Language Instructors' Perceptions on the Utilization of English as an International Language in English-Speaking Instruction

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Abstract

This study examined the attitudes of English as an International Language (EIL) instructors in Saudi Arabia and its impact on their beliefs. A blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. The collection of quantitative data was done through a Likert scale questionnaire, while the collection of qualitative data was done through semi-structured interviews. For the quantitative data, participants responded to around 50 % of the questions, viewed a short film, and then responded to the remaining questions. The short film introduced the participants to the notion of EIL. The sample comprised 66 university-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher teaching in a Saudi university. Then, to get a deeper comprehension of the responses, four participants, consisting of two male and two female EFL instructors, were interviewed. The quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS. The qualitative data were analyzed manually. Findings from this study indicated that most participants had positive views about EIL, with 74.2% agreeing they received enough English instruction for EIL training and 68.3% considering EIL in classroom activities. In addition, academics appeared receptive to EIL speaking training, arguing that English is a communicative language regardless of the accent. The study suggests that exposure to EIL-speaking instruction positively affects teaching practices and increases students' confidence. The findings suggest that instructors should be introduced to the EIL concept to enhance pedagogy, encouraging students to focus on developing their speaking skills in general.

Keywords: World Englishes, English as an International, English Language Learners, English Language Teaching, Oral communication

1. Introduction

The global use of English has unquestionably resulted in its recognition as a lingua franca. McKay (2002) pointed out that English has achieved its global status through four distinct mechanisms: It serves as a bridge for global communication between varied countries and cultures. The English language has evolved beyond its strong ties to the cultural customs of the Inner Circle nations. It is deeply woven into the cultural structure of the countries where it is used. The primary purpose of the language is to enhance communication among its users. Nihalani (2010) posited that English speakers from diverse regions, including Singapore, India, and South Africa, have significantly shaped the English language, introducing distinct and unique features. These influences fundamentally reshape the global perception of the English language, inspiring a new appreciation for its diversity and adaptability (Nihalani, 2010, p. 25).

According to Crystal (2003), English is the predominant language taught globally, with more than 100 countries providing education in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thus, non-native English speakers surpass native speakers in terms of predominance, as the population of non-native English speakers has significantly increased (Nihalani, 2010; Crystal, 2012). The increasing diversity in language and culture within the global English language setting has required a more complex approach to teaching EFL. Therefore, it resulted in the development of various forms of English spoken by both native and non-native speakers, which is commonly referred to as World Englishes (WEs) (Marlina, 2014; Kachru, 1985).

Due to significant changes in the demography of English users, the previous notion that learners primarily study English to converse with native speakers in the Inner Circle is now invalid. Currently, most English Language Learners (ELLs) can converse in several accents and engage with native and non-native speakers from various global locations. According to McKay (2002), scholars and educators concur that teaching and learning English as an International Language (EIL) should be based on a unique set of concepts different from those employed in teaching other second or foreign languages. In the past, English was thought of as a stable and uniform concept, but the recognition of its variety has challenged that view (Matsuda, 2012; Jenkins, 2000). This substantially impacts English teaching and strengthens the notion of EIL.

The literature on EIL has generated numerous inquiries concerning the ownership of English, the distinctive features of WEs, the cultural implications of English, biases towards native speakers, linguistic dominance, the purpose of acquiring English, attitudes towards different English varieties, deficiencies in the curriculum and teacher training under new assumptions, and the ideal representation of an "exemplary" English speaker. Given the assumptions and challenges described above, a new paradigm has emerged in the field of English language teaching. This approach aims to comprehensively investigate the educational judgments that are often accepted without being questioned (Matsuda, 2012, p. 4).

Currently, the field of English language education recognizes EIL and WEs literature as a rapidly expanding area of research. Researchers in this domain are investigating the worldwide dissemination of the English language, along with its status, roles, and use contexts. Awareness of this phenomenon has steadily risen in recent decades, as evidenced by the establishment of specialized academic journals such as World Englishes, English Today, and English Worldwide. Furthermore, there has been a substantial increase in the number of publications in this field, written explicitly by scholars from the Outer and Expanding Circles.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Historically, the goal of attaining fluency equivalent to that of a native speaker has significantly influenced the field of teaching and studying ESL/EFL. However, the changing population of English speakers, the status of the English language, and its evolving usage have created new demands for individuals acquiring or using English, especially in non-conventional English-speaking nations. Most English speakers are bilingual, using English as their second language to interact with non-native English speakers globally. The wide range of languages, cultures, and uses connected to English in modern society challenges the fundamental principles of English Language Teaching (ELT) and requires reassessing teaching methods, especially in courses on English as a global language.

ELLs may struggle with acquiring proficient oral communication skills due to the traditional concept of speaking "proper" English, which requires them to invest time and effort in achieving native or native-like pronunciation. However, if ELLs feel satisfied with their accents and recognize the importance of skillful communication, they may realize that having a native-like ability in English is optional. The growing focus on EIL necessitates a significant shift in English teaching methods, particularly in EFL environments, and a thorough examination of teacher training to improve the effectiveness of teaching English speaking skills within this new framework, considering the demographics of English speakers and their intended audience, especially in countries in the Expanding Circle.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to understand the views of EFL instructors in Saudi Arabia on teaching English speaking skills. It questioned whether they should focus on achieving a native-like accent or ensuring comprehensible speech. While some educators and learners support either approach, EIL emphasizes effective communication over native-like fluency. The study examined the current viewpoints of educators on EIL instruction in Saudi Arabia and their impact on their proficiency in teaching EFL. The findings are crucial for improving educational strategies and promoting effective communication among ELLs.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 English as an International Language (EIL)

EIL is a paradigm shift in ELT and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that acknowledges the diversity and multiculturality of English varieties and their functions across various contexts and circles (Marlina, 2014). It rejects the notion of a single English variety as the medium for international communication and emphasizes English as a language of international and intercultural communication with its pluralized forms (Sharifian, 2018). EIL promotes a pluricentric view of English, focusing on communication rather than speakers' skin color or nationality. It is considered an epistemological and linguistic lens for critically revisiting ways of conceptualizing English, reassessing analytical tools and approaches in sociolinguistics of English and TESOL disciplines, and revising pedagogical strategies for English language education (Marlina, 2014).

According to Marlina (2014), EIL encourages the recognition of English's international functions and its use by speakers from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other's mother tongues. This emerging paradigm in ELT aims to promote diversity and multiculturality of English varieties and move away from teaching for native competence (Matsuda, 2019; Alsagoff et al., 2012). It implicitly embraces theories like translanguaging, acknowledging the fluidity of languages and language practices that should be applied in the language classroom.

The EIL paradigm emphasizes raising awareness among teachers and learners about diverse English varieties, reflecting bilingual and multilingual identities, sociocultural norms, and political affiliations. According to Doğançay-Aktuna & Hardman (2017), "English language teachers, both native and non-native speakers, need to understand these varieties and teach their students sociolinguistic tools to navigate across Englishes" (p. 19). This comprehensive education promotes an understanding of language and identity relationships, the negotiated nature of intercultural communication, and language variation and change.

1.3.2 World Englishes (WEs) Paradigms

Indian-American linguist Braj Kachru proposed a model classifying English speakers into three concentric circles (see Figure 1): Inner Circle (UK, US, Australia, etc.), Outer Circle (India, Philippines, Nigeria, etc.), and Expanding Circle (Brazil, Germany, China, etc.). This "model has successfully promoted sociolinguistics of the global spread of English and raised awareness of dynamic varieties of WEs" (Chew, 2010, p. 45). However, Kachru's model has faced criticism for several reasons, including ignoring users' identification, countries that moved from the Expanding Circle to the Outer Circle, bilingual or multilingual people, and language proficiency of speakers.
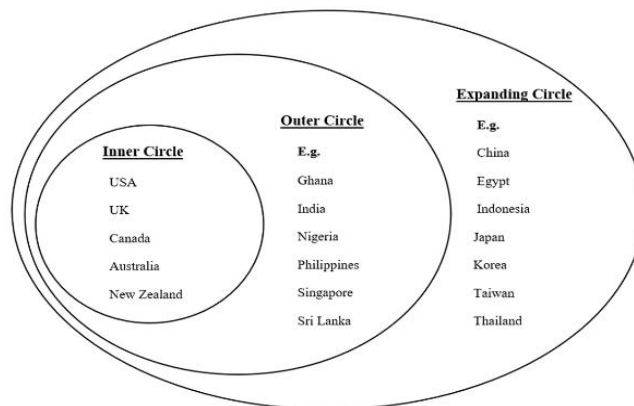
Figure 1. World Englishes Classification

Modiano's revised model, introduced in 1999, emphasizes language proficiency as the primary distinguishing factor among English varieties, rejecting the prestige concept. This model disrupts the traditional hierarchical placement of English varieties and includes Foreign Language Speakers (see Figure 2). It positions EIL at the center as a lingua franca, excluding specific English varieties or countries. The model prioritizes proficiency over country of origin, removing the notion of prestige based on nationality, country of origin, race, or native/non-native dichotomy.
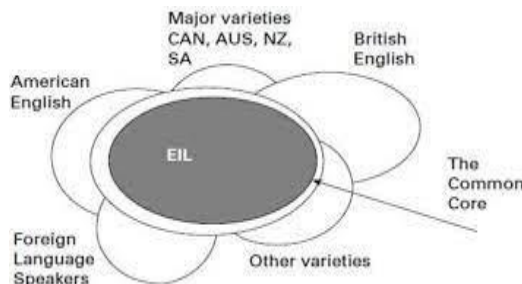

Figure 2. Modiano's revised model

The Kachruvian school of thought emphasized inclusivity and pluricentricity in understanding the linguistics of English worldwide. WEs was viewed as a paradigm that captures the dynamic nature of language spread worldwide and advocated for recognizing English varieties from Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries and new varieties from Outer Circle countries or all varieties of English worldwide (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011; Bolton, 2012).

WEs faced criticism for ignoring regional English varieties within a single country and the ideological implications of legitimating periphery Englishes. Saraceni (2009) argued that WEs ignores regional varieties, sociolects, and idiolects, while Canagarajah (1999) noted that Kachruvian WEs systematized periphery variants, valuing educated versions of local English and leaving out eccentric hybrid forms as unsystematic.

1.3.3 WEs in EIL

WEs is a key principle in the EIL paradigm, introduced around three decades ago. According to Bolton (2012), it refers to "localized forms of English found worldwide, particularly in the Caribbean, parts of Africa, and many societies in Asia" (p.13). The dominant discussion on ELT before the 80s was mainly within the "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" dichotomy, which promoted the classification of the English language into "Native Language, ESL, EFL, and EIL" (Bolton, 2012, p.13). However, scholastic debates about English varieties' features, functions, and status globally date back to the sixties. Holliday (2005) argued that English is no longer the possession of the British or Americans but is an international language adopted by increasing numbers of people for various purposes. McArthur (1987) proposed a diagram that displays WEs and their relationships, placing World Standard English in the center, surrounded by regional varieties and sub-varieties of English.
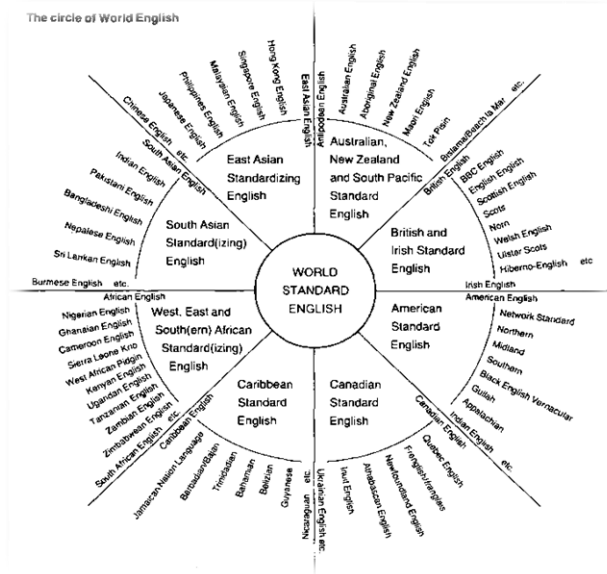
Figure 3. Relationship among the World Englishes, according to McArthur (1987)

Smith (1976) introduced the term "English as an International Auxiliary Language," reflecting the global usage of English. This term emerged as a response to traditional terms like ESL or EFL. Smith's contributions led to a paradigm shift in English language teaching, with the recognition of "Englishes" in the plural, including "Varieties of English," "International Englishes," "New Englishes," "English languages," and "World Englishes" (Bolton, 2012, p.14).

WEs is a growing trend in scholarly research that examines the global spread of English, its status, functions, and usage contexts. The emergence of specialized academic journals like World Englishes, English Today, and English Worldwide and the growing number of publications by scholars from the Outer Circle have strengthened this recognition. This interest in "New Englishes" has been paralleled by a related interest in new literature in English, particularly from writers from former British colonies, such as Arundhati Roy (India), Ben Okri and Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Derek Walcott (Saint Lucia), Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka), Naipaul (Trinidad), Timothy Mo (Hong Kong) and Salman Rushdie (India) (Bolton, 2012, p. 15).

1.3.4 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

ELF is a crucial aspect of EIL literature, used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages. Originally derived from the Arabic language 'lisan-al-farang,' it was used as an intermediary language between Arabic speakers and travelers from Western Europe (House, 2003). The term is preferred when English is used as a means of communication across linguistic boundaries. ELF refers to the growing trend of English users from mainland Europe, China, and Brazil using English more frequently as a contact language among themselves rather than with native English speakers.

English is now considered a global lingua franca due to its widespread use across various domains and functional feasibility (House, 2003). This has led to an unprecedented phenomenon where there are more non-native English speakers than native speakers. This marks the first time a single language has become universal enough to serve as a global lingua franca for communication among speakers of many languages (Graddol, 2007). The number of ELF users is rapidly increasing, with estimates suggesting there may be as many as two billion English speakers worldwide (Crystal, 2008). This would mean over 1 billion EFL/ELF users and approximately one in three of the world's population can communicate effectively in English (Crystal, 2012).

Kirkpatrick (2017) discussed six principles of the Lingua Franca approach in the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These principles focus on mutual intelligibility, intercultural competence in relevant cultures, suitable local multilingual teachers, excellent learning environments for lingua franca speakers, spoken language differences from written language, and the relevance of assessment to the ASEAN context.

ASEAN, consisting of Vietnam, Brunei, Cambodia, Burma, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Laos, and Malaysia, uses English as a lingua franca. In 2009, the ASEAN Charter made English the sole working language, and all discussions and documents are in English. This allows ASEAN countries to use English as an equalizer and defend their interests (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Clayton, 2006).

In Europe's highly multilingual context, English ensures that no particular group has a linguistic or cultural advantage, contributing to solving communicative and sociocultural challenges in the region. In summary, the Lingua Franca approach emphasizes the importance of mutual intelligibility, intercultural competence, suitable local multilingual teachers, and relevant assessment.

1.3.5 EIL Teaching

English is the predominant language taught worldwide, with over 100 countries offering instruction in it. However, traditional ELT pedagogy frequently promotes the acquisition of a native English accent and implies that any deviation from a native speaker model is considered a fault (McKay, 2003; Jenkins, 2003). This has resulted in discontentment with the conventional native speaker approach, prompting experts to advocate for a fundamental change in ELT. Japanese public schools have modified their approach to English instruction by including many forms of English, including the Model of Japanese English, which is recognized and embraced as a global language (Honna, 2016, p. 67).

In his study, Matsuda (2012) proposed that nations in the Expanding Circle have the potential to create their own variations of English, such as Malaysian English and Indian English. This would enable English learners to communicate more efficiently in a worldwide society.   Richards (2008) highlighted the need to introduce students to a wider range of English dialects, whereas Chang (2014) found that being exposed to different English dialects helped students gain a greater understanding of and enhanced confidence in learning, perceiving, and using English as non-native speakers.

Richards (2008) and Chang (2014) performed studies on the influence of EIL on speaking classrooms, highlighting the importance of instructors exposing pupils to a wide array of English dialects. Chang's research, conducted on a group of 22 Taiwanese undergraduate students, revealed that being exposed to various forms of the English language assisted the students in developing a greater understanding and confidence in learning and utilizing English as non-native speakers. Seidlhofer (2005) and Jenkins (2006) proposed that EIL and WEs should be pragmatically included in ELT pedagogy to address the discrepancy between theory and practice. According to McKay (2003), there is no requirement to attain an accent that is identical to that of a native speaker. However, Honna (2016) argued that English is a diverse language that incorporates cultural and linguistic elements from different languages. Baccaglini (2013) conducted interviews with eight foreign researchers and English learners to get their perspectives on EIL instruction. The findings revealed a range of ideas reflecting the dynamic nature of the EIL concept. One participant suggested that people should possess knowledge of many varieties of the English language because they communicate with non-native English speakers and the rest of the world.

1.3.6 Teaching the Skill of Speaking in English

Teaching English speaking skills has transformed throughout history, characterized by modifications that took place over three separate and identifiable periods. During the 1970s and early 1980s, audio-lingual teaching methods were widespread, with a primary emphasis on replicating American English pronunciation. In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, teachers emphasized the development of fluency in speaking and were lenient towards minor mistakes made by students. The globalization of English in the 21st century has resulted in greater recognition of many English dialects and the associated beliefs and practices linked to these local variations (Matsuda & Freidrich, 2011).

Traditional English teaching methods require students to imitate a native accent, which can hinder intelligibility in communication with non-native speakers. Matsuda (2012) suggested that English teachers should think about English differently and embrace the diverse forms of English that students bring into the classroom. Tanghe (2014) found that exposing students to WEs and different English varieties was beneficial for developing language proficiency.

According to scholars such as Jenkins (2000) and Low (2015), the population of non-native English speakers has surpassed that of native speakers, making it unnecessary to consider native English speakers as a benchmark for instructing English speaking skills. Due to the limited availability of native English speakers for conversation, non-native English speakers face restricted possibilities for interaction. Therefore, it is advantageous to include non-native accents in the English language curriculum. Jenkins (2000) argued that exposure to a wide range of non-native English is crucial for EIL.

Richards (2008) highlighted the importance of listening skills in the context of speaking and listening teaching. Currently, the main goal of speaking lessons is to promote fluency, which may be achieved through efficient communication exercises. Baccaglini (2013) has shown that ELT pedagogies ought to include techniques for students who face difficulties in English communication, specifically in oral communication.

1.3.7 EIL and Teaching the Skill of Speaking

Scholars (Chun, 1988; Hahn, 2004; Low, 2015; Pennington & Ellis, 2000) have proposed various strategies for EIL speaking skills. These include incorporating information about diverse cultures, using students' first language (L1) in English classes, and teaching intonation to help listeners understand and interpret dialogue (Chun, 1988). Teaching suprasegmentals, such as stress, pitch, and juncture, is also crucial in EIL speaking courses (Hahn, 2004).

Hahn (2004), Low (2015), and Pennington and Ellis (2000) all emphasized the importance of teaching primary stress placement in English. This involves emphasizing a syllable or word above others in a word or sentence by increasing its loudness and vowel length. This feature facilitates the development of English learners' ability to produce primary stress and enhances overall intelligibility. Levis (2005) suggested using stress on content words rather than function words to distinguish them. Low (2015) proposed illustrating misconceptions caused by differences in the main stress position. Students' awareness of main stress may be increased by perceptual exercises, while oral presentations and reading aloud can help enhance stress placement abilities.

1.3.8 Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions

Matsuda and Freidrich (2011) highlighted the importance of teachers' beliefs and attitudes in ELT. A study by Lai (2008) investigated the perspectives of Taiwanese university professors about EIL and the culture of the target language. The findings revealed conflicts and debates among participants, with a few believing that specific nations or speakers "owned" English, leading to ELLs learning English in an American or British model.

Luo (2017) explored the attitudes of seven English lecturers from Taiwanese universities about ELF in Taiwan, whereas Pan and Block (2011) evaluated the attitudes of Chinese professors and students at six Beijing institutions toward teaching EIL. The findings revealed that instructors believed in the popularity of EIL and its role in China's development.

Arrieta (2016) conducted a study on the opinions of teachers and students regarding accented English and the integration of WEs into English courses. Instructors and students from two universities in the United States took part in online questionnaires both before and after viewing a 4-minute video on WEs. Initially, the instructors showed little interest in receiving training on WEs, but their perspectives shifted somewhat after watching the video. Teachers' opinions and perspectives are essential in ELT and its execution.

1.4 Research Questions

The study aimed to investigate the following research questions:

What are the perspectives of English university instructors in Saudi Arabia on the use of EIL in teaching spoken English?

Does the integration of EIL in English-speaking classroom instruction impact the perspectives of EFL instructors in Saudi universities?

2. Method

Because of its ability to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches, a mixed-methods strategy was used, overcoming the inherent limits of each method.   The survey used a Likert scale to collect numerical data, while a semi-structured interview was used to collect qualitative data.

2.1 Participants

The research involved 66 university-level instructors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The male participants accounted for 56.1% of the total, while the female participants accounted for 43.9%. All participants had a minimum of three years of teaching experience in English speaking, with the majority having over ten years of experience. 37.9% of the participants received instruction or pursued their education in English in a country where English is the primary language.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were given the option to provide their contact information for any follow-up interviews. A sample of four volunteers was selected at random from the list, comprising two male and two female EFL instructors at a university in Saudi Arabia. All four participants possessed a minimum of five years of experience in teaching EFL.

2.1 Instrument

An online survey adapted from Arrieta's (2016) study was used to investigate EFL educators' thoughts and perspectives on pronunciation in EIL settings (see Appendix A). The questionnaire consisted of three sections: pre-film questions, post-film questions, and personal inquiries. The questionnaire started with a concise elucidation of the concept of EIL in relation to oral communication. The pre-film questions facilitated the response to the initial research question, whereas the post-film questions facilitated the response to the second question.

The questionnaire includes a short film that participants may view while filling out the form. As a result, the participants answered around half of the questions, watched the video, and then answered the remaining questions. The notion of EIL in spoken education was explained to participants in this 4-minute video. The goal was to see if incorporating EIL into speaking training would change academics' impressions of English-speaking instruction in Saudi Arabia. Professor Jack Richards, the video's speaker, is a world-renowned specialist in teacher training, English language acquisition, and curriculum design. A brief introduction of the speaker was delivered before the video to provide spectators with an explicit knowledge of his identity. After completing the questionnaire, participants were requested to provide their email addresses if they consented to partake in a subsequent interview.

A semi-structured interview was designed to understand the replies better (see Appendix B). Four people voluntarily answered questions. The interview questions were developed to mirror the questionnaire replies to understand the reasons for participants' responses.

2.3 Data Collection

The researchers obtained approval from the outstanding committee for scientific research at Jazan University January 1, 2024, in order to initiate the data collection process. The survey link was initially distributed to the participants. A total of 66 responses were collected from EFL instructors at Saudi University. Following the conclusion of the survey, participants were given the option to provide their contact information for any follow-up interviews. Subsequently, a random selection process was employed to choose four participants for the semi-structured interviews, consisting of two female and two male EFL. Following that, interviews were conducted. The interviewees' data were manually recorded and transcribed. To maintain anonymity, the names of the interviewees were replaced with numerical identifiers.

3. Results

The findings are organized into two primary categories. The initial presentation focuses on the quantitative analysis derived from the survey administration, which is subsequently followed by a concise overview of the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews. The examination of these data provided valuable insight in answering the research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of English university instructors in Saudi Arabia on the use of EIL in teaching spoken English?

2. Does the integration of EIL in English-speaking classroom instruction impact the perspectives of EFL instructors in Saudi universities?

Due to the mixed-methods approach used in this study, the data analysis involved employing a comparison approach to assess and distinguish between the quantitative and qualitative measures. Ivankova and Creswell (2009) suggest that the prevailing method is to compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative results to verify or support the findings of the entire investigation (p. 142).

3.1 Statistics and Quantitative Data

The study used a survey to gather professors' perceptions of EIL, with a pre-film questionnaire and a post-film questionnaire assessing the impact of EIL exposure. The results here are to answer the research question.

3.1.1 Preliminary Interpretation

The survey employed a Likert scale to collect quantitative data, and the analysis was performed using SPSS. This analysis involved examining descriptive statistics for each item, such as the frequencies, means, and standard deviations (see Tables 1 and 2). The items analysis indicated that all items exhibited sufficient variance, leading to their retention at this stage.

The data were subsequently analyzed to ascertain their suitability for factor analysis. On analysis of the correlation matrix, it was seen that each variable exhibited a correlation coefficient ($r = 0.3$) with at least one additional variable. This indicates that all items were interrelated, and no items required removal.

Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a p-value of 0.00, indicating that the data exhibit a strong fit for factor analysis and demonstrate standardized correlations.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy was assessed, and it was concluded that the data is appropriate for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a cut-off above 0.50, specifically 0.91.

3.1.2 Pre-Film Results

Teachers' perspectives and attitudes are crucial in ELT and have a significant impact on students. The study sought to better understand the perspectives of English university teachers on EIL in the context of speaking instruction in Saudi Arabia. The results showed that the majority of participants expressed a high level of agreement, with "strongly agree" and "agree" being the most often chosen replies. Conversely, "disagree" and "strongly disagree" were the least commonly selected options for almost all items, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations values for the Pre-film Responses of EFL instructors

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree	M	SD
I received sufficient English instruction for EIL training.	60.6%	13.6%	13.6%	4.5%	7.6%	4.15	1.27
I consider EIL in my classroom activities, instructional approaches, or instructional resources.	63.6%	22.7%	4.5%	6.1%	3%	4.38	1.03
I prefer teaching a particular dialect of English, such as American or British English.	33.3%	24.2%	21.2%	9.1%	12.1%	4.58	1.36
I believe it is critical in education to receive training and/or gain knowledge in EIL.	51.5%	27.3%	9.1%	4.5%	7.6%	4.11	1.22
I believe it is critical for me to integrate the concept of EIL into my lectures, materials, or overall practice, regardless of whether I have received EIL training.	43.9%	27.3%	13.6%	6.1%	9.1%	3.91	1.29
I think non-native English speakers can thrive in English-speaking countries even if they don't fully understand the difference in the way native and non-native speakers communicate.	37.9%	34.8%	16.7%	6.1%	4.5%	3.91	1.1
I believe that people who speak English as a foreign language, despite having a non-native accent, can succeed in English-speaking countries.	66.7%	25.8%	4.5%	1.5%	1.5%	4.55	0.79

Table 1 shows that most instructors have received adequate training in EIL, with a mean of 4.09 (SD=1.19) across all seven items, indicating their overall understanding of the concept.

3.1.3 Post-Video Results

The study examines the perspectives of the instructors after watching the short film, specifically exploring the impact of English as an International Language (EIL) on teaching speaking skills. Table 2 presents the frequency of their comments after seeing the video.

Table 2. Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations values for the Post-film Responses of EFL instructors

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree	M	SD
The video that I have just viewed appears to have the potential to be advantageous in my classroom.	48.5%	24.2%	18.2%	6.1%	3%	4.09	1.09
Regarding speaking abilities, I believe obtaining EIL instruction is crucial.	37.9%	37.9%	18.2	3%	3%	4.05	0.93
Regarding speaking abilities, I believe my students must acquire EIL knowledge.	45.5%	33.3%	12.1%	4.5%	4.5%	4.11	1.08
Familiarity with the concept of EIL in relation to speaking is crucial, in my opinion, for the success of my students as English speakers.	31.8%	39.4%	19.7%	9.1%	0%	3.94	0.94
I believe it is essential to integrate the concept of EIL in relation to speaking abilities into EFL curricula.	37.9%	40.9%	16.7%	1.5%	3%	4.09	0.94
The speaker in the video is a "good speaker," in my opinion.	58.5%	27.7%	10.8%	1.5%	1.5%	4.4	0.86
I believe students can succeed as English speakers despite a non-native accent.	63.6%	28.8%	4.5%	3%	0%	4.5	0.73

The study reveals that instructors' perceptions of EIL regarding speaking were influenced by exposure to EIL speaking instruction. The prevailing replies were "strongly agree" and "agree," whereas the less frequent responses were "disagree" and "strongly disagree." For example, 45.5% of instructors believed that students need to be familiar with EIL in terms of speaking for their success in English.

The mean score across all seven items was 4.17, with a standard deviation of 0.97. This suggests that there were somewhat more favorable perceptions after seeing the film (see Table 2).

The post-film questionnaire yielded a higher mean score compared to the pre-film questionnaire (4.17 > 4.09), suggesting that exposure to EIL-speaking instruction had a beneficial effect on academics' attitudes.

There was a question about the characteristics that define "a good speaker" in the context of EFL, which was asked pre- and post-video. Table 3 presents the results of participants' definition of a good speaker before and after watching the short film.

Table 3. Participants' definitions of a good speaker pre- and post-video

	Pre-video	Post-video
Communicating effectively enough for others to comprehend you most of the time.	28.8	27.3
Communicating effectively enough for others to understand you consistently.	47	56.1
Communicating proficiently, avoiding any indication to others that you are an EFL speaker.	12.1	10.6
Demonstrating sufficient proficient English to imitate a native speaker, irrespective of the accent used.	7.6	4.5
Communicating proficiently in a specific native accent to resemble a native English speaker.	4.5	1.5

The results showed that around half of the participants defined good speakers as being able to communicate effectively enough to be understood consistently.
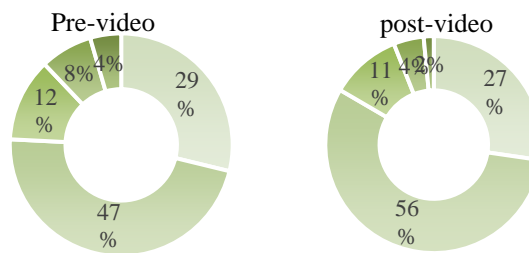

Figure 4. "A good speaker" in the context of EFL (Pre- and post-video)

The statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the pre-video and post-video conditions. This suggests that exposure to EIL had a little but favorable impact on academics' judgments.

3.2 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data was analyzed by discerning patterns, themes, and categories through the utilization of semi-structured interviews. The data underwent analysis using the "constant comparison" method, which involves dividing the data into manageable segments and subsequently comparing these segments to identify differences and similarities. The data that could be compared were arranged based on the identical conceptual categorization.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather more information and supplement quantitative data. The interviews were compared to survey questions to better understand participants' responses. The transcripts were evaluated through constant comparisons, breaking down data into small parts to identify similarities and differences. The data was organized into broad groups and labeled with the same concept. Sex themes were identified, including prior knowledge of EIL, preferred accent, video opinions, introducing EIL into the

classroom, native accent vs being understood, and desire to get EIL training. Each topic represented an interview question, with the first two themes, prior knowledge of EIL and preferred accent, corresponding to the first research questions. The remaining themes, video opinions, introducing EIL into the classroom, native accent vs being understood, and desire to get EIL training, are to answer the second research question.

3.2.1 Prior Knowledge of EIL

The study examined participants' awareness of the EIL concept. Professor 1 was familiar with EIL but not as a subject, possibly due to research or TV shows. Professor 2 learned about EIL through the short film and the survey. She stated, "I never heard about EIL before, but now I do. I think to succeed in anything in life, being able to communicate well is the most important thing." Professor 3 was aware of EIL as a broad overview of English's relevance in a globalized society, focusing on English for global communication. Professor 4 had heard of EIL but not in the study's intended context, believing it only covered important components of English. The findings were combined with the preferred accent theme results to answer the first research question.

3.2.2 Preferred Accent

A study found that Professors 1, 3, and 4 preferred the American accent, while Professor 2 preferred the British accent. Professor 1 admired his American dialect and pursued a master's degree in the United States. Professor 1 acknowledged the merit of an unaffiliated EIL and believed that successful communication was what constitutes success. He stated, "You can hear me talking in an American accent, but this doesn't mean I would judge anyone for having an accent. As long as we understand each other, this is what matters." Professor 2 developed a fondness for the British accent because of studying abroad in the UK. Despite having a preferred accent, all participants were more receptive to EIL speaking instruction. Participants stated that English is not a language of the United States, Britain, or Australia and that success in communication can be achieved anywhere.

3.2.3 Video Opinions

The interviewees were mostly supportive of the EIL video, with Professor 3 opposing the idea of imitating a native accent. However, some praised the video for providing clear information about accents. Professor 1 found the video helpful in understanding accents and their importance in language skills and communication. Professor 2 found the video useful in demonstrating that accents are not important for instructors or learners but rather for the knowledge provided by professors. Professor 3 liked the video for effectively conveying the subject. He explained, "It is not a new concept to me, but yes, this three- or four-minute video helped me to realize a thing that I never thought of." The video did not change their opinions about English-speaking teaching, but it provided further information about its influence. Professor 2 described accents as "a decoration" and superfluous, while Professors 1 and 3 were heavily impacted by the video. The findings suggest that the notion of EIL presented in the short film had a broad impact on participants.

3.2.4 Introducing EIL into the Classroom

Four respondents emphasized the importance of EIL in speaking education. Professor 1 suggested EIL as an introduction to speaking lessons, helping students form a positive view of their abilities. However, it is crucial to avoid discussing "better" accents, as students may not understand the concept. He insisted, "Language teachers should teach their students about EIL as it is going to boost their confidence to know that their accent is not the focus." Professor 2 suggested that students should be aware of EIL from the start of their English learning journey to prevent unnecessary time and effort spent imitating native accents. She stated, "This helps students understand that sounding like a native speaker is not of utmost importance, but rather being understood when speaking, which is crucial for standardized exams like IELTS and TOEFL." All participants agreed that learning about EIL can improve motivation and confidence in students.

3.2.5 Native Accent vs. Being Understood

The study asked respondents about the importance of emulating a local accent or being understood. Most respondents believed being intelligible was more crucial than emulating a native accent. Professors emphasized effective communication, absorbing lessons, and acquiring useful knowledge. While both being understood and imitating a native accent were acknowledged, being understood was considered essential. Only Professor 1 had a different position and insisted that mimicking a native accent is critical for language competency. Professor 1 preferred speaking with a native accent.

3.2.6 Desire to Get EIL Training

Interviewees showed interest in EIL training and courses, with Professor 1 advocating for EIL despite his lack of interest. He argued that people already know English as a global language and that non-native English speakers outweigh native speakers. Other respondents, professors 2 and 3, expressed personal reasons for their interest in EIL training, such as wishing they had learned about EIL sooner so they would not focus on accents and instead focus on enhancing their English-speaking abilities in general. Professor 4 believed that a more in-depth EIL course would be more beneficial than just the video, arguing that a more in-depth course would be more effective.

4. Discussion

The first research question, "What are the perspectives of English university instructors in Saudi Arabia on the use of EIL in teaching spoken English?" explores the viewpoints of English university instructors in Saudi Arabia on the use of EIL in the instruction of English-speaking. The findings revealed that most EFL teachers had favorable views about EIL and were already familiar with it. 74.2%

of participants agreed they received sufficient English instruction for EIL training. Additionally, 68.3% of the participants considered EIL in their classroom activities, instructional approaches, or instructional resources. Surprisingly, prior to watching the short video, 92.5% of the participants believed that EFL speakers could succeed in English-speaking countries despite having a non-native accent. After watching the short video, almost the same percentage of the participants (92.4%) believed students could succeed as English speakers despite a non-native accent. On the other hand, despite their endorsement of EIL, 57.5% of the participants preferred to instruct a specific variant of English, such as American or British English. Furthermore, academics appeared more receptive to EIL speaking training, arguing that English is a communicative language regardless of the accent. Participants believed that success in any aspect of life necessitated the ability to communicate proficiently despite one's accent. One of the participants insisted that the EIL concept helps reduce the judgment that some people hold on other speakers and stated, "As long as we understand each other, this is what matters."

The research question, "Does the integration of EIL in English-speaking classroom instruction impact the perspectives of EFL instructors in Saudi universities?" was answered by discovering that the majority of respondents had positive attitudes toward the short film, were impacted by it, expressed a willingness to receive EIL training or enroll in courses, and emphasized the significance of comprehension above developing a native accent. The semi-structured interview data proved that participants considered introducing EIL into speaking education advantageous, implying that exposure to EIL speaking teaching improved their perspectives. This supports the quantitative findings, which indicate that exposure to EIL training significantly influenced participants' views. For example, when the participants were asked about the definition of "good speaker," the percentage of participants who selected the answer "Communicating effectively enough for others to understand you consistently" increased to 56.1% after it was 47%.

The study reveals that exposure to EIL-speaking instruction positively impacts EFL instructors' perceptions of English-speaking instruction. This can affect teaching practices, increase students' confidence, and make them better English speakers. Two studies conducted by Chang, 2014 and Tanghe, 2014 found that exposure to various forms of English helped students develop a greater appreciation for the language and increase their confidence in learning and using English as non-native speakers. Tanghe (2014) found that exposure to WEs and different English varieties developed language proficiency, increased confidence, and allowed students to accept different English varieties without the need to replicate a native accent. The study corroborates the findings of Arrieta (2016) that being exposed to EIL or WEs has an impact on teachers' views. Arrieta (2016) found that teachers' views changed slightly after exposure, while students displayed increased support and enthusiasm for courses incorporating WEs.

The findings of this study suggest that instructors should be introduced to the EIL concept to enhance pedagogy and improve speaking skills. This exposure would encourage students to refrain from spending time and effort on imitating a native-like accent, which could hinder their progress in developing their communicative competence. In addition, a suggestion has been made to integrate the concept of EIL into the introduction of all speaking lessons.

Competing interests

The author declare that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

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No additional data are available.

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Appendix A

EFL instructors' Survey

The following questions relate your pedagogical approach to teaching English as an International Language (EIL). Please read the content below before answering the questions.

EIL indicates the adoption of English as a means of communication and a common language across the globe. English is regarded as a global language because of its extensive usage, resulting in a larger population of non-native speakers compared to native English speakers. EIL advocates the notion that any particular English-speaking country, such as the United States and England do not exclusively own the English language.

Keep in mind: There is no correct or incorrect response. Your subjective viewpoint would be appreciated.

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. I received adequate English instruction for EIL training.					
2. I consider EIL in my classroom activities, instructional approaches, or instructional resources.					
3. I prefer teaching a particular dialect of English, such as American or British English.					
4. I believe it is critical in education to receive training and/or gain knowledge in EIL.					
5. I believe it is critical for me to integrate the concept of EIL into my lectures, materials, or overall practice, regardless of whether I have received EIL training.					
6. I think non-native English speakers can thrive in English-speaking countries even if they don't fully understand the difference in the way native and non-native speakers communicate.					
7. I believe that people who speak English as a foreign language, despite having a non-native accent, can succeed in English-speaking countries.					

8. What characteristics define "a good speaker" in the context of English as a Second or Foreign Language?

- ▪ Communicating effectively enough for others to comprehend you the majority of the time.

- ▪ Communicating effectively enough for others to understand you consistently.

- ▪ Communicating proficiently; avoiding any indication to others that you are an ESL learner.

- ▪ Demonstrating sufficient proficient English to imitate a native speaker, irrespective of the accent used.

- ▪ Communicating proficiently in a specific native accent to resemble a native English speaker.

Before proceeding to the subsequent questions, kindly view the video outlined below.

Professor Jack C. Richards, a highly regarded expert in the fields of English language acquisition, teacher preparation, and instructional materials development, is the speaker in the video. He has taught in universities across the world, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Indonesia, China, and Brazil, among others.

It lasts approximately three minutes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qab5v7YefHU

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. The video that I have just viewed appears to have the potential to be advantageous in my classroom.					
2. Regarding speaking abilities, I believe obtaining EIL instruction is crucial.					
3. Regarding speaking abilities, I believe my students must acquire EIL knowledge.					
4. Familiarity with the concept of EIL in relation to speaking is crucial, in my opinion, for the success of my students as English speakers.					
5. I believe it is essential to integrate into EFL curricula the concept of EIL in relation to speaking abilities.					
6. The speaker in the video is a "good speaker," in my opinion.					
7. I believe students can succeed as English speakers despite a non-native accent.					

8. What characteristics define "a good speaker" in the context of English as a Second or Foreign Language?

- o Communicating effectively enough for others to comprehend you the majority of the time.

- o Communicating effectively enough for others to understand you consistently.

- o Communicating proficiently; avoiding any indication to others that you are an ESL learner.

o   Demonstrating sufficient proficient English to imitate a native speaker, irrespective of the accent used.

o   Communicating proficiently in a specific native accent to resemble a native English speaker.

Lastly, kindly respond to these brief inquiries:

Please indicate your gender:

❍ Male ❍ Female

What is your primary language? _____

Have you ever taught English speaking skills?

❍ Affirmative ❍ Negative

If affirmative, was there an emphasis on instructing a specific form of English, such as British or American English?

❍ Affirmative ❍ Negative ❍ Occasionally

What is the duration of your experience teaching English at the university? _____

Do you possess a non-native accent when speaking English?

❍ Affirmative ❍ Negative

Have you ever resided, instructed, or pursued an education in English outside of Saudi Arabia?

❍ Affirmative ❍ Negative

If your answer is affirmative, kindly provide specific details regarding the location, duration, and timeframe. _____

To partake in a subsequent interview, kindly provide your email address. _____

Appendix B

EFL Instructors' Semi-Structured Interview

1)   What are your thoughts on the video?

2)   Is the video changing your attitude or impression of English speaking?

3)   Did you have any prior knowledge of EIL before taking part in the study?

4)   Determine whether it is more important to you to imitate native accents correctly or ensure clear comprehension. Why?

5)   Would incorporating the concept of EIL into teaching speaking skills be beneficial? Why?