Pronunciation Issues and Varieties of English from an EIL Perspective: A Survey of Outer and Expanding Circle Learners' Beliefs

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Abstract

In a globalized era where English keeps the position of an international language, learnt and spoken by lots of people from diverse linguistic, cultural and national backgrounds, there is a need for a new perspective towards English as an international language which can bridge notions and cultures. The appearance of varieties of English is the consequence of the global dissemination of English. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data using a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix A) administered to 60 Iranian learners from expanding circle and 60 Indian learners from outer circle, this study surveyed the developing picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of different varieties of English from the perspective of learners from two circles which include the most users of English in the globalized world. The results of the questionnaires supplemented by interviews with leaners from expanding and outer circles revealed that expanding-circle learners like more to have a native-like identity with their preference towards nativism. The implications on the findings on the spread of native speaker norms and the status of ELF and its reflections in learning and teaching in expanding and outer circle countries are discussed.

Keywords: Pronunciation, Intelligibility, English as an International language, Language Awareness, Identity

1. Introduction

For better or worse, by choice or force, English has 'traveled' to numerous areas of the globe and has been used to serve various purposes (Sharifian, 2009, p.1).Nowadays, the status of English in the place of a global entity has been embraced by many English speaking nations and it has surpassed the geographical and cultural limits of those countries. The important function of English in numerous international, educational, cultural and commercial fields and the outgrowing number of non-native users of English in the world has given rise to the pluralization of English users and types and the global status of English as an international language. Now English as a global entity permeates almost all societies. Crystal (2003: 61) has estimated the number of English users worldwide between 1.1 billion and 1.8 billion, only 320 to 380 million of which are native speakers of English language.

Although there is a strong belief among learners that language belongs to native speakers (Matsuda, 2003), in the context of international communication, interaction usually happens among non-native speakers of English. Indubitably, bilingual and multilingual interlocutors from the outer and expanding circles are main users of English. The use of English has now extended beyond Native Speaker (NS) and No-Native Speaker (NNS) interaction and the vast majority of communication in English does not involve any NSs of the language (Graddol, 1997, 2006). Statistically, English communication happens among more than one billion competent speakers from Outer and expanding circles (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 2006). Canagarajah (2007) believes that majority of English users are from expanding and outer circles in which other languages play important roles in the society, so linguistic proficiency of majority of English users as multilingual speakers cannot be just measured against that of monolingual English speakers.

Jenkins (2006 a: 174) considers that rather than sticking to NS-based norms, teachers should try to raise learners' awareness of different varieties of English and help them to improve their confidence. Following Jenkins, McKay (2012) puts emphasis on language awareness among all users of English, including both L1 and L2 speakers. He believes that EIL users should be aware of notions such as language innovation, varying linguistic and pragmatic norms, negotiation strategies, and social sensitivity in language use. McKay (2012, p. 42) proposes some principles that an EIL pedagogy should follow:

- The promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism;

- Localized l2 language planning and policies;

- The development of an awareness of language variation and use for all students;

- A critical approach to the discourse surrounding the acquisition and use of English;

- An equal access to English learning for all who desire it; and

- A re-examination of the concept of qualified teachers of English.

One of the most important issues in the realm of EIL is the matter of pronunciation in EIL pedagogy. The importance of pronunciation can be for two main reasons: First, creating intelligibility which refers to constructing an understandable discourse among participants within a communicative framework. Second, considering the central role of pronunciation in EIL and the way that it affects learners' awareness towards their sociocultural identity.

Although a number of studies have been accomplished on teachers' and learners' attitudes towards EIL, there are fewer studies that are concerned with the perceptions of nonnative-English-speaking learners (NNESLs) regarding pronunciation and different varieties of English from an EIL perspective. The present study investigated the developing picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of multiple varieties of English from the perspective of learners from two circles which include the most users of English in the globalized world.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 English as an International Language

Sharifian (2009) in his book *English as an International Language* argues that some scholars confuse the term 'International English' with EIL. A definition of EIL and its difference with the term "International English" is proposed by Sharifian (2009). Sharifian writes,

> The use of an adjective plus 'English' often suggests a particular variety, such as American English, Singaporean English or Chinese English. Thus 'International English' can suggest a particular variety of English, which is not at all what EIL intends to capture. EIL in fact rejects the idea of any particular variety being selected as a lingua franca for international communication. EIL emphasizes that English, with its many varieties, is a language of international, and therefore intercultural, communication (p.2).

As Seidlhofer (2011, p.17) puts it "'far more people learning English today will be using it in international contexts rather than in just English-speaking ones". In EIL realm, the distinction between native and non-native speaker is not always clear and the main focus is on communication rather than on the speakers' nationality or skin color. According to Kachru (1992) one of the main aims of EIL is recognition of world Englishes without considering the circle to which they belong.

2.2 The importance of EIL in the globalized world

Firstly, one of the most important factors which gives English an international status is the outgrowing number of its users. Kachru (1986, 1992) used a model that classified the role and use of English around the world into three concentric circles: Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle countries. Inner Circle includes countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), America, Canada and Australia where English is used as the first language. The Outer Circle countries–such as India, Nigeria and Singapore are mutilingual and English has the status of a second language along with other languages. Finally, the Expanding Circle includes countries–such as Iran, China and South Korea where English has the status of a   foreign language in teaching and learning. Undoubtedly, major users of English are bilingual and multilingual speakers from the outer and expanding circles. The use of English has now extended beyond NS-NNS interaction and the vast majority of communication in English does not involve any NSs of the language (Graddol, 1997). Statistically, over one billion competent speakers from outer and expanding circles use English to communicate predominantly with each other ((Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 2006). Although it is difficult to estimate the exact number of English speakers, it is obvious that the number of speakers from Outer and Expanding circles outnumber the speakers from the Inner Circle (McKay, 2003; Jenkins, 2009). Considering the issue of nativism, Modiano (1999) believes that standard for categorizing different interlocutors of English should be language competence and not nativism because language competence should not be something just in the hands of native speakers. Jenkins (2000, p. 160) also puts it forward that "there is no need to weigh up an item as "an error" when the massive numbers of the world's speakers produce and understand it".

Secondly, the increasing number of users of English in the globalized world has led to the emergence of world Englishes (Kachrue, 1986). In other words, Pluricentricism of English language with varieties of vocabulary, accent, grammar and pragmatic discourse conventions is undeniable. Nativization (Kachru 1986), Approriation (Canagarajah, 1999) and re-nationalization (Mckay, 2012) are the preliminary factors for a language to be accepted by the members of a community.

Canagarajah (2006) believes that because of the spread of outer-circle and expanding-circle Englishes into the inner-circle countries no longer World Englishes should be divided into three circles proposed by Kachru. He explains that now vast majority of speakers from the Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle countries live in the Inner-Circle countries, even native speakers of English are more exposed to World Englishes.

2.3 Internationalization of Education

The rapid growth of English has encouraged many scholars to look into the possibility of shifting from traditional ENL (English as a native language) pedagogy in ELT to EIL (English as an International Language (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrik, 2007; Sharifian, 2009; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012). Drawing from a numbers of researchers and scholars

in the field of EIL, Brown (2012, p. 155-156) mentions some significant principles that need to inform the teaching and learning of English in today's era of globalization and get the learners ready to become competent users of English in international contexts which some of them can be as follow:

-Fostering English language and cultural behaviors that will help students communicate effectively with others and achieve friendly relations with English speakers from any culture

-Helping students achieve intelligibility when they are among other English speakers

-Enhancing students' access to and capacity to contribute to the international body of information

-Supporting learning English efficiently and help students feel better about their English learning

-Providing students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used, and furnish them with strategies for handling such differences

-Using "global appropriacy and local appropriation" to help learners be "both global and local speakers of English" who can function both at home in their national culture as well as internationally

-Respecting the local culture of learning and promoting a sense of ownership and confidence in the local varieties of English

-Including models of Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle users of English so students realize that English does not belong exclusively to the Inner Circle.

The development of a curriculum based on EIL is also an important issue in the internationalization process of education. Matsuda (2012) believes that in the development of curriculum three important questions should be replied: (1) does the curriculum represent variety of speakers? (2) does it provide adequate exposure to other varieties of English and raise learners' awareness? Whose cultures are represented? and (4) Is it appropriate for local context?

As cultural and linguistic diversity is the focal point of EIL curriculum, English learners should be guided towards raising their awareness of English language variation and they should be helped to communicative more effectively with interlocutors from different lingua-cultural backgrounds in different contexts.

2.4 EIL and Pronunciation

The ideology of native speakerism has strengthened the assumption that native speakers have a special claim to English language as their belonging. For many years, British and American Englishes, as two overriding varieties of English, have been considered as the most acceptable standards for English language teaching in different parts of the globe especially in expanding circle countries. However, the emergence of ELF (English as Lingua Franca) or EIL as the most fundamental and debatable approach (Graddol,2006) has called the default acceptance of these two dominant varieties of English into question and has emphasized the acceptability of different verities of English used by non-native speakers around the world (Jenkins, 2007; Kirkpatrik, 2010; Seidlhofer,2004). One of the challenging issues in the realm of EIL is the concept of pronunciation. The issue of pronunciation has been vastly discussed by many scholars in the past few years (Jenkins, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2009; Derwing & Munro, 1997, 2005, 2011). Jenkins (2002) believes that the intuitions that are taken into account for pronunciation are those of native speakers and little consideration is given to the intelligibility for non-native speakers, in spite of the fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers by a significant margin. Jenkin (2000, p.207) also points out, "a native-like accent is not necessary for intelligibility in ELF interaction".

Based on Jenkins (2009), all English speakers, even non-native speakers, are members of EIL community. He points out that when Inner Circle speakers participate in EFL communication, they do not set the linguistic agenda. No matter of which circle of use we come from, from an EFL perspective, we all require to make fine-tuning to our local English variety for the assistance of our interlocutors when we they get involved in lingua franca English interaction.

Jenkins' (2000) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) can be considered as a functional feature to the training of pronunciation in the beginning. While sustaining all the most key traits of phonology, Jenkins' model notifies learners about those aspects which are less important for global intelligibility than is presently educated to non-native learners in native-like educational circumstances. This model helps educators and learners to know problematic areas and not blindly follow a particular pronunciation version. Of course, the identity issue plays an important role that students might resist non-native accent. Raising awareness of learners towards global spread of English and the realities of English today can help students to be realistic and not be blind followers of a particular model.

2.5 EIL and Intelligibility

With the emergence of globalization, the concept of intelligibility has been highlighted over attaining a native-like accent (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2000, 2006). Jenkins (2000), as the originator of the ELF core, considers that learners of English as an international language should not adapt to native speaker norms but should fine-tune their speech to suit an audience of mainly nonnative speakers. Smith (1992) views intelligibility as the speaker's awareness of a variety or accent of English: the greater the familiarity, the more likely the user will understand, and be understood by, speakers of that variety. Intelligibility constructs a comprehensible discourse among participants within a given communicative framework. Derwing and Munro (1997) found that intelligibility does not correlate closely with "accentedness" (as measured by inner circle speakers), recommending that learners of English from Japan or elsewhere do not need to mimic inner circle pronunciation in order to be understood by speakers from countries such as America or the UK.

2.6 EIL and Culture

The assumption that non-native English speakers learn English in order to communicate with native English speakers and learn about their culture does not always hold true anymore. While slowly accepting the realities of English language and varieties of it and associate cultures, many textbooks still have an attitude towards Inner Circle norms when presenting culture in the classroom. A multi-cultural approach can aid students to become familiar with different varieties of cultures and variety of speakers who use them. Harumi (2002) proposes a new model with three ways for teaching culture with a new approach: Culture around language – focusing on customs of the various peoples using English in the world in diverse ways; Culture through language – learning about global cultures, while using English to do so; And finally, culture in language – the embedded belief systems of English speakers within the language.

As McKay (2012) has stated EIL should be taught in a way that respects the local culture of learning. The use of these principles in the design of EIL materials can positively encourage the kind of language learning that results incompetent users of English who are aware of varieties of English and can also use English for international communication in ways that respect varieties of English with different culture.

Interculturalism is an approach to teaching culture that seeks to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to understand and respect language users as individuals with complex multiple identities and avoid the stereotyping which accompanies identifying someone's person by their national or ethnic origins (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

2.7 EIL and Identity

One of the challenging issues that has sparked much controversy in the realm of EIL is native and non-native speaker accent, especially its link to identity. A wrong assumption is that native speakers have no difficulty understanding each other's accents because they speak Standard English. Unfortunately, ELT materials usually construct a highly positive image of native speakers, so non-native speakers attempt to assimilate those identities by imitating NS accent.

When English is learned by millions of bilingual speakers as an additional language for international communication, it is necessarily denationalized and acculturated to local specific needs. Hence it is unacceptable that NS-based norms should prevail and serve as the yardstick for measuring NNSs' phonological accuracy, lexico-grammatical correctness and discourse-pragmatic appropriacy (lee, 2012).

Of course, Teachers' actions play an important role in preserving their own identity. Raising learners' awareness towards varieties of English cab be really helpful to encourage learners' confidence in their own varieties of English and in turn it can help them to believe that native model is not the best pedagogic model to be followed.

3. Purpose of the study

This study aimed at investigating the developing picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of multiple varieties of English from the perspective of learners from two circles-expanding and outer circles- which include the most users of English in the globalized world. To explore this area of interest further, the following research questions are formulated:

1- What are Indian and Iranian learners' beliefs about the significance of NS accents and their functions in pronunciation standards?

2-What are Indian and Iranian learners' preferences and expectations in relation to pronunciation norms?

3- To what extent do Indian and Iranian learners take an EIL perspective in response to the ownership of English?

4. METHOD

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 60 adult ESL students from India (as members of outer-circle community) who studied in Almustafa International University and 60 Iranian EFL learners (as members of expanding-circle community) who were English language graduates in English. 10 of each group participated in both the interviews and the surveys.

Table 1. General profile of participants

Participants' information	general	Indian participants	Iranian participants
Gender			
Male		36	34
Female		24	26
Educational Background			
Associate degree		0	0
Undergraduate		24	18
Postgraduate		36	42
Age			
20-25		18	14
26-30		22	26
31+		20	20

4.2 Procedures

This study made use of semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was a modified version adopted from Sifakis and Sougari (2005) and Li (2009).The questionnaire contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Moreover, interviews were conducted with 10 Indian and 10 Iranian learners who had previously answered the questionnaires and had volunteered for the interviews. Basically, the interviews aimed at supplementing the findings of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire has two parts: firstly, Iranian and Indian learners' background information (age, sex, and contact with native or non-native speakers) and secondly, attitudes towards pronunciation and accent-related matters. Items 1 to 4 asked about asked about respondents' views regarding accent-related issues. Item 5 and 6 asked about preferred identity of learners and their attitudes towards non-native accents. Item 7 asked about learners' attitudes towards non-native teachers' accents and item 8 asked about the ownership of English.

Before the actual administration of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 10 English learners in order for the purposes of content and linguistic validity. Five researchers were also consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire and the interview were clear and the scales were appropriate. Based on the feedback obtained, several modifications were done. Regarding the open-ended sections, learners' responses were coded to yield quantitative data.

5. Findings and Discussion

Q.1 examines learners' satisfaction with their own accent. In case of Iranian participants, of the 60 valid responses, 44 (73 %) were not much satisfied with their accents and only 6 (20 %) were fairly satisfied with their accents.

In contrast, a total number of 36 Indian participants (60 %) were fairly satisfied with their accents and there were about 20 percent of participants who claimed to be "very proud" or "extremely proud".

Indian participants' satisfaction with their accent can have some closely related reasons: (1) *their more attention to communication than pronunciation* and (2) *their willingness to have their own Indian English accent in the world*. Here are some Indian participants' remarks regarding their satisfaction with their accents:

> **Indian participant (15)**: *I'm fairly proud of my accent because other nations accept my pronunciation.*

> **Indian participant (22)**: *I'm fairly satisfied because I don't have a problem in communicating with others.*

> **Indian participant (30)**: *My accent is not bad. I'm fairly satisfied with it because conveying message is superior to having native-like accent.*

Iranian participants' responses indicated that most of them like to have native-like pronunciation and because of that they are not satisfied with their accents. Those who were also fairly satisfied with their accents mentioned that they should do their best to have native-like accent.

> **Iranian participant (20)**: *I'm more catholic than Pope. I should have just American accent to be satisfied with my accent.*

> **Iranian participant (41)**: *I have an endless way to learn English with American accent and I do my best.*

> **Iranian participant (48)**: *I'm satisfied with my accent but I should practice more to seem like them.*

Q.2 asked the participants about the importance of getting a native-like accent.

Table 2. The importance of getting a native-like accent

Q.2	How much is it important for you to get a native-like accent?	Indian Participants	Iranian Participants
1	Extremely	6 (10 %)	26 (43.3 %)
2	Very	24 (40 %)	26 (43.3 %)
3	Fairly	28 (46.7 %)	6 (10 %)
4	Not much	2 (3.3%)	2 (3.3 %)
5	Not at all	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total		60 (100.0 %)	60 (100.0 %)

The results show that it is more important for Iranians, in comparison with Indians, to get a native-like accent. The reasons towards this preference are explained in question 3.

Q. 3 asks participants to indicate their preferred English accent: Whether they like to keep the accent of their own country or to sound like native speakers. In case of Iranian participants, of the 60 valid responses, 56 (93.3%) would like to speak English with a native-speaker based accent (see table 3). In contrast, a total number of 38 Indian participants make it clear that native speaker accent is unacceptable to them as role model and they like to have their own local accent as the role model in communication.

Table 3. Participants' preferred accent when they speak English

Q.3	If possible, When speaking English, you would like to	Indian Participants	Iranian Participants
(1)	Keep the accent of your own country	38 (63.3 %)	4 (6.7%)
(2)	Sound like native speakers	16 (26.7%)	56 (93.3 %)
(3)	Other (please specify)	6 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total		60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)

An analysis of the reasons for having NS-based accent can reveal some attributes associated with native-based accent.

Table 4. Reasons for preferring NS-based accent

Attributes of NS-based accent	Iranian Participants	Indian Participants
Beautiful/nice/pleasant	16	4
Correct/accurate/perfect	10	4
Can be easily understood	20	6
Prestigious	10	2

Here are some participants' remarks regarding the preference of a NS-based standard.

> **Iranian Participant (16)**: *Speaking English with native accent is so impressive and I can attract the attention of other people.*

> **Iranian Participant (28)**: *I don't like to be understood as a non-native speaker when I speak English.*

> **Iranian Participant (34)**: *It's more prestigious when you speak like native speakers and this wouldn't happen until I speak like a native.*

> **Indian Participant (16)**: *It's a language derived and rooted from English speaking countries and it can be the best role model.*

> **Indian Participant (44)**: *It is better to speak a language the way it is originally spoken.*

Some reasons by participants supporting their own country's accent can be mentioned as follow:

> **Indian participant (50)**: *I'm comfortable with it when I speak English with the accent of my own country.*

> **Indian Participant (14)**: *English is for communication and I have no problem when I speak English with my friends from different countries.*

Upon closer scrutiny of those participants whose preferred English accent is a NS-based one, it can be understood that it seems more beautiful for most Iranians to have American accent while most Indians like to have British accent.

Q. 4 asks learners about their preference for participants in a listening part of English course book. In option (a), as shown in table 5, preference for native and native participants is seen more among both Iranian and Indian participants (about 60%). Some participants (about 40 %), in both outer and expanding circle, point out in their remarks that learners should become familiar with both native and non-native accents and their preference in listening parts of course books is both native and non-native accent.

Table 5. Participants' preferences for participants in a listening part of English course

Q.4	What is your preference for participants in a listening part of English course book?	Indian Participants	Iranian Participants
(1)	Native and Native	34 (56.7%)	36 (60%)
(2)	Native and Non-native	26 (43.3%)	24 (40%)
(3)	Non-native and Non-native	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total		60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)

However, after participants' responses to Q. 4 were calculated, they were asked whether or not it is necessary if learners become familiar with different varieties of English during an English lesson. The comments of some Indian and Iranian participants are as follows:

> **Indian participant (12)**: *yes. To some extent we need to communicate and work mutually, so it is important to know varieties of English.*

> **Indian participant (28)**: *we need to know various accents if we want to communicate well and I usually communicate with non-natives than natives.*

> **Indian participant (48)**: *Sometimes I get into trouble when I'm not familiar with different accents.*

Iranian participant (32): *being familiar with different accents of non-native English speakers can be helpful in communication.*

Iranian participant (60): *I want to get familiar with different accents and that is the reason that I listen to different accents.*

Iranian participant (18): *some friends of mine are from countries like Pakistan, Japan, South Korea and I think I should know different accents in order to have better communication.*

As shown in their remarks, their preference for being familiar with verities of English may be accounted by two main factors: (1) *concern for understanding different speakers from different countries in the globalized world* (2) *a fact that most speakers of English are non-native speakers and being intelligibility is more important than just having native pronunciation.*

Q.5 examined participants' preferred identity when speaking English. In case of Indian participants as members of outer circle, their remarks are indicative of a concern for both native-like English proficiency and their Indian identity as symbolized by a native-like accent.

Table 6. Participants' preferred identity when speaking English

Q.5	My preferred identity when speaking English	Indian Participants	Iranian participants
1	I want to keep my own country's accent – not a native speaker of English-so long as others can understand me.	42 (70.0%)	4 (6.6%)
2	I want to sound like a native speaker of English	12 (20.0%)	52 (86.8%)
3	Other (please specify)	6 (10.0%)	4 (6.6%)
Total		60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)

Indian Participant (6): *To interact with non-native speakers I speak Indian accent, to talk with foreigners I speak with native accent.*

Indian Participant (8): *I know English is a tool for communication. As a person, I feel very strongly that I'm an Indian though I'm fluent in English.*

Indian Participant (16): *As far as smooth communication takes place I wouldn't mind how I am sounding but I can have both pronunciation.*

Indian Participant (20): *I must pronounce correctly and it doesn't matter whether to talk with native or Indian accent.*

In case of Iranians, the orientation is toward speaking with a native accent. Majority of Iranian participants (over 85%) found it important to sound like native speakers of English when speak English. These are some comments by Iranian participants:

Iranian Participant (4): *I know it is difficult to speak like a native speaker but I want to sound like native speakers of English in order to communicate well.*

Iranian Participant (32): *I want to have a real native accent and I try to have it with trying more and more.*

Iranian Participant (44): *It is more prestigious to speak English with native accent and I can attract more the attention of others when I interact with them.*

Participants were also asked about their attitudes toward non-native English accents in general in question 6. In case of Indians, as members of outer circle, a total of 56 out of 60 say that they find nothing wrong when interacting with others who speak English with a non-native accent, provided communication is not impeded. There are just 4 Indian participants who are in favor of seeing non-native pronunciation should be corrected and American or British model should be replaced with it.

Table 7. Participants' attitudes toward non-native English accent when listening to others speak English

Q.6	My attitude toward non-native English accent when listening to others speak (tick one)	Indian Participants	Iranian Participants
(1)	It's fine when others speak English with a non-native accent – so long as I can understand it.	56 (93.3 %)	20 (33.3%)
(2)	The non-native accent should be corrected.	4 (6.7%)	38 (63.3%)
(3)	Other (please specify)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)
Total		60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)

Here are some comments by Indian participants:

Indian Participant (12): *It is important to convey message properly and clearly. Intelligibility is superior to accent.*

Indian Participant (16): *Accent is secondary as long as it is not a completely different accent.*

Indian Participant (44): *Main reason and purpose for language is being able to communicate clearly without any obstacles. As long as the goal is achieved, I do not see a reason to change my accent.*

One of the Indians in favor of correcting non-native accent believes that English belongs to native speakers and I will be accepted more when I speak with native standard model.

Considering Iranian participants, majority of them, 38 out of 60 believe that non-native accent should be corrected and native standard model should be replaced.

Iranian Participant (16): *You can be better understood by having native-like accent.*

Iranian Participant (14): *Non-native accent is ambiguous and it should be corrected.*

Iranian Participant (58): *It is more beautiful to have native-like accent and I do our best to have American accent.*

Iranian Participant (22): *When you learn English, you should also learn its accent.*

However, some Iranian speakers, 20 out of 60 were in favor of speaking English with non-native accent, so long as it can be understood.

Iranian Participant (26): *we should be able to speak correctly and it is more important than having native-like accent.*

Iranian Participant (54): *I think when we are understood it is enough in communication.*

Iranian Participant (24): *Objective of learning is communication and when we understand each other with non-native accent, why should we emphasize on native-like accent.*

In sum, majority of Iranian participants are in favor of seeing non-native accent should be corrected. It can be generally inferred from the comments by Iranian learners that (1) *native accent is more prestigious among Iranians* (2) *native accent seems more understandable to Iranians* and (3) *native pronunciation (especially American accent) is more favored as a norm for learning.* `

Q. 7 examines participants' attitudes toward non-native teachers' accents. The results show that majority of Indian participants (above 63%) find it unnecessary that teachers should have native-like pronunciation and they should focus more on content of learning than on having a native-based accent, there are nevertheless some Indian participants (about 37%) who like their teachers to have native-like pronunciation.

Table 8. Participants' attitudes toward non-native teachers' accents when teaching English

Q.7	Your attitude toward non-native teachers accent when teaching English	Indian Participants	Iranian Participants
(1)	It is fine when my teacher speaks English with non-native accent and the focus should be more on learning than imitating the accent of native speakers.	38 (63.3 %)	6 (10.0 %)
(2)	My English teacher should have pronunciation like standard American or British English.	22 (36.7%)	54 (90.0 %)
(3)	Other (please specify)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total		60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)

Indian Participant (8): *My English teacher should speak correctly and it isn't important to have native-like pronunciation.*

Indian Participant (20): *I think communication is more important than accent but it's better for my teachers to know standard accents.*

Indian Participant (40): *My English teachers should have Native-based pronunciation but it isn't important in case of other teachers.*

In case of the question, whether or not the teacher of English should demonstrate native-based pronunciation, there are different comments by learners but it is clear that there is near agreement that teachers should somehow pay attention to native accent model, regardless of focusing on content.

Iranian participants' concerns about having teachers with native-based accents is clearly reflected in their responses to Q.7 regarding their preferred teachers in case of pronunciation (about 90 %). These concerns are evidenced in the remarks of some learners:

> **Iranian Participant (42)**: *My teacher should teach me proper pronunciation which is American accent.*
>
> **Iranian Participant (22)**: *If I want to communicate well, I should learn native-like accent.*

Most of the Iranian participants are in favor of having teachers with native-like accent and even they like to have native-like identity (as it was mentioned in Q.5). Even the primacy of pronunciation over accent is the concern of majority of Iranian learners.

Ownership of English

Learners of outer-circle and expanding-circle were also asked about the ownership of English. In case of Iranian learners, about 60% selected native speaker; and 13.3 % selected those nations who use English as an international language. 10% chose bilinguals ("those whose mother tongue is another language, but have grown up using English as well"). Only 6.7 % said "anyone fluent enough to speak the language without major problems" was a rightful owner. Very few took an EIL perspective: Only 10% chose as owners "speakers of the language (independently of problems)." Considering Indian learners, about 55% said native speakers; 22% selected bilinguals ("those whose mother tongue is another language, but have grown up using English as well and 23% chose "speakers of the language (independently of problems) as real owners of English language."

Choosing native speakers as the rightful owner of English shows a strong orientation towards nativisim among both Iranian and Indians but this tendency is more among Iranians. An interesting point is that more Indians take an EIL perspective in comparison with Iranians. This tendency towards nativism is in conflict with EIL norms and shows more trying on behalf of teachers for raising awareness of learners of different varieties of English and promoting their confidence in the global world.

6. Conclusion

Based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data using a semi-structured questionnaire, supplemented by an interview, administered to 60 Iranian learners from expanding circle and 60 Indian learners from outer circle (see Appendix A and B), this study surveyed the emerging picture of EIL pronunciation and evaluation of different varieties of English from the perspective of learners from two circles who are the most users of English in the globalized world. Findings revealed some differences among learners with regard to various models of English and accent pronunciations.

The results of the current study showed that Iranian learners' attachments to inner-circle norms were stronger in comparison with Indian learners. Iranian participants' responses indicated that most of them like to have native-like pronunciation and because of that they are not satisfied with their English accents. Those who were also fairly satisfied with their accents mentioned that they should do their best to have native-like accent. In contrast, Indian participants were more satisfied with their English accent and this satisfaction can be because of their more attention to communication than pronunciation and also their willingness to have their own Indian English accent in the world. In case of Iranian participants, of the 60 valid responses, 56 (93.3%) would like to speak English with a native-speaker based accent while a total number of 38 Indian participants (63.3 %) make it clear that native speaker accent is unacceptable to them as role model and they like to have their own local accent as the role model in communication. Upon closer scrutiny of those participants whose preferred English accent was a NS-based one, it can be understood that it seems more beautiful for most Iranians to have American accent while most Indians like to have British accent.

From the perspective of the learners' preference for participants in a listening part of an English course book , although more than half of the learners in both circles preferred native and native participants in dialogues in the books , a review of their comments revealed their concern for being familiar with verities of English and this can be because of their concern for understanding different speakers from different countries in the globalized world and a fact that mutual intelligibility is more important than just having native pronunciation.

This study also investigated learners' attitudes toward non-native English accents in general. In case of Indians, as members of outer circle, a total of 56 out of 60 say that they find nothing wrong when interacting with others who speak English with a non-native accent, provided communication is not impeded. In contrast, most of Iranian participants (63.3%) indicated that their interlocutors' non-native pronunciation should be corrected and native accent as a more prestigious and more understandable norm should replace the non-native one. Most of the Iranian learners also believed that teachers should provide feedback in case of mispronunciation and demonstrate NS-based pronunciation for learners.

In case of participants' preferred identity when speaking English, Indian participants' remarks are indicative of a concern for both native-like English proficiency and their Indian identity as symbolized by a native-like accent while majority of Iranian participants (over 85%) found it important to sound like native speakers of English when speak English.

Findings of this study also indicated participants' attitudes toward non-native teachers' accents. The results showed that majority of Indian participants (above 63%) find it unnecessary that teachers should have native-like pronunciation and they should focus more on content of learning than on having a native-based accent, there were nevertheless some

Indian participants (about 37%) who liked their teachers to have native-like pronunciation. In case of Iranians, they concerned more (about 90%) about having teachers with native-based accent.

Considering pedagogical implications of this study, Jenkins (2006 a: 174) considers that rather than sticking to NS-based norms, teachers should try to raise learners' awareness of different varieties of English and help them to improve their confidence. Following Jenkins, McKay (2012) puts emphasis on language awareness among all users of English, including both L1 and L2 speakers. He believes that EIL users should be aware of notions such as language innovation, varying linguistic and pragmatic norms, negotiation strategies, and social sensitivity in language use.

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Appendix A

 Learners' Attitudes toward Pronunciation Instruction and Varieties of English

Learner Background:

Name:

Major:

Nationality:

Please check the appropriate option:

a. **Gender***:*   □*Male*   □ *Female*

b. **Age***:*   *20-25   26-30   31+*

c. Years of Learning English Experience: 1-5   6-10   11+

d. Residence in an English-speaking Country: No   Yes   (for……years)

 Directions: The questions below explore different elements of your Attitudes toward Pronunciation Instruction and Varieties of English. Please answer the following questions.

1. Are you proud of your English accent?

□ extremely   □ very   □ fairly   □ not much   □ not at all

Briefly give reasons for your answer: -- --

 2. How much is it important for you to get a native-like accent?

□extremely   □ very   □ fairly   □ not much   □ not at all

 Briefly give reasons for your answer:-- --

 3. If possible, when speaking English, you would like to

□a. keep the accent of your own country

□b. sound like native speakers

□c. others (please specify)--

Reason for your preference: -- --

4. What is your preference for PARTICIPANTS in a listening part of English course book?

□Native and Native

□Native and Non-native

□Non-native and Non-native

5. Your preferred identity when speaking English with Iranian/non-Iranian /Indians/non-Indians (tick one):

□ (a) I want to sound like an Iranian/Indian speaker of English, not a native speaker of English – so long as others can understand me.

□ (b) I want to sound like a native speaker of English

□ (c) Other (please specify)---

6. Your attitude toward non-native English accents when listening to them (tick one):

(*Consider some typical learner pronunciation patterns: "I think this product is nice."*)

□ (a) it's fine when others speak English with a non-native accent – so long as I can understand it.

□ (b) the non-native accent should be corrected (which accent should be the norm?).

□ (c) Other (please specify)---

7. Your attitude towards non-native teachers accents when teaching English (tick one):

□(a) It's fine when my English teachers speaks English with non-native accent and they should focus more on learning than imitating the accent of Native American or British speaker.

□ (b) My English language teachers should have pronunciation like standard American or British English.

□Other (please specify)---

8. Who do you think to be the 'rightful owner' of the English language? Rate in order of importance from 1 to 6 (1: most important).

□the native speakers (independently of nationality).

□those nations who use English as an International language

□those whose mother tongue is another language, but have grown up using   English as well (i.e. they're bilinguals)

□anyone fluent enough to speak the language without major problems.

□anyone who attempts to speak the language (independently of problems).

□ no one.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1-Do you believe it is appropriate to retain your L1 accent in your English or that you should attempt to sound 'native-like'?

2-Are you concerned to be intelligible to listeners when you speak English?

3- In view of the fact that most of our communications are with non-native speakers from other countries, don't you think we should get familiar with varieties of English accent?

4- Who do you think is the real owner of English?