English varieties.

2. The prevalence of standard language ideology in ELT

It is apparent that the standard language ideology does not promote pluralism. This echoes Quirk's (1990) position on NNS varieties of English as a deficit. The following anti-pluralism sentiment from Quirk was part of the debate with Kachru over the legitimacy of NNS Englishes that took place in the pages of *English Today* journal in the early 1990s:

> Certainly, if I were a foreign student paying good money in Tokyo or Madrid to be taught English, I would feel cheated by such a tolerant pluralism. My goal would be to acquire English precisely because of its power as an instrument of international communication. I would be annoyed at the equivocation over English since it seemed to be unparalleled in the teaching of French, German, Russian, or Chinese. (p. 10)

The standard language ideology, as argued by Jenkins (2007), has colonized ELT communities and infused "much of the day-to-day literature available for teachers *and students*, whether or not this is the intention" (p. 44, emphasis added). In this regard, we find Lippi-Green's (1997) model of language subordination process useful in explaining how and why the standard language ideology has dominated ELT psyche today. The model of language subordination process consists of eight steps based on analyses of stereotypical reactions and actions faced by language users (see Table 1). Public discourses and commentary on language use or speech communities are cited to illustrate the influence of standard language ideology on how English language variation has been treated in the domain of ELT.

Table 1. The model of language subordination process

Step	Practice
1	Language is mystified.
2	Authority is claimed.
3	Misinformation is generated.
4	Non-mainstream language is trivialized.
5	Conformers (conformists) are held up as examples.
6	Explicit promises are made.
7	Threats are made.
8	Non-conformers (non-conformists) are vilified or marginalized.

Adapted from Lippi-green (1997, p. 68)

The first step concerns how the concept of mystification is commonly applied to the English language (Lippi-Green, 1997). The claim usually is that language learners or users of non-mainstream varieties can never achieve a full command of the language without NS expertise guidance. Linguistic mystification can be found in every language using domain, with the domain of an ELT industry being most prevalent. As an expanding-circle country where English has no official status, Thailand's ELT relies heavily on the mainstream NS varieties of English (Methitham, 2011; Jindapitak, 2015, 2018; Jindapitak & Teo, 2011). A few quotations from letters and articles in English newspapers in Thailand, as observed by Watson Todd (2006, p. 1), illustrate this: "Native speakers are the best teachers of their own language", "Almost all parents would rather their child be taught English by a native English speaker and are only concerned with that person's knowledge of the target language", and "…if you can speak a language, you can teach it". In another instance, Methitham (2011) has observed that many Thai parents have worked hard to send their kids to international or bilingual schools where NS English is privileged and in the hope that they will be taught by NS teachers. Clearly from these illustrations, ELT communities treat NSs as the best English teachers and NNSs the second best (Canagarajah, 1999). Also related is Jindapitak's (2018) study which investigated how stakeholders (high school English teachers, parents and students) reacted to the policy of a well-known school in the South of Thailand, stated clearly on a billboard that "Moving toward the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), everyone can learn English with native speakers". All the participants viewed the policy positively. For instance, the parents firmly believed that getting their children to study with NS teachers would guarantee brighter futures for them as far as employment is concerned. In the same fashion, teachers articulated that NS teachers are in a better position to perform Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) than Thai teachers simply because they are born to speak English as their mother tongue. When asked who the ideal English teachers as models for ELT in the AEC context were, all believed that the only correct model of ELT was that transferred directly from NS teachers. Ironically, in the interview, both the teachers and students admitted that getting everyone in contact with a NS teacher is an impossible target since there has been a lack of qualified teachers (Jindapitak, 2018). Despite this impracticality, NS teacher is still used as a marketing strategy to attract more customers. To make matters worse, research conducted by Methitham (2009), Suwannarak (2010) and Nomnian (2012) revealed that many Thai English teachers felt insecure or reluctant when asked to teach aural and oral skills. Some even excused themselves with the phrasing, "because I am not-the-owner-of-English nonnative" (Methitham, 2009, p. 164), especially when dealing with language uncertainty or problems. One reason making English teachers feel unconfident when teaching speaking and pronunciation is probably the expectation to make

students achieve a native-like competence, the goal that even teachers themselves find it hard to accomplish (Nomnian, 2012). This NS speakerism ideology has created a general belief among ELT parties that NNS learners or practitioners can never master the target language without relying on the NS norms.

Closely linked to the first step, the second step involves how authority is claimed in language use, learning and teaching. The powerful institutions that position themselves or are positioned as standardized agents, including media, educational system, corporate sectors and the judicial system, claim deep linguistic knowledge and authority in subjects of language, as in Lippi-Green's (1997) words: "Talk like me/us. We know what we are doing because we have studied language, because we write well" (p. 68). In Thailand, famous phrases, such as "speak like a native speaker", and "100% taught by native speakers", can be variously found in language schools' adverts aimed to target customers who want to improve their English and achieve an ambiguous native-like competence in English. This linguistic paradox can also be seen in the following study. Ruecker and Ives (2015) analyzed several school ads in Thailand and concluded that institutions are not only marketing language education by pointing to the demand of customers (parents and students) but also creating "a metonymic connection to the social and economic power that comes with Western, White, first-world subject positionality" (Ruecker & Ives, 2015, p. 752). It is crucial to note that this conclusion can also be generalized to other parts of the world, especially in countries where English is learned as a second or foreign language. It is not exaggerated to say that the notion of NS-based authority in language use is clearly evident in ELT (Pennycook, 1994) since practices and principles of ELT have been heavily influenced by Western ideologies (mainly by the two most powerful English-speaking nations, America and Britain).

The third step concerns how misinformation about language or language use is generated. Lippi-Green (1997) argues that misinformation about language or language use serves as the best example of down-to-earth argumentation. Lippi-Green (1997) puts it in a satirical sense: "That usage you are so attached to is inaccurate. The variant I prefer is superior on historical, aesthetic, or logical grounds" (p. 68). Studies utilizing indirect attitudinal elicitation techniques (e.g., the matched guise technique and verbal guise technique) to capture participants' hidden perceptions of English language variation support this claim. For instance, Jindapitak (2015) presented 116 Thai university participants with several NS and NNS English stimuli (accents). The participants were asked to rate the speakers on several bi-polar stereotypical traits (e.g., educated—uneducated, friendly—unfriendly, intelligent—unintelligent, etc.). It was found that without knowing the speakers' demographic backgrounds, the participants rated the NS stimuli (American, British and Australian English) more favorably than the NNS

counterparts on most stereotypical traits. The study confirms Lippi-Green (1997) and other studies employing the same indirect technique (e.g., Cargile et al., 2006; Scales et al., 2006; McKenzie & Gilmore, 2017, etc.) that NS Englishes always enjoy the first places in an accent hierarchy, consolidating the construct of NS superiority and NNS inferiority (Jenkins, 2007; Jindapitak, 2015). Misinformation about language and language use has also exerted supreme influences in ELT for decades. On the shelves of bookstores in Thailand, for example, there are hundreds of pocket books mainly teaching English conversation, many of which contain misinformation about language. For instance, a pocket book by a well-known Thai author offers three steps of accent eradication techniques—the book boasts on its front cover that Thai learners can change their accent into American in 24 hours! Another book, which has sold over 300,000 copies nationwide and authored by a NS celebrity in Thailand, offers techniques to speak English like a NS, pointing to the need to develop such competence for communication in the AEC. In another prominent example, equating perfect English with one's ability to speak like a NS, a book by a young author with a prestigious university degree promises learners that its lessons can turn them into NSs of American English in 79 hours. Discourses such as these indicate that there are inherently superior and inferior varieties of English, with the inferior ones needing to be fixed or conform to the superior others, confirming the existence of linguistic mystification that dramatically exerts a sphere of influences on ELT industries today. Despite the exaggerated claims, these pocket books have continued to sell well on shelves across Thailand. Accordingly, when Thai learners encounter world Englishes or forms of English which differ from what they have learned from books and teachers, they are less likely to see them as different linguistic forms but tend to lump them together into a deficit linguistic basket (Ploywattanawong & Trakulkasemsuk, 2014).

The fourth and fifth steps deal with how non-mainstream varieties are trivialized and how conformists are acknowledged or held up as good examples. According to Lippi-Green (1997), on the one hand, the institutions like broadcast or media are prone to trivialize non-mainstream varieties and report about users "who agree to reject their accent… in favor of the ideal of the… standard" (p. 68-69), on the other hand. A salient example of how a non-mainstream variety is trivialized is a speech on a radio broadcast made by Singapore's former Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew: "Singlish is a handicap we must not wish on Singaporeans" (Davies et al., 2003, p. 575). When such non-mainstream knowledge is trivialized, the next reasonable step is to make such knowledge insignificant or irrelevant in ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). As can be seen in Christopher Wright's TV show, a popular English teaching TV program in Thailand, harsh satires are often directed against Thai comedians with broken uses of English or uses that do not conform to any of the NS standards. On the other hand, famous Thai TV stars as invited guests, whose English is native-like, are held up as good examples of successful English

learners and users. Examples of how non-mainstream varieties and how conformists are held up as good examples can also be variously found in printed media. In another example, a recommended English learning pocket book by a leading bookstore in Thailand features self-study lessons teaching how to say things in both NS and NNS ways. Although the book does not explicitly trivialize NNS usage of English, it claims that learning how to utter sentences like "real" NSs does make followers sound "smarter", "cooler" and "more attractive". Similarly, Chamcharatsri's (2013) study on netizens' perceptions of Thai English revealed that the localized form of English (Thai accent) is often trivialized explicitly as many participants did not recognize its existence and directly associated it with failure in teaching and learning; therefore, Thai English is never held up as a good linguistic model for ELT purpose.

Being one of the deeply pervasive ideologies, the standard language ideology has created a NS-NNS dichotomy in the domain of ELT (Canagarajah, 1999). There has been an established belief that the language associated with NSs intrinsically sounds natural, authentic, prestigious and pleasant, thus making it prototypical for both language use and learning. One disturbing hidden result of native-speakerism is discrimination against NNSs by all parties involved in ELT industries (e.g., employers, parents, policy makers, students, customers, etc.). Attributes such as "smarter", "smoother" or "cooler" which are associated with NSs have strengthened the discriminatory differentiation between NSs and NNSs, which is "often overlooked because of the greater preoccupation in many parts of our profession with the short term business side of satisfying customer demand" (Holliday, 2008, p. 121). Customers and learners who are not aware of linguistic diversity are often convinced to conform to an ideological NS norm.

The sixth and seventh steps are concerned with the negotiation of explicit promises and threats. While approximating a mainstream norm is rewarded, threats are explicitly made when language users refuse to follow the standard authorized by the dominant bloc institutions (Lippi-Green, 1997). In light of this, Lippi-Green (1997) stipulates:

> Persons who persist in their allegiance to stigmatized varieties of
> English, who refuse in the face of common-sense arguments to at least
> try to lose a foreign accent, will be cut off from the privileges and
> rights… at every turn; if they will not at least acknowledge the
> superiority of the mainstream language. Then all the allegiance and
> success in the word will not open any doors. (p. 69)

The picture of how explicit promises and threats are made in relation to linguistic variation becomes clearer when we consider NNSs' acceptance of their own Englishes. Saengboon (2015), for instance, has observed that "whenever Thai English is mentioned, it is likely to refer to incomplete or inaccurate use of English

at the individual level" (p. 153). In other words, while Thais try to cling on to the mainstream English when it comes to language use, they prefer to distance themselves from the local form of English, the discourse of Thai English. In an extreme case, we have seen that many English speakers devalue their own (localized) English owing to the fact that they are unable to conform to one of the NS norms. This vivid example can be found in Buripakdi's (2012) study which explored how Thai professional writers positioned themselves toward Thai English. It was found that most writers devalued their Thai English and thought of themselves as vulnerable and peripheral and suppressed their own discourse. On the other hand, they regarded Western discourse and ideology as more linguistically sophisticated and advanced. More interestingly, a participant in her study described how one's use of English reflects his/her different levels of education. She stated bluntly that "If you make it look Thai style then it will be like you're in elementary level; you are not in a university level; you are not in bachelor degree yet" (p. 258-259). It is clear that, in a discourse hierarchy, there are assumed different levels of English, and there are assumed versions of English which are socially superior to others and placed in the position of prestige (Jenkins, 2007). Users of English who conform to and acknowledge the superiority of the mainstream norm will continue to enjoy countless opportunities available to them; however, doors will close for those who fail to conform to the mainstream norm or prefer to use English in a style that sounds too elementary (foreign) to the ears of others.

The last step is related to how non-conformists are virtually vilified or marginalized. Language subordination process, at its mercilessness, turns into discrimination against people belonging to specific groups or speech communities (Lippi-Green, 1997). Stigmatized or non-mainstream varieties of English are often used as an excuse to vilify people of the group. In any event, perceived or actual communication burden seems to be driven by the "I-simply-can't-understand-you" effect, which refers to listeners' intolerance for speakers (of non-mainstream groups), and how they explicitly discriminate against them on the basis of their accents or other linguistic cues (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 69). The way people stereotypically evaluate others on the basis of language, which is considered one of the obvious social conflicts, can be found in various English using situations. Lippi-Green (1997) highlights that "language and accent as symbols of greater social conflicts are also found in serious dramatic efforts, on television and film" (p. 101). The most salient example of this practice can be seen through the discriminatory interaction between a middle-class white male NS customer and an Asian convenience store clerk from the 1993 film, *Falling Down*. The interaction below is tangible evidence that whenever there is a communication burden or difficulty, non-mainstream speakers or speakers of non-standard English varieties are often to blame:

ASIAN: Eighdy fie sen
D-Fens: What?
ASIAN: Eighdy fie sen
D-Fens: I can't understand you…I'm not paying eighty-five cents
                for a stinking soda. I'll give you a quarter. You give me
                seventy 'fie' cents back for the phone. What is a fie?
                There's a 'v' in the word. Fie-vuh. Don't they have 'v's'
                in China?
ASIAN: not Chinese … I am Korean.
D-Fens: Whatever, what difference does that make? You come
                over here and take my money and you don't even have the
                grace to learn to speak my language.
(Smith, 1992, as cited in Lippi-Green, 1997, pp. 101-102)

There has been report that in many cases NSs tend to have unfavorable attitudes toward NNSs, which consequently impair their willingness to communicate with them and to acknowledge NNS speeches (Kang et al., 2015). Practices of linguistic discrimination have also prevailed ELT communities. Bresnahan et al. (2002) and Rubin (1992) have reported that international teaching assistants (ITAs) in many universities in the US have often been regarded by students as being incompetent and underqualified. Worse, many have been subject to taking classes with these ITAs despite the ITAs' exceptional teaching qualifications and flawless grammatical knowledge (Bresnahan et al., 2002; Rubin, 1992).

In Thailand, discriminatory practices based on English language variation is less serious than the inner-circle countries. However, Buripakdi (2008) documented many stories of linguistic discrimination faced by Thai English teachers and writers in her study. For instance, she revealed how a Thai doctorate's accent affected his job: "Some of my students switched to farang [NS] teachers because of my accent" (Buripakdi, 2008, p. 37). Buripakdi also narrated how she once judged Thai English teachers by means of accents. The narrative succinctly showcases how typical Thai English teachers are downgraded and how professional qualifications are marred by accents they hold:

…speaking English with a Thai accent was one of the most delightful topics that we students used to lampoon Thai teachers. We questioned their qualifications for being an English teacher on this basis. We graded good English teachers based on their pronunciation. Most strikingly, we equated quality English teachers with the ability to speak with a farang's accent. …the popular English teachers among us were those who spoke English "Britishly" or "Americanly," but not "Thaily". (Buripakdi, 2008, p. 228)

The issue of discrimination on the basis of language is considered undesirable as it indicates language users' intolerance for lingua-cultural differences. Halliday (1986, as cited in Mahboob, 2005) articulates that a language user who is made embarrassed on "his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being: to make anyone… feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the color of his skin" (p. 62). To counter the standard language ideology, it is important that language users develop a pluralistic perspective on English language variation. In this regard, the paradigm of world Englishes put forward in applied linguistics in recent decades has played an important role in mediating language users' attitudes toward English language variation.

3. The paradigm of world Englishes: Theory and practice

In contrast to the standard language ideology which promotes an assimilation to an ambiguous standard norm, the paradigm of world Englishes stresses the importance of awareness of linguistic diversity and understanding "that English no longer has one single base of authority, prestige and normativity" (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 3). It seems to us that the ground-breaking change that knowledge of world Englishes has contributed to the field of applied linguistics is "the democratization of attitude to English everywhere on the globe" (McArthur, 1987, p. 334), thus offering a new theoretical lens through which English language variation can be looked at.

First, the paradigm of world Englishes seeks to challenge the idea that there is "a single monochrome standard form of English that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech" (Quirk, 1985, p. 6). Likewise, Pennycook (2007) puts it: the paradigm of world Englishes, which pluralizes the English language, "seeks to challenge the notion of a monolithic English emanating from the central Anglo-institution of global hegemony" (p. 4). It is crucial to note that, in a context where English is used as a lingua franca, people may use the same language, but they may not use it in the same manner due to the fact of linguistic nativization and localization. Nor will they need the same taste of English for different communicative purposes. For instance, Smith (1983) illustrates how variation serves people's different linguistic demands in lingua franca communication:

> A Thai does not need to sound like an American in order to use English well with a Filipino at an ASEAN meeting. A Japanese does not need an appreciation of a British lifestyle in order to use English in his business dealings with a Malaysian. The Chinese do not need a background in western literature in order to use English effectively as a language of publications of worldwide distribution. The political leaders of France and Germany use English in private political discussions but this does not mean that they take on the political attitudes of Americans. (p. 7)

Second, the paradigm of world Englishes weakens the idea that a specific variety of English is linguistically superior to or more prestigious than others (Kachru, 1991, 1992). Although many scholars have argued that it presently remains unrealistic to homogenize expanding-circle Englishes (see e.g., Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Nelson, 2011), this does not mean that the expanding-circle Englishes remain marginalized or excluded from the community of world Englishes. It is an undeniable fact that variation does exist within the expanding circle although it is still far from nativization as in the outer circle. Taking Thai English as an example, McKenzie et al. (2016) argue that while Thai English has not yet been established as a single homogeneous variety of English, there is a certain tendency among Thai speakers of English to use a specific form of English that seems "to share both certain commonalities with and stands distinct from forms of English spoken elsewhere in South/South-East Asia" (p. 537). Specifically, empirical evidence has shown that the distinctive features of Thai English can be found at several linguistic levels including lexicon, syntax, phonology and discourse, leading to the conclusion that "the features very much confirm the transfer of Thainess to the use of ThaiE [Thai English]" (Trakulkasemsuk, 2012, p. 110). This illustration indicates that although users of English in many expanding-circle countries are generally dependent on some of the NS standards, there is an evidence that, to a certain degree, expanding-circle Englishes have developed their own systematic characters departing from the NS standards (Trakulkasemsuk, 2012). These characters, however, could be realized as users' bilingual resources for making meaning (Watkhaolarm, 2005; Buripakdi, 2012). The richness of bilingual resources, in turn, helps "foster positive attitudes in becoming Thai English bilinguals (Watkhaolarm, 2005, p. 157). Hence, it should be argued that being regarded as developing varieties of English, the expanding-circle varieties are not necessarily assumed the inferior status or pejorative attribution. The paradigm of world Englishes allows us to neutralize our attitudes toward linguistic differences. Most importantly, since it stresses the importance of what language users know rather than where they come from (Rampton, 1995, as cited in Jenkins, 2006, p. 147), it eliminates the notion of NS linguistic superiority and NNS linguistic inferiority.

Third, the paradigm of world Englishes calls for the need to differentiate between errors and creativities/innovations in language use (Widdowson, 1994). According to world Englishes scholars, linguistic variation can be seen as a solid evidence indicating that language evolves through time and as a means for promoting speakers' creativities (Kachru, 1997; Widdowson, 1994, 1997). As English has gone too far to be associated with the inner-circle mothers (i.e., American and British English), variation in English could be considered linguistically innovative (Widdowson, 1994) and valuable (Jenkins, 2007), allowing English speakers, whether NSs or NNSs, to use the language in their own creative ways (Kachru, 1991). Kanoksilapatham (2016), for instance, fully

supports the reconstruction of a Thai way of English use. She maintains that it is possible for Thais to add their own flavors or creativities to the way they use English. In her illustrations, Thai terms, such as *krengjai, sanuk or maipenrai* can be used creatively in an English sentence, making it reflective of the norm of Thai society. Furthermore, Lowenberg (2002) supports that every language speaker is born with the ability to use language creatively. This is congruent with Crystal (2001) who portrays how creativity plays a big role in the way language is learned: "To have learned a language is immediately to have right in it. You may add to it, modify it, play with it, create in it, ignore bits of it, as you will" (p. 21).

Last but not least, the paradigm of world Englishes infuses English speakers with confidence, inner voice, right and ownership, allowing them to take pride in their own varieties of English (Kachru, 1991). This means that English speakers could create cultural artifacts in English as a means to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas (Scales et al., 2006). The needs of speakers in many different speech communities for English as a means for conveying cultural and linguistic messages have resulted in English acquiring its unique intercultural elements. According to Buripakdi (2008), the most significant value rewarded by the paradigm of world Englishes seems to be the fundamental tenet that allows world Englishes speakers to gain dignity over language use: "it opens up alternatives of meanings and possibilities and allows new ideas to emerge. All language learners… breathing inside and outside the Asian basket do not have to hide in a dim linguistic corner any longer" (p. 65). Buripakdi (2008) goes on to narrate how using the localized form of English allows her to take pride in her own unique English, and how such experience helps her to glorify her identity as a Thai speaker of English:

> I let my writing dance; my inner voice sing; my passion blossom. No longer do I worry if my Thai English is wrong as long as my feeling is right. […] My English smells Thai-ly since I am thinking in Thai but writing in English. This experience illustrates the notion that using English Thai-ly goes beyond strictly linguistic elements: It is the means by which I can say "I am a speaker of English". (p. 66)

We have discussed so far that English language variation, from the perspective of world Englishes, is a common and natural sociolinguistic phenomenon. It is not an exaggeration to claim that English cannot be construed as a static language because it can be modified and adapted to suit speakers' global and local communicative needs. Because of this recognition of the variable nature of English, there has recently been a growing interest among world Englishes researchers in investigating how world Englishes-related knowledge influences learners' language attitudes in many parts of the world.

For instance, Sung (2015) conducted small scale research by involving 25 Hong Kong tertiary students in three global Englishes activities. Based on the semi-structured interview, the students developed deeper understandings of the sociolinguistic realities of English in the world—they knew more about different varieties of English. However, they still held slightly negative attitudes toward NNS varieties (labelling NNS varieties as imperfect). In Korea, Tanghe (2014), developed a conversation course with the focus on world Englishes taught to 49 Korean English majors. Based on student reflections, the students reported increased confidence in speaking English and acceptance of English varieties. The course also allowed them to critically problematize and challenge dominant ideologies of ELT in Korea. More recently, Rose (2017) engaged 25 graduate students in a two-week program called "A Global Approach to English Language Teaching" conducted at a university in Ireland. The students were asked to provide reflections after the program. The findings revealed that many world Englishes topics—e.g., learning about legitimacy of NNS Englishes, the future of English, the power attached to different English varieties—helped the students become aware of linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the students became more critical in viewing, learning and using English. They not only became sensitive to the issue of English ownership, but also became aware of different varieties of English.

These empirical studies have suggested that engaging students in world Englishes perspectives can help them to develop a sense of linguistic diversity or view the world from a pluralistic view, leading to their increased tolerance for English language variation. We feel that it is necessary to actively promote this kind of awareness raising in schools and universities in order to prepare students to function effectively and harmoniously in linguacultural communities more. As research incorporating world English components into ELT has just begun to appear in journals and periodicals, we feel that it is urgent for this type of research to be conducted in various parts of the world including Thailand where people are now witnessing the changing profile of English.

4. Conclusion

This paper discusses how the standard language ideology influences social evaluations of English language variation. Viewing the English language through the lens of world Englishes, we wish to suggest that NS and NNS varieties of English be viewed as linguistically and socially equal, meaning that there is no such thing about a specific variety being associated with linguistic superiority, with all other English varieties broadly lumped into the basket of linguistic inferiority (Lick & Alsagoff, 1998; McKay, 2002).

In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in studies in world Englishes which acknowledge and legitimize international varieties of English outside the inner circle (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2005; Buripakdi,

2012; McKenzie & Gilmore, 2017). Therefore, we need some pedagogic responses that address the importance of having an awareness of linguistic diversity. We feel that it is important for ELT parties to reconceptualize and re-evaluate ELT assumptions and applications that may lead to practices of linguistic discrimination. In light of this, we believe that raising language learners' awareness of world Englishes can be a promising way to increase their tolerance for English language variation and to make them realize sociolinguistic concerns raised by the diffusion of English. It is crucial to note, however, that by raising language learners' awareness of world Englishes, it does not necessarily mean that teachers should stop teaching forms of NS varieties of English, or that a NS-oriented model in ELT needs to be completely replaced by another model. The attempt discussed so far is, instead, to seek opportunities to present an alternative perspective to look at English language variation so that language learners can recognize the messiness of English in the world and become aware of how language attitudes may affect social judgments of English speakers (Song & Drummond, 2009; D'Angelo, 2012).

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