

# Global Englishes Awareness and Pedagogical Practices: A Study of Chinese English Teacher Educators

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## ABSTRACT

Previous studies on Global Englishes (GE) awareness tend to focus on pre- and in-service English teachers, with little attention paid to English teacher educators. Given the potential transfer of English teacher educators' perceptions on diverse Englishes and associated teaching practices to English teacher trainees, this study adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the GE awareness and pedagogical practice of Chinese English teacher educators who are engaged in preparing English teachers for junior middle schools in rural China. The analysis of the data collected via a questionnaire survey with 49 English teacher educators and interviews with seven of them indicates that most participants had a pseudo GE awareness, holding a positive attitude toward non-native English but deeming it as less standard than its native counterpart, and almost all participants followed the native-speakerist paradigm in classroom teaching, and did not actively introduce GE to their students. Revealed simultaneously is that even the participants with long stays overseas also bought into native speakerism. In reference to China's socio-cultural and historical-political contexts, this study proposes that China adjust its national English syllabi and reconstruct the professional development programs for English teacher educators to facilitate the implementation of Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching (ELT) has long been entrenched in native speakerism (Holliday, 2015), with Inner Circle English (Kachru, 1986), particularly Anglo-American English, upheld as the "gold standard" (Liu & Li, 2019). This stands in stark contrast to the accelerating hybridity and fluidity of language in the current globalized and globalizing world, especially the sociolinguistic realities of English today, where non-native English speakers (NNESs) have outnumbered native English speakers (NESs), and more cross-cultural communications in English take place among NNESs (Jenkins, 2015). To bridge this divide, scholars of Global Englishes (GE; e.g., Rose & Galloway, 2019) have consistently advocated for ELT to be shifted from the native-speakerist paradigm to the Global Englishes language teaching (GELT) paradigm. Nevertheless, achieving this shift faces multifaceted challenges.

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One significant challenge is that many English language teachers lack GE awareness. A construct further clarified in this study not merely as a consciousness of the co-existence of native and non-native Englishes but, more importantly, as a mindset that all Englishes are equal, and/or hold negative attitudes toward GELT (Galloway & Rose, 2017; Matsuda, 2017). Given that ELT teachers' beliefs about (non)native Englishes are greatly influenced by their teacher education experiences (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; Lee, 2018), it is crucial to investigate the perceptions of English teacher educators on (non)native Englishes, as well as their pedagogical practices. The knowledge of English teacher educators in these areas becomes even more significant when considering that teacher trainees, including both pre- and in-service teachers, are facing or will face a large number of English language learners. However, previous research on GE awareness and pedagogical practices has primarily focused on pre- and in-service English teachers (Hall et al., 2017; Galloway, 2017; Vettorel & Corrizzato, 2016), with little attention paid to English teacher educators.

This study investigates the GE awareness of Chinese English teacher educators, focusing on those involved in undergraduate-level English teacher education programs preparing English language teachers for junior middle schools in rural China. In light of the interactions between teacher beliefs and pedagogical behaviors (Borg, 2018), it will also examine these teacher educators' pedagogical practices. The focus on (rural) China is motivated by several factors. Firstly, as the world's second-largest economy today, China is increasingly participating in international affairs, therefore rendering English as a lingua franca for communication between Chinese and (non)native English speakers; secondly, China has the largest number of English learners and users in the current world, which significantly impacts the development of English and the global ELT paradigm (Liu, 2022); thirdly, the overwhelming majority of secondary school students in China receive English language education in rural regions (Hu, 2005); and finally, research on GE and GELT in China is limited due to its native-speakerist ELT convention (Gong & Holliday, 2013; Liu & Li, 2019). This study is expected to contribute to the scholarship on GE and GELT and provide insights into the professional development of Chinese English teacher educators.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Global Englishes for Language Teaching**

Global Englishes (GE) is an umbrella term inclusive of those critically oriented, methodologically heterogeneous but ideologically homogeneous studies on the globalization of English, including World Englishes (WE; Kachru & Nelson, 2006), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF; Seidlhofer, 2011) and English as an International Language (EIL; Matsuda, 2012). It assimilates simultaneously nutrients from the burgeoning scholarship propelled by the current increasing border-crossing linguistic practices, such as translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013), translanguaging (Garcia & Li, 2014), metrolinguism (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) and multilinguism (May, 2014). Although committed to redefining the ownership of English, GE aims not to develop a new theory on the globalization of English but to integrate these strands of scholarship to showcase "How the English language functions as a global language" (Galloway, 2017, p. 5). Today, consolidating and further advancing their shared pluricentric and equitable perspective on English, i.e., "An inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic and socio-cultural diversity and fluidity of English use and English users in a globalized world" (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 4).

In light of the current sociolinguistic realities of English, GE scholars have proposed a GELT framework to replace the conventional but still vibrant native-speakerist ELT paradigm. For them, ELT should move away from the discourses and discursive practices that uphold native English speaker (NES) as the target interlocutor, NES as the owner of English, Inner Circle culture as the learning target, native English speaker teachers (NESTs) as the ideal English language teachers, NES as the role model for using English, Inner Circle English as Standard English (StE), first languages and cultures of NNESTs as a hindrance rather than resources, the attainment of NES or NES-like proficiency as the ultimate goal, and NES linguacultural norms as the assessment criterion (Rose & Galloway, 2019, pp. 20-26). In other words, GE scholars believe that ELT needs to 1) increase WE and ELF exposure, 2) emphasize respect for multilingualism, 3) enhance GE awareness, 4) raise awareness of ELF strategies, 5) emphasize respect for diverse cultures and identities, and 6) change native-speakerist English teacher-hiring practices (Rose et al., 2021, p. 3). It is noted that while challenging conventional ELT approaches or methods, GELT itself is not an alternative to them, and at the same time, is not a concrete or even one-size-fit-all teaching approach or method, but a conceptual or ideological guidance for ELT practice today and in the predictable future (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

## **2.2 Teachers' GE Awareness and (Potential) Implementation of GELT**

Following the logic that English language teachers' perceptions on English determine, to a great extent their pedagogical practices, many researchers have attempted in recent years to explore these teachers' GE awareness as well as their (potential) implementation of GELT (see Rose et al., 2021).

These studies tend to focus on pre- and in-service non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs), revealing a prevalent mixed mentality (Ahn, 2014; Eslami et al., 2019; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2015; Christou, et al., 2022; Young & Walsh, 2010). To be specific, most of the participants were found to be aware of the co-existence of native and non-native Englishes as well as the equality of their functionality in communication but insisted on Inner Circle, particularly Anglo-American English as StE. Obviously, this linguistic stance runs contrary to the inclusive perspective on diverse Englishes as advocated by the GE scholarship, illustrating in a sense that these teachers do not have a true GE awareness, which, predictably, makes it impossible for them to implement GELT. Although a certain proportion of the participants displayed a liberal stance on native and non-native Englishes, they were found to be hesitant to implement GELT due to what they deem as practical constraints, such as NES accent being taken as a priority in employment (Lai, 2008), the paucity of teaching materials commensurate with GELT (Choi & Liu, 2020), the lack of know-hows of conducting GELT (Doan, 2014), and the long-established practice in English language testing that upholds NES English as the yardstick (Liu, 2018).

That most pre- and in-service NNESTs lack true GE awareness is also revealed by the scholarship of the Non-native English Speaker Teachers Movement (Braine, 2010). For instance, research on self-perceptions of NNESTs tends to show their positive self-evaluations in respect of pedagogical skill and multicultural knowledge, but a low self-esteem with regard to English language competence (Bernat, 2008; Canagarajah, 1999). These findings, alongside those discussed in the preceding paragraph, illustrate that

“Language proficiency is an area where ‘native-speakerness’ still dominates” (Nguyen, 2017).

Given that teachers’ educational experiences exert great influences on their beliefs and pedagogical acts (Borg, 2018), GE researchers propose incorporating GE theories and GELT skills into ELT teacher education programs (Matsuda, 2017; Rose & Galloway, 2019). In fact, many teacher educators have been doing so in their pedagogical practices (Rose et al., 2021). An outstanding reward for their efforts is the enhancement of teacher trainees’ GE awareness and knowledge of GELT (Ates et al., 2015; Bayyurt, 2018; Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Selvi, 2017). However, more efforts are needed to improve teacher trainees’ positive attitudes toward GELT and their skills to implement GELT (Chern & Curran, 2017; Prabjandee & Fang, 2022). It is worth noting that these teacher educators themselves are GE researchers and, therefore, cannot represent the vast population of English teacher educators, whose GE awareness and pedagogical implementation of GELT are still less known or underexplored.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating Chinese English teacher educators’ GE awareness and examining their classroom teaching practices in relation to GELT, focusing on those who are engaged in preparing English language teachers for junior middle schools in rural China. Specifically, it intends to explore how these English teacher educators perceive (non)native Englishes, how they conduct classroom teaching, and the possible (mis)alignment between their perceptions and actual classroom teaching practices.

### **3. METHOD**

#### **3.1 Context**

In the current junior middle school education sector of China, there are about 0.5 million Chinese English teachers but 49 million students (Liu & Zheng, 2018). The teacher-student ratio is even lower in rural China (Hu, 2005), and, much worse, many teachers there come from other disciplines, such as physics, and have not received formal English language teacher education (Wang, 2020). This highlights the need for Chinese universities to increase the enrollment of their English teacher education programs and provide more education opportunities for in-service English teachers working in rural China.

For this study, three Chinese universities located in three fourth-tier cities in China were chosen (referred to in this paper as University A, University B, and University C). They have all been offering undergraduate-level English language teacher education programs, preparing English language teachers for secondary schools in the rural regions under the administration of these cities. Each program accommodates approximately 400 undergraduate students. Similar to the undergraduate-level English teacher education programs of many other local universities in China, these programs offer three-course cohorts, focusing respectively on English language skills, basic knowledge about linguistics and Anglo-American literature, and pedagogical knowledge and skills. However, despite the globalization of English, no course on this issue has been offered.

#### **3.2 Participants**

This study adopts a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, utilizing questionnaires and interviews as research instruments (Creswell, 2015). A total of 49

Chinese English teachers from the English teacher education programs of the three above-stated universities participated in the questionnaire survey, including 18 teachers from University A, 16 from University B, and 15 from University C. Ten teachers who completed the questionnaire were selected for follow-up interviews. The selection considered voluntary participation, as well as five additional factors involving gender, academic degree, professional rank, overseas experience, and affiliation, in order to maximize their representativeness. Ultimately, seven teachers attended the interviews, with three initially accepting the invitation but later dropping out. To maintain confidentiality, the interviewees are identified as Teacher Interviewees 1-7, with the numerical number indicating the interview sequence. Their profiles are outlined in the following table.

**Table 1**

Gender, academic degree, professional rank, and affiliation of the interviewees

Teacher Interviewee	Gender	Academic Degree	Professional Rank	Oversea Experience	Affiliation
TI-1	Male	MA	Lecturer	Null	University A
TI-2	Male	MA	Associate professor	18 months	University A
TI-3	Female	MA	Lecturer	Null	University B
TI-4	Female	MA	Associate professor	6 months	University B
TI-5	Female	PhD	Lecturer	36 months	University B
TI-6	Female	PhD	Lecturer	24 months	University C
TI-7	Female	PhD	Professor	36 months	University C

Note: TI = Teacher Interviewee

### 3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire is composed of three sections. The first section aims to measure English teacher educators' GE awareness with five Likert scale statements (Items 1-5) adapted from Prabjandee and Fang (2022). Each statement has four choices ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree,' rather than following the popular five-point pattern that has a 'not sure' choice in order to avoid the central tendency bias, namely, respondents tend to choose the middle point of a Likert scale question with an odd number of options (Chan, 2017). The second section intends to investigate English teacher educators' everyday classroom teaching practices and assess how their practices align with their perceptions of GE. It comprises six multiple-choice questions (Items 6-11) adapted from Liu (2018). The third section includes five question items to gather demographic information on the participants. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified through a pilot study with five Chinese English teacher educators; its validity was checked by two applied linguistics researchers with expertise in quantitative research.

Semi-structured interviews were adopted to explore in-depth the participants' GE awareness and the causes for their pedagogical practices. In reference to the analysis of the questionnaire data as well as other studies on ELT practitioners' attitudes toward GE and GELT (e.g., Boonsuk & Ambele, 2020), four guided questions were formulated, covering topics on the status of (non)native English, the reference model in classroom teaching, the necessity to cultivate students' GE awareness, and the (possible) implementation of GELT. Prior to formal interviews, these question items had been pilot-tested with two respondents to the questionnaire survey.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was sent early in March 2022 respectively to the WeChat platform for the English teacher educators working at each of the three aforementioned universities. The 49 teachers responded to the survey, and the completed questionnaires were all valid. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Likert-scale statements (Items 1-4) reaches 0.726, with Item 5 precluded according to the 'alpha if item deleted' option. The interviews were conducted in Chinese, with seven questionnaire respondents in either on-site face-to-face or online format. Each interview lasted about 40 minutes and was audio-taped upon the permission of the interviewees.

The data analysis adopted an integrative approach (Creswell, 2015), though operated in a seemingly separate sequence. Quantitative data collected via the questionnaire were first analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure the extent to which the participants are aware of GE (Items 1-4), locate the overarching pattern of their everyday classroom teaching practices vis-à-vis GELT (Items 6-11), and assess the awareness-practice (dis)agreement. Attention was also paid to the statistical values of individual question items contributing greatly to the overall attitudinal and behavioral pattern. Then, it moves on to dissect the transcribed interview data in line with the thematic analysis method (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Precisely, this analysis aims to further clarify the participants' perceptions on GE as revealed by the quantitative data with a focus on whether their perceptions represent an inclusive perspective on diverse Englishes, and to decide on the crucial factors that constrain or facilitate their implementing GELT. Finally, the analytical results of the two preceding steps were re-examined against the mainstream historical-present discourses and discursive practices within the realm of China's ELT.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 A Pseudo GE Awareness

Table 2 presents the statistics collected through the four Likert scale questions on English teacher educators' GE awareness (Items 1-4). Both the mean value for the question cluster ( $2.08 \pm 0.628$ ) and the average percentage for those who expressed (strong) disagreement on these statements (70.7%) suggest that most of the participants were positive about non-native English. As regards whether non-native English is less standard than native or NES English (Item 3), 55.1% of the participants, however, provided an affirmative answer. These contradictory findings seem to show that the majority of the participants did not have a true GE awareness – an inclusive and democratic stance on diverse Englishes – though deeming non-native English as acceptable. However, the liberal attitude toward non-native English by 44.1% of the participants cannot be ignored.

**Table 2**  
ELT Teacher Educators' Global Englishes (GE) Awareness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
<b>Item 1.</b> I think non-native English (such as Indian English, Nigerian English and Singaporean English) is unacceptable.	9.3%	61.1%	29.6%	0.0%	1.90	0.590

<b>Item 2.</b> I think non-native English is equivalent to broken English.	26.5%	63.3%	10.2%	0.0%	1.84	0.590
<b>Item 3.</b> The English language with L1 features is less standard than native speaker English.	6.1%	38.8%	55.1%	0.0%	2.49	0.617
<b>Item 4.</b> Accents of NNEs are unpleasant to listen to.	16.3%	61.2%	20.4%	2.0%	2.08	0.672
<b>Total</b>	14.6%	56.1%	28.8%	0.5%	2.08	0.628

Notes: N = 49; NNEs = Nonnative English Speakers; L1= First Language; SD = Standard Deviation

This pseudo-GE awareness was also found to be prevalent among the interviewees. Contrary to the conventional view of non-native English as incorrect or even deformed (Seidlhofer, 2011), the seven interviewees stated that non-native English is acceptable, whether it is Outer Circle English such as Indian English or an Expanding Circle English like China English. Frequently heard in their remarks is the scholarly voice that English has become a global lingua franca and learners of English will use English to communicate with people from diverse first language (L1) backgrounds rather than merely with NESs (Dewey, 2015; Llorca, 2016). Moreover, they contended that in English-medium communications, people tend to pay attention to what is said rather than linguistic features, particularly the accents of their interlocutors. In the words of TI-1,

*"I think communication is mainly for exchanging information, and in communication, people pay more attention to the content rather than the language features of the speaker. If you have a strong expression ability and a strong sense of logic and can express complex things clearly, your English is acceptable even if your English has your mother tongue accents."* (TI-1; emphasis added)

In addition, the seven interviewees all pointed out that their current positive attitudes toward non-native English do not originate from their undergraduate education but from their post-graduation experiences with non-native English, either through "communicating with NNEs" (TI-6) or "watching English movies, or reading writings by NNEs" (TI-3). This seems to consolidate, on the one hand, the finding of many previous studies that exposure to (non)native Englishes can invoke GE awareness (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2018; Boonsuk et al., 2021), and confirms, on the other hand the prevalence of native-speakerist practices within traditional ELT teacher education programs. As TI-5 stated, "We were always asked by our teachers to imitate NES English when we were undergraduate students."

To further justify their accepting non-native English, four interviewees resorted to the linguistic landscape of China, comparing non-native English to local Chinese dialects while relating NES English to *Putonghua*, a Chinese variety also called Mandarin Chinese. They thought that people from different regions of China bear their respective local accents and pragmatic patterns when speaking *Putonghua*, but this does not affect communication. As TI-2 stated, "We can understand each other or at least 95% of our interlocutors' *Putonghua* though it is featured with local dialects". Although granting credit to dialect-featured *Putonghua* for its communicative functionality, this statement conveys an implicit message that *Putonghua* is Standard Chinese. Evidently, they neglected that *Putonghua* is, to an extent, the metamorphosis of a Chinese dialect of Hebei, a province in Northern China (Liu,

2018), and, more importantly, that every speaker of a language has his/her idiolect or accent (Davies, 2003; Wardhaugh, 2011). It can be concluded from this English-Chinese analogy that these four interviewees took NES English as StE but regarded non-native English as a subordinate English variety, though not necessarily 'wrong,' 'ugly,' 'corrupt,' or 'lazy' (Trudgill, 1996).

When asked directly whether NES English is more standard than non-native English, five out of the seven interviewees gave an affirmative answer in a taken-for-granted manner, forming a contrast to the other two who asserted that StE is a sociopolitical construct. This explicit and the above-discussed implicit agreement on NES English as StE aligns to a great extent with the statistics for the responses to the Likert scale question (Item 3; see Table 2), namely, 55.1% of the questionnaire respondents considered NES English as more standard than non-native English. Two frequently articulated rationales for this stance emerged from their talks. One is that the English language originates from the Inner Circle countries and therefore, Inner Circle English or NES English is StE; the other rests with the belief that NES English is more intelligible than non-native English due to its 'standard' pronunciation. It is evident they failed to see that the status of a language depends on political, social, and economic factors other than the origin of the language (Wardhaugh, 2011) and that "Phonological elements alone cannot guarantee comprehension the intelligibility of a language" (Liu, 2018, p. 127) as "It is people, not language codes, that understand one another" (Bamgbose, 1998, p. 11). In this sense, most of the interviewees, alongside many other participants in this study, can be said to have not developed a true GE awareness, though arguing that non-native English is acceptable.

#### 4.2 Native-Speakerist Pedagogical Practices

Regarding pedagogical practices, almost all participants (98%) expressed that they adopted NES English as the reference model. In particular, they asked their students to imitate NES in respect of pronunciation, oral expression, and writing style, though these practices differ in frequency rated as 'sometimes,' 'often,' and 'always' (see Table 3). This forms a stark contrast to the positive attitude toward NNES English as expressed by 70.7% of the participants, in addition to the statistics for the Likert scale statement (Item 2) that 44.1% of the participants denied the long perceived inferiority of non-native English to NES English (see Table 2).

**Table 3**  
Teacher Educators' Classroom Teaching Practices in Relation to (Non)Native English

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<b>Item 7.</b> I ask my students to imitate the pronunciation of NESs.	0.0%	30.6%	44.9%	24.5%
<b>Item 8.</b> I ask my students to imitate the oral expressions of NESs.	0.0%	30.6%	53.1%	16.3%
<b>Item 9.</b> I ask my students to imitate NESs' writing style.	6.1%	32.7%	51.0%	10.2%
<b>Total</b>	2.0%	31.3%	49.7%	17.0%

Notes: N = 49; NESs = Native English Speakers



The seven interviewees also admitted that they take NES English as the reference model in classroom teaching, which is most salient in respect of English pronunciation. Five interviewees stated explicitly that they set the acquisition of NES or NES-like pronunciation by their students as the pedagogical goal, and in classroom teaching they asked or even demanded their students to imitate General American (GA) accent or Received Pronunciation (RP). As TI-4 assertively put it,

*“They must imitate [GA or RP], because the students I am teaching will serve as English language teachers in the future and they must first of all have correct English pronunciation. For me, there is no room for negotiation on this issue. [They] must imitate [GA or RP].”* (TI-4; emphasis added)

It is natural that the students TI-4 faces need to improve their English language proficiency and pronunciation, as they will serve as English language teachers. This is more of necessity given that the three universities on which study focuses are local higher educational institutes, whose matriculate quality is comparatively unsatisfactory if measured against Gaokao, the national university entrance examination of China. What is implied in these remarks, however, is that TI-4 as well as the other four interviewees who are deeply concerned with pronunciation bought into the old-fashioned “nativeness principle” in foreign language teaching, which “holds that it is both possible and desirable to achieve native-like pronunciation” ... [but] in practice very few adult learners actually achieve [it]” (Levis, 2005; Marr & English, 2019). In elaborating on the “must imitate” position, they argued that “NES pronunciation is standard and comprehensible to all users of English, be they NESs or NNEs” (TI-5). However, it must be reminded that ‘standard pronunciation’ is a socio-cultural and historical-political construct rather than a linguistic fact based on its phonological traits per se (Lippi-Green, 2012). In the meantime, language pronunciation cannot be equated to language comprehension, which involves “a complex of factors comprising recognizing an expression, knowing its meaning, and knowing what that meaning signifies in the socio-cultural context” (Bamgbose, 1998, p. 11). Furthermore, even if their students could achieve NES or NES-like pronunciation and were then comprehensible to all users of English, whether the students are able to understand L1-featured Englishes of other NNEs would be a question. The situation would be more complicated if the incapability of many learners of English in distinguishing NES accents from non-native English speaker (NNE) accents (Scales et al., 2006) were taken into account.

The other two interviewees (TI-1 and TI-4) seemed to be liberal-minded, though also asking students to learn NES pronunciation. For them, students need an English pronunciation model to follow, and the selection of NES pronunciation as the reference model is made out of the consideration of its social status and the constraints of NES English-oriented textbooks, but it is unnecessary for students to speak exactly like a NES. Perhaps what these two interviewees need to do further is to inform their students of the “why” for choosing this pronunciation model, introduce deliberately to them different English varieties or accents, and make explicit the fallacy that “LX users should be punished for not speaking ... like L1 users” (Dewaele & Sarto, 2022, p. 230). Without doing these, students might develop a native-speakerist perception of the English language and could not see that NES English as StE is merely a socio-political construct because “If the variety serving as the instructional model is the only variety presented in class, an impression might form that it is the only correct variety” (Matsuda & Fredrich, 2011, p. 338).

The interviewees were also found to often ask their students to learn how NESs use English orally and in writing. However, most of them seemed to be lenient in these aspects in comparison with their strictness with learning NES pronunciation, as is shown by their assertion that deviations from NES norms in oral expression and writing style are acceptable if not affecting communicative efficacy. In terms of the former, they thought that "oral English is mainly for communication, and learners do not have to follow exactly NES norms" (TI-7) and "students will inevitably bear the Chinese cultural features when expressing their ideas in English" (TI-5). With regard to the latter, only one interviewee (TI-2) stated that students have to follow exactly the rhetorical pattern of NESs, which he considered more logical and detailed than that of Chinese writings usually filled with empty and formulaic rhetoric. This opinion, though coming from one interviewee, corroborates in a sense that a person's attitude toward his/her L1 exerts influence on his/her attitude toward a foreign language (Widdowson, 2003).

Although NES English is adopted by most of the participants as the reference model in classroom teaching, either out of the ideological effects of native speakerism or due to practical concerns, 82.6% of the participants introduced to their students non-native English and informed their students that learning English entails to communicate mostly with NNEs in the future and not to acculturate to NES culture, though doing these in different frequency rated as 'sometimes', 'often' and 'always' (see Table 4). Worthy of attention is that more than half of the participants (57.8%) only "sometimes" provided these messages to their students.

**Table 4**

Teacher Educators' Classroom Teaching Practices With Respect to GELT

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Usually
<b>Item 10.</b> I tell my students that to learn English is mainly to communicate with NNEs.	30.6%	55.0%	10.0%	4.1%
<b>Item 11.</b> I introduce to my students the English language varieties of (non)native English speaking countries.	8.2%	65.0%	22.0%	4.1%
<b>Item 12.</b> I tell my students that to learn English is not to acculturate to the culture circle of NESs.	16.2%	53.0%	26.0%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	18.3%	57.8%	19.0%	4.1%

Notes: N = 49; NESs = Native English speakers; NNEs = Nonnative English speakers

The frequency, "sometimes," also stays with all the interviewees except TI-3, who is, actually though unconsciously, implementing GELT in classroom teaching. However, this "sometimes" occurs only when they encountered the sporadically scattered information on GE and its implications for English language learning in textbooks. As TI-6 stated, "I only mention the topic of non-native English or the equality of different English language varieties when it appears in textbooks." As such, this "sometimes" practice can be said to represent a passive reaction of those participants to ELT textbooks or the sociolinguistic realities of English today rather than an active act to implement GELT. Notably, such practice may not help students to develop GE awareness, though they argued strongly for the merit of this awareness among students.

When asked whether to implement GELT in the future, six interviewees replied explicitly that they would not. They argued that current NES-oriented "ELT textbooks" (TI-

2), "national standard English examination" (TI-5), and "national ELT teacher education syllabi" (TI-2) constitute practical obstacles to implementing GELT; they also worried about the possible resistance from their students, colleagues and university administrators (TI-7). All these practical and potential obstacles, in addition to the lack of true GE awareness among more than half of the participants (see Section 4.1), further illuminate why almost all the participants adopted NES English as the reference model in classroom teaching (see Table 3) and why only a small percentage of the participants "often" and "usually" introduced to their students the current sociolinguistic landscape of English and English users (see Table 4).

## 5. DISCUSSION

Given the divide between real-world English and English taught in classrooms, as well as the significant influence of English teacher educators on their students' attitudes towards diverse Englishes and pedagogical practices, this study explored Chinese ELT teacher educators' awareness of GE, their classroom teaching practices, and the potential awareness-practice (mis)alignment.

With regard to GE awareness, most of the participants were found to have a pseudo awareness, namely, holding a positive attitude toward non-native English but deeming it as less standard than NES English. This mixed mentality has also been revealed by many other studies (e.g., Ahn, 2014; Eslami et al., 2019; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2015), lending support to what Jenkins (2007) called the "schizophrenia" prevailing among ELT practitioners, who have recognized the existence and equal communicative functionality of native and non-native Englishes, yet still insisting on NES English as StE. Worthy of attention is that a large proportion of the participants (44.9%) displayed a liberal stance on (non)native English. It seems that native speakerism is not as influential as before on ELT practitioners as an entirety.

In terms of pedagogical practice, however, almost all participants admitted to taking NES English as the reference model. Most of them asked or even demanded their students to imitate NES English, particularly NES pronunciation. The consequence of such practice is the reinforcement of the conventional belief that attaining NES or NES-like pronunciation or accent means success in learning English (Liu, 2018). This belief, in addition to their asserted practical constraints such as NES-oriented English textbook, national English curriculum, and national English examination as well as the predicted resistance from students, colleagues and administrators, may explain their refusing to implement GELT or only "sometimes" introducing GE in class, despite their acknowledgment of the necessity to cultivate students' GE awareness.

These mixed findings on GE awareness and pedagogical practice need to be further visited following, in addition to the native-speakerist convention in global ELT, five other interconnected contextual factors surrounding English language education in China, including the historical-present status of China in the world, the top-down governmentality of ELT by the Chinese government, the scope of ELT research published in China, government policies on the Chinese language, the image of teachers within the Chinese culture. This is because beliefs about language and language learning/teaching are shaped by broader historical, political, and economic super macro forces (Kubota, 2018) as well as education culture (Jin & Cortazzi, 2008).

Historically, the state-run English language education in China was initiated by the Qing government after its defeat in the Second Anglo-Chinese War (termed as the Second Opium War in China) in 1860, aiming to learn the Western science and technology for self-strengthening. This instrumental motive also caused China to implement the Open and Reform policy in 1978 (Liu & Li, 2019). The over-100-year 'learning from the West' discourse and its attendant practices inevitably contribute to the superiority of the English-speaking West, granting NES English an unshakeable hegemonic status within China's ELT. This may partly explain the prevalence of the StE ideology among the participants in this study. However, China as the world's second-largest economy at present, and the increased use of English by many Chinese as a lingua franca to contact the world may have enhanced the self-confidence of Chinese English learners in China English (Wang, 2020) as well as their awareness of the equal communicative functionality of native and non-native Englishes. This can be said to have been verified to an extent by this study if the positive attitude toward NNEs English and the liberal stance of a large proportion of the participants on native and non-native Englishes are taken into account (see Table 2).

In China ELT at different educational levels tends to be guided by or even follow exactly national ELT curricula or syllabi (Liu, 2022). In terms of English language standards, the curricula have been native-speakerist in orientation, and this is also true of the national curriculum for undergraduate English-major students recently issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2020, i.e., Teaching Guide for Undergraduate English Majors of General Higher Educational Institutes. For instance, in the description of Comprehensive English, one of the core language skill courses stipulated by this curriculum, it is stated as one pivotal teaching objective that "students should be able to distinguish and use normative English pronunciation and intonation, and accustom themselves to major English language varieties" (MoE, 2020, p. 15). In reference to the ELT tradition within China and beyond, the term "normative English pronunciation and intonation" evidently refers to RP and GA pronunciation, and "major English language varieties" is the pseudonym of Anglo-American English. It is therefore no surprise that almost all participants in this study admitted to taking NES English as the reference model in classroom teaching. As TI-2 stated, "I will not ask students to learn non-native English pronunciation because this does not agree on the regulations of national English teaching curriculum". It is also noted that national ELT curricula determine to a great extent English textbooks and national English examinations in respect of language standard. This is why most of the interviewees resorted to China's current English textbooks and national examinations to justify their rejecting GELT.

Three other contextual factors should be taken into account for further interpretation of the above-stated major findings of this study. Firstly, ELT research articles published in China tend to focus on technical issues such as "what teaching methods are effective for acquiring English" (Liu, 2018, p. 194). This may lead to the lack of true GE awareness on the part of most participants in this study, as they, alongside many Chinese ELT practitioners, often rely on Chinese-version literature for research and teaching inspiration. Secondly, the promotion of *Putonghua* by the Chinese government since 1956 may contribute to their falling into the traditional StE ideology, as *Putonghua* is widely regarded as Standard Chinese, grammatically and phonologically more correct than local Chinese dialects (Liu, 2018). This can be verified by the aforementioned English-Chinese analogy made by the four interviewees, who compared NES English to *Putonghua* but NNEs English to local or regional Chinese dialects. Thirdly, in Chinese cultural contexts, teachers are usually regarded as the source of knowledge or experts in the subjects they teach (Jin

& Cortazzi, 2008) and not allowed to make any mistake. This might be one additional reason for most participants' requiring their students to imitate NES pronunciation, as is evident from the remarks of TI-4, "The students I am teaching will serve as English language teachers ... and they must ... have correct English pronunciation".

Apart from the above-discussed major findings, there is a minor one that deserves attention. Specifically, the seven interviewees all stated that they can accept NNES English and that this positive attitude does not come from their undergraduate education but from their post-graduation experiences with NNES English. On the one hand, this finding seems to prove that exposure to diverse (non)native Englishes can invoke or increase the awareness of GE (Ahn, 2014). However, out of the seven interviewees, four pursued their master's and/or doctoral degrees either in Inner Circle or Outer Circle countries, and definitely had a wide range of contacts with (non)native English speakers. Notwithstanding that, they regarded non-native English as less standard, though considering it to be acceptable. Inferred from this finding is that mere exposure to (non)native Englishes may not lead to GE awareness directly; what is needed is explicit knowledge of GE and linguistic equality. On the other hand, this finding indicates that the undergraduate education of these interviewees was native-speakerist in orientation, as is evident from TI-5's statement that she and her classmates were required to imitate NES English when engaged in undergraduate study. In light of the interactions between language ideology and language learning experience (Lippi-Green, 2012), the interviewees' current views of NNES English as less standard may more or less relate to their undergraduate education. This suggests in turn the importance of adding a course of GE and GELT to ELT teacher education programs to help pre- and in-service teachers understand "how language conventions and language practices [including language teaching] are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 215).

Since language teacher education often influences language teacher trainees' beliefs (Borg, 2011) and, consequently, their future teaching practices, it is highly possible that most of the English teacher educators in this study would cultivate a pseudo-GE awareness and, much worse, a native-speakerist ideology among their teacher trainees, who may, in turn, transfer this awareness and ideology to their (future) students in rural regions. This is unfortunate for the students in rural China, who are already disadvantaged due to its high student-teacher ratio and relatively low-qualified in-service teachers (Liu & Zheng, 2018; Wang, 2020). Therefore, it is imperative for China's ELT policymakers to reconsider and adjust current national ELT syllabi, particularly the national curriculum for English teacher education in reference to the sociolinguistic realities of English today. Meanwhile, top ELT researchers in China should work towards adjusting and even reconstructing the professional development programs for ELT teacher educators to help them understand GE theories and acquire GELT skills to provide better service to pre- and in-service ELT teachers. Perhaps, these programs need to take it as a priority to make teacher educators aware that the ardent or even manic adherence to NES norms in ELT goes against the current sociolinguistic realities of English and unwittingly impose a psychological burden on many teachers and learners, whose English performance is framed as being inferior to that of NESs (Dewaele & Saito, 2022). One concrete strategy is the addition of the courses of GE or cultural politics to English teacher educator development and teacher education programs.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the GE awareness and pedagogical practices of Chinese English teacher educators who are engaged in preparing English language teachers for junior middle schools in rural China. It was found that most participants had a pseudo-GE awareness, holding a positive attitude toward NNEs English but deeming it less standard than NES English, and almost all participants followed the conventional native-speakerist paradigm in classroom teaching. Even those with long stays overseas also bought into native speakerism, upholding Inner Circle English as StE and native speaker pronunciation as the Standard English pronunciation. Evidently, there is a long way to go before implementing GELT in China's ELT.

By exploring Chinese English teacher educators' GE awareness, as well as their pedagogical practices in relation to GELT, this study expands the scope of previous GE and GELT studies that tend to focus on pre- and in-service teachers. Moreover, it further confirms the conception of GE scholars that GE awareness is an inclusive and equitable mindset on traditionally termed native and non-native English varieties rather than the mere knowledge of their existence. In addition, it argues on the basis of its finding that mere exposure to diverse (non)native English may not lead directly to GE awareness, the effective development of which also requires explicit knowledge of GE and GE theories. Despite its merits, this study has some limitations regarding both participant scope and data type. In terms of participant scope, the participants of this study were recruited solely from three Chinese universities. Future studies suggest expanding the sample size by recruiting more participants from a wider range of Chinese universities to ensure that research findings are more representative of Chinese English teacher educators. Regarding data type, the data on teacher educators' pedagogical practices in this study solely consists of their self-reports collected through a questionnaire survey and interviews. Future studies are suggested to adopt classroom observation as an instrument for complement.

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### Availability of Data and Materials

All the data generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly accessible due to the request of the research participants but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Competing Interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests

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### Authors' Contribution

Not applicable

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