Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of World Englishes and Their Views on its Integration into Language Testing

Aliyah A. Acobo

Abstract The emergence of World Englishes (WE) has led to various influences in the education sector, including its challenge to traditional language assessments. Despite its rise and development, studies have shown a notable gap on how people view it, especially in its integration into language testing. This study explores the perspectives of secondary English teachers on WE and their views towards its integration in language assessments using a perception scale to assess the six dimensions of World Englishes (i.e., Kachru's three concentric circles, the standard English, the ownership of English, Philippine English, the potential sources of varieties of English, and the other aspect of World Englishes) and through the conduct of Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Interestingly, this study found that teachers hold diverse perspectives. While teachers acknowledge the WE varieties, they still value the established norms of American and British English emphasizing the use of standard grammar in writing but recognizing pronunciation variations in spoken English. Teachers also show a neutral stance when it comes to Philippine English, indicating that they reject the notion of the inferiority of the Philippine English accent but show little interest in promoting its features. Furthermore, teachers prefer communicative competence over strict grammar accuracy in language assessments and underscore the importance of contextualization to promote cultural sensitivity in language testing.

Keywords: *World Englishes, language testing, teachers' perceptions, British English, American English, Philippine English, Standard English*

1. Introduction

The English language undergone significant development over the past few decades, and this is largely because of the rise and development of World Englishes (WE). WE represent the variety of English regional and cultural varieties that serve the purpose of international communication (Kachru, 1985). This reflects the dynamic nature of English as a global language that develops with the use of various linguistic properties in different cultural contexts.

In this ground, traditional language assessment procedures often fall short of these developments that they tend to emphasize a monolithic view of English. McNamara (2000) draws attention to the inadequacies of such practices in making the necessary evaluation for grading students who are using WE. Shohamy et al. (2016) note issues, and the consequences that language assessment in different linguistic paradigms have to face for. Such mismatch raises pertinent questions on the validity and equity of the current testing methodologies, especially within a global environment where English is in use outside of its traditionally native-speaking territories.

In the Philippines, integrating WE in language teaching and assessment has taken off, given the multilingual character of the country and its cultural diversity. For instance, according to Tupas and Martin (2016), it is paramount and more than ever required that WE or, in this case, Philippine English be recognized and integrated as a standard variety in whatever context. According to Bernardo (2020), language testing needs to be more inclusive to capture the linguistic diversity of Filipino test-takers, following global language use norms where WE have been embraced.

This research investigated the secondary English teachers' perceptions of World Englishes (WE) and their attitudes towards employing WE in language assessment procedures. This is important in understanding the role their attitudes will play in subsequent student assessment and learning. According to Jenkins (2007), recognition of and adaptation to WE in the instruction and assessment of language have far-reaching implications for both pedagogy and assessment requirements. Hence, the complex relationship between WE and language teaching and learning has explored the merit of introducing WE to students while other studies raise possible problems (Jenkins 2009).

Literature Review
The Emergence of World Englishes (WE)

The historical development of World Englishes (WE) is critical to appreciating the linguistic reality of English today. Kachru's (1985) classic Three Circles Model is the starting point for classifying Englishes according to historical spread and use. The model posits the Inner Circle, the speakers of native-speaking countries, the Outer Circle, the retrofitted colonies, and

the Expanding Circle-with countries or populations without historical links with English. Such a conception foregrounds the multivariate sociolinguistic contexts in which English is used worldwide.

Scholars, represented by Schneider (2003) and Mesthrie (2010), have written extensively on the linguistic features that set WE Englishes apart. These include variation in grammatical lexicon and pronunciation, in evidence, which is attributed to the influence of local languages and cultures. Thus, Indian English is the product of lexical borrowings, both from Hindi and from other indigenous languages, just like Singaporean English is characterized by unique syntactical structures on account of the influence of Chinese and Malay.

Diparity in WE and Language Testing

Standardized tests find it hard to assess the communicative competencies of WE users. Brumfit (1994) explains how the tests are inherently based on native-speaker norms and hence put the WE backgrounds of learners at a disadvantage since they are likely to have a different variety of the language. Shohamy (1988) and Wei (2014) have demonstrated how unfamiliar WE vocabulary in the test materials can lead, therefore, to a lack of comprehension and very poor performance primarily in reading texts. This study investigated first the secondary English teachers' perception towards WE and their views towards the integration of we in language assessments.

Testing Englishes must reflect the global reality of English use. This much is argued by Bauer & Brumfit (1999). Byram (1997) insists that exposure to English from different world Englishes leads to the inculcation of intercultural communicative competences- foundational skills in the contemporary connected world. Canagarajah (1996) posits the need for more sociolinguistic features to be incorporated in the test administration so that fairness and equity can be accorded to all, irrespective of their linguistic background.

Challenges and Concerns

Despite the advantages offered by incorporating WE into testing, some difficulties remain. Handling standards of assessment in such varied contexts is a challenge (McNamara, 2002). Hoste (2004) suggests issues of confusion or unfairness arising if test content is unduly localized to particular WE varieties. Hewings (2005) relates the importance of extensive teacher training, along with curriculum design, for the effective handling of WE-informed practices of testing.

Understanding the WE and its incorporation, in turn, implication for Testing practices of WE and its incorporation in testing helps identify areas for which very little research has been done. Though some preliminary research can give a basic idea, a clear understanding of the perspective is lacking. This study seeks to bridge that gap by exploring teacher attitudes toward testing of the new approach, thus offering a better understanding of this multifaced relationship.

2. Research Questions

This research utilized quantitative research design to investigate secondary teachers' perceptions and qualitative research design to understand their views towards the integration of WE in constructing language assessments. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the perspectives of the secondary English teachers towards WE?
2. What were the views of the secondary English teachers in integrating WE in language assessments?

3. Methodology

a. Research Design

This study utilized quantitative research design through a survey method and qualitative through a thematic analysis technique to gather comprehensive information on the matter. Creswell (2014) defined quantitative research as research that employs numerical data collection and uses the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative findings to quantify variables and generalize results from a study. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative information to explore the meaning of a social issue actually or potentially informative Creswell (2014).

Quantitative research was conducted using the modified perception scale to measure the level of perception of the respondents towards World Englishes. In contrast, qualitative research was conducted through a thematic analysis method to explore the participants' perceptions of the integration of World Englishes into language assessments.

b. Participants and Sampling Procedure

This study employed a convenience sampling method, recruiting 13 secondary English teachers from public secondary schools in the district of Salay, Misamis Oriental. There was a total of eighteen (18) secondary English teachers of the said district but only 13 showed willingness to participate. Convenience sampling is a method in which researchers select readily accessible subjects who are within reach, and in close vicinity, with the researcher. In this regard, the district selected in this study was chosen to ensure that all the available secondary school English teachers would be included, hence making comprehensive data collection activity possible within these districts. This fact

contributes to the rationale for the study as despite the small number of the sample, these ways might provide insights on how to better align language testing to the realities of World Englishes in the contemporary world of globalization.

c. Data Collection Tools

To investigate the secondary English teachers' perception towards World Englishes and their views in the integration of WE to the language assessments, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. These tools were carefully selected to measure participants' views towards WE and language assessment and to gain deeper insights into their interpretative processes.

a. *The Modified Perception Scale* is utilized to quantitatively assess the participant' perception towards World Englishes. This 22-item survey questionnaire of Chaengaksorn (2021) is floated via google forms.
b. *The Modified Focus Group Discussion Prompts* from Hu (2018) was modified and utilized to qualitatively explore the participants' views towards the integration of WE in language assessment. These questions helped in recognizing the perceptions of the participants towards World Englishes and language assessments. The FGD was conducted online using Zoom platform.

Prior to its use, the researcher conducted a pilot test among 20 non-participants and employed Cronbach's Alpha to test its internal consistency. The pilot test was conducted at St. Rita's College of Balingasag, one of the private schools situated in Balingasag, Misamis Oriental, which has similar characteristics of the research locale in terms of participants' employment. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. Thus, the closer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. In this case, the Modified Perception Scale for pilot test resulted to an excellent internal consistency of Cronbach's Alpha a = 0.91, which indicated that the instrument has a good internal consistency reliability coefficient.

The researcher then conducted a remote Focus Group Discussion. According to Eeuwijk& Angehrn (2017), *"FGD is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discusses a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator. This method serves to solicit participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences, and practices, shared in the course of interaction with different people."* To achieve the depth of narrative required for this inquiry, the researchers employed FGD prompts. The FGD prompts that the researcher employed were validated by a qualitative researcher.

d. Scoring Table

Table 1. The Score Ranges and Corresponding Descriptions

Score Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

Table 1 is utilized in interpreting the secondary English teachers' perception scores towards WE. Scores falling within the range of 1.00 to 1.80 are categorized as *Strongly Disagree*, which suggests that the teachers strongly disagree. Scores ranging from 1.81 to 2.60 are categorized as *Disagree*, which indicates a general disagreement. Scores between 2.61 and 3.40 signify a *Neutral* stance, which suggests an absence of strong agreement or disagreement with the statements presented in the perception scale. Scores falling within the range of 3.41 to 4.20 are labeled as *Agree*, which indicates a moderate level of agreement. And the scores ranging from 4.21 to 5.00 are categorized as *Strongly Agree*, which indicates a strong acknowledgment and agreement.

4. Results and Discussion

This part of the study exhibits the results, analysis and data gathered based on the problems of the study. The tabulated data sets are organized based on the order of the specific problem of the study.

The researchers made use of the 22-item Likert-type scale to gauge teachers' perception towards World Englishes (WE) modified from Chaengaksorn (2021).

RQ1: What were the perspectives of the secondary English teachers towards WE?

Table 2. Teachers' Perception towards Kachru's three concentric circles

	Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Correct English is British English only.	1.62	1.04	Strongly Disagree
2.	Correct English is American English only.	1.62	1.04	Strongly Disagree
3.	Australian, New Zealand and Canadian English should be counted as correct English.	3.31	1.49	Neutral
4.	ESL Englishes (e.g., Indian, African, or Singaporean English) is incorrect.	1.92	.95	Disagree
5.	EFL Englishes (e.g., China or Russian English) is incorrect.	2.00	.91	Disagree
	Overall Mean	**2.09**	**1.90**	**Disagree**

Score: *Interpretation:*
4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20 Agree
2.61 – 3.40 Neutral
1.81 – 2.60 Disagree
1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 2 reveals the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards Kachru's three concentric circles. As shown in Table 2, the result indicated the respondents, overall, disagreed to the five indicators. Items 1 and 2 got the least agreement with a mean of 1.62 and a standard deviation of 1.04, which can be interpreted as *Strongly Disagree.* Item 3 got the highest agreement among the indicators, with a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.49, which can be interpreted as *Neutral.*

Teachers' perceptions towards more inclusive views of English suggests that they appreciate the existence of other possible Englishes, beyond the well-established dominance of the original Inner Circle countries. This changing perspective will offer an opportunity for language teaching to truly embrace WE by including examples and teaching materials that demonstrate the richness and diversity found in English all over the world. This is supported by the study of Galloway & Rose (2021), which draws attention to the importance of accepting and implementing WE in teaching for the wider development of intercultural competence through exposing students to new accents and vocabulary items, along with new structures and other grammatical constructions. They further espouse that incorporating WE in teaching will allow students to better appreciate linguistic diversity and to be more prepared for natural communication, which definitely includes different Englishes. This lowers the stigma often attached to other varieties that are not of standard English, making the learning environment more all-round inclusive. As Fang & Widodo (2022) observed, such valuing of different varieties of English shifts the attention away from non-native speakers who struggle to conform to the inner circle native speaker norms and toward native speakers and frameworks that assume that the chief objective is communication, regardless of the means. This broadens conceptualizations of English in teaching and hence, underlines inclusive pedagogy, a pedagogical shift toward a growing of English as a dynamic and multilingual face of global interaction.

Table 3. The Concept of Standard English

	Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
6.	Correct English must have a single standard.	3.15	1.52	Neutral
7.	Standard English must use the same grammar rule.	3.92	1.26	Agree
8.	Standard English may have a different accent and pronunciation.	3.69	1.18	Agree
9.	Correctness and standard English must be gauged through written English.	3.54	0.88	Agree
	Overall Mean	**3.58**	**1.09**	**Agree**

Score: Interpretation:
4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20 Agree
2.61 – 3.40 Neutral
1.81 – 2.60 Disagree
1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards the concept of standard English. Items 6 got the least agreement with a mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 1.52, which can be interpreted as *Neutral.* Item 7 got the highest agreement among the indicators, with a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.26, which can be interpreted as *Agree.* As shown in Table 3, the result indicated the respondents, overall, agreed to the four indicators.

The results show in-depth knowledge among the teachers with regard to Standard English. Although the overall mean shows *Agree,* item 6 interpreted as *Neutral* displays a shift of the position toward a flexible notion of Standard English, as proposed by the acknowledgment of WE which is consistent to the study of Wei (2023). Further, participants agree with the item 8, with a mean of 3.69, exhibiting how teachers understand the accent variation within Standard English, thus resonating with Kachru's (1985) concentric circles. Similarly, despite the understanding that both spoken and written texts of various registers need to be included for an overall comprehensive understanding of Standard English as mentioned by Barg (2021), the importance has still been given to written English as evidenced by item 9.

Table 4. The Concept of the Ownership of English

Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
10. English belongs to just anyone who can speak it.	3.00	1.35	Neutral
11. Only Britons or Americans are rightful owner of English.	1.46	0.78	Strongly Disagree
Overall Mean	**2.23**	**1.07**	**Disagree**

Score: Interpretation:
4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20 Agree
2.61 – 3.40 Neutral
1.81 – 2.60 Disagree
1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards the concept of ownership of English. Items 11 got the least agreement with a mean of 1.46 and a standard deviation of 0.78, which can be interpreted as *Strongly Disagree.* Item 10 got the highest agreement between the indicators, with a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.35, which can be interpreted as *Neutral.* As shown in Table 4, the result indicated the respondents, overall, disagreed to the two indicators. These findings reflect that teachers do not agree with the view of exclusive ownership by native speakers — namely, British or American — while they somewhat find the idea of English ownership by Item 10, *Neutral.*

The strong disagreement in Item 11 implies that the teachers realize that English belongs to the world and is not the sole possession of some people only. This follows the tenets of WE as discussed by Schneider (2009), which suggest that the different varieties of the language spoken across the world are legitimate and dynamic in their own right. In the study of Lin (2023), it revealed that students who used WE materials seemed to have a higher sense of ownership and belonging towards the language—feeling that it was something to be concretely built instead of being passively accepted for native speakers. Though teachers may feel English is becoming a global language, they still value appropriateness and proficiency in it as the more worthy qualifiers for ownership.

Table 5. Philippine English

Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
12. Unlike Singaporean, Indian, and Philippine English, Philippine English is an individual idiosyncrasy.	2.92	1.12	Neutral

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
13. Filipinos should use Philippine English to show their Filipino identity.	2.85	1.28	Neutral
14. Speaking English with Philippine accent is embarrassing.	1.54	0.97	Strongly Disagree
15. Any Filipino speaking with British or American Accent is highly revered.	3.23	0.73	Neutral
Overall Mean	2.63	1.02	**Neutral**

Score:	*Interpretation:*
*4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree*
*3.41 – 4.20	Agree*
*2.61 – 3.40	Neutral*
*1.81 – 2.60	Disagree*
*1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree*

Table 5 reveals the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards the concept of Philippine English. Items 14 got the least agreement with a mean of 1.54 and a standard deviation of 0.97, which can be interpreted as *Strongly Disagree.* Item 15 got the highest agreement among the indicators, with a mean of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 0.73, which can be interpreted as *Neutral.* As shown in Table 5, the result indicated the respondents, overall, are *Neutral*.

Based from the findings above, it can be inferred that teachers found Philippine English to offer a unique opportunity: overwhelming rejection of the inferiority of having a Philippine English accent translates into neutrality in aspects such as using Philippine English for identity or revering nonnative accents. This neutrality presents an opportunity to move beyond passive inclusion towards active promotion of Philippine English in language teaching. Research by Garcia & Pecorari (2022) supports this idea by demonstrating that students exposed to materials that celebrate the diversity of Philippine English have shown an increase in confidence and engagement. Language teaching can tap into that by integrating Filipino literary pieces and cultural references that would evoke a sense of pride in what makes Philippine English unique and point to the accomplishment of the citizens in communicating effectively in several English varieties. In this way, language teaching can enable students to develop a strong foundation in Philippine English that enables effective national communication and identity.

Table 6. The Potential Sources of Varieties of English

Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
16. You learn either British or American English at school.	3.54	1.05	Agree
17. World Englishes can be found in English novel.	3.77	0.73	Agree
18. World Englishes can be found in social network sites.	3.69	0.63	Agree
19. English taught at school must be either British or American English.	3.23	1.01	Neutral
20. It may be interesting to teach varieties of English rather than British or American English.	3.69	0.95	Agree
Overall Mean	3.58	0.87	**Agree**

Score:	*Interpretation:*
*4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree*
*3.41 – 4.20	Agree*
*2.61 – 3.40	Neutral*
*1.81 – 2.60	Disagree*
*1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree*

Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards the potential sources of varieties of English. Items 19 got the least agreement with a mean of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.01, which can be interpreted as *Neutral*. Item 17 got the highest agreement among the indicators, with a mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 0.73, which can be interpreted as *Agree*. As shown in Table 6, the result indicated the respondents, overall, *Agree*.

Findings above show the encouraging trend in teachers' views on the possible sources of the varieties of English. While there is a balanced opinion on whether to teach British or American English, there is clear agreement that it is definitely likely to meet the WE in novels and in social networks. These findings are of considerable relevance to the diversity of tools and practices in language teaching. The agreement that WE are in novels and social networks implies that the teachers acknowledge diverse English beyond the traditional tools of the classroom. This is consistent with the growing role of WE in language teaching (Brutt-Griffler, 2020). Most recently, Gomes et al. (2023) have demonstrated that students in whose curriculum there was a place for WE materials are more aware and show greater reliance on the richness and dynamics of the English language. This further implicates that language teaching should exploit this potential by making WE materials from different countries into the curriculum, demonstrating the international character of English communication. Discussion about historical and cultural factors that contributed to the way different Englishes formed also promotes a more inclusive approach to the language. These teaching potentials allow language to move away from the stereotype British versus America, to open the doors through education to a world of World Englishes, and prepare people for effective communication in a globalized world.

Table 7. The Other Aspect of Varieties of English

Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
21. English messages with sporadic grammatical mistake are fine as long as the message can be understood.	3.46	1.27	Agree
22. If I can choose, I will speak either British or American English.	4.15	0.55	Agree
Overall Mean	3.81	0.91	**Agree**

Score: *Interpretation:*
4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20 Agree
2.61 – 3.40 Neutral
1.81 – 2.60 Disagree
1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of teachers' perception towards the other aspect of varieties of English. Items 21 got the least agreement with a mean of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.27, which can be interpreted as *Agree*. Item 22 got the highest agreement between the indicators, with a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.91, which can be interpreted as *Agree*. As shown in Table 7, the result indicated the respondents, overall, agreed to the two indicators. While concurring about the importance of clear communication even with minor grammatical errors, a much stronger agreement underlines the preference for British or American English. These would signal the need to bring more balances to language teaching so that it retains clarity and yet does not stand as an obstacle to interaction and exposure to varied Englishes. This agreement even to the level of tolerating minor grammatical errors signifies a very practical understanding of communication, perhaps as in WE, under the caption of intelligibility, i.e., where clarity of communication is preferred over rigidity regarding any one particular standard (Seidlhofer, 2011). Focusing on effective communication is supposedly also good for today's digital world, as an experimental study by House (2022) showed the readers genuinely paid much more attention to a clear meaning than perfect online grammar.

RQ2: What were the views of the secondary English teachers in integrating WE in language assessments?

This part of the study presents the findings based on the conducted Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among the participants.

Theme 1. Teachers can incorporate World Englishes in select test types.

The first theme identified is that teachers consider integrating WE in select test types. This theme is supported by two (2) identified codes: minimal integration in specific test types and use in reading passages and comprehension questions.

1.1 Minimal Integration in Specific Test Types

Study of Zhang (2021) found that learners who are exposed to different varieties through an explicit teaching of concepts of World Englishes have shown significant improvements in their listening comprehension in terms of both intelligibility (word recognition) and comprehensibility (meaning understanding). Below are the extracted responses from the teachers during the FGD:

"World Englishes can be incorporated in test items to reflect real-world usage and celebrate linguistic diversity. Examples include including regional vocabulary or accents in listening passages." (Teacher 1)

"Incorporating World Englishes in test items can be beneficial for several reasons, including promoting linguistic diversity, reflecting real-world language use, and making tests more inclusive for speakers of different English varieties." (Teacher 4)

"Yes, in minimal level only. It can be integrated in Spelling test like British and American English they have differences on spelling (the use of /z/ and /s/ for example), Pronunciation test also British, American, Indian, Korean, Australian English have varied pronunciations and accents." (Teacher 5)

"Yes, incorporating World Englishes into test items can provide a more comprehensive and inclusive assessment of English language proficiency." (Teacher 6)

"I would incorporate it after exposing my learners to the varieties and probably add it on the essay part just to check how wide are their understanding of WE." (Teacher 11)

It can be inferred from the responses above that teachers recognize the role and the importance of World Englishes in language teaching and testing practices and thus supporting their significance to reality use and reinforcement of linguistic diversity. Having targeted the development of weak listening skills, the teachers pointed to the need for an inclusive approach to assessments, which support learners from different linguistic backgrounds. They mainly focused on how World Englishes could be integrated with different test formats like listening, spelling, pronunciation, and essay writing with a staged approach to gradual integration. The findings reflect more general awareness by teachers of the need to appreciate the use of linguistic diversity in the fulfilment of students' language competence and cultural awareness. These findings are supported by the study of Rose & Galloway (2019) which explained that incorporation of World Englishes into the curriculum is necessary for teachers as a communication gesture and represents the diversity of English use in the world. They argued that inclusion of approaches to World Englishes in the language education gives rise not only to students' communicative competence development but also to a more inclusive and realistic approach to the use of English in the world. Chan (2020) further explained that teachers who acquire the World Englishes view tend to develop more inclusive and more equitable assessment practices. These practices help accommodate learners from different linguistic backgrounds and, respectively, increase the supportability of this learning environment. Hence, World Englishes play a pivotal role in enriching language education and contributing to linguistic diversity.

1.2 Use in Reading Passages and Comprehension Questions

Recent studies on World Englishes have highlighted the inclusion of diverse English varieties in reading passages and comprehension questions, especially in standardized tests. This approach acknowledges English's global nature and the need to adapt language tests for diverse English speakers. For instance, IELTS and TOEFL are incorporating regional English variations and non-native English-speaking raters to balance test standardization with linguistic diversity (Elder & Davies, 2006; Brown, 2014). This ensures non-native speakers are not unfairly held to native-speaker standards, preparing them for real-world communication and reinforcing the concept of English as an international language (Hu, 2012; Harding & McNamara, 2018; Taylor, 2006). Below are the extracted responses from the teachers during the FGD:
"Yes, by incorporating them in reading passages and reading comprehension is somehow beneficial to understand it better." (Teacher 1)

"And I would introduce WE progressively in the diverse set of reading materials that my students read, from more familiar varieties toward less familiar varieties, using it then in the comprehension questions so that I could also test comprehension and flexibility." (Teacher 8)

"To do so, I will feature real texts representing differing Englishes, so that my students can appreciate the diversity at hand. This would be followed by comprehension questions designed to test their grasp of these variations." (Teacher 9)

"I say that it is very important to expose students at a very young age to different forms of English. I would include WE in reading exercises and again in comprehension questions to see how well they understand and can navigate through the differences." (Teacher 12)

Teachers have observed a close relationship between the inclusion of WE in curriculum and better student learning in all studies, similar to the findings in Lin's (2020), which found deeper content comprehension in the texts of the WE-exposed students. This implicates that exposure to WE enhances comprehension and improves critical thinking skills. Jenkins (2023) supports this claim by pointing out that gradual exposure to WE, proceeding from more familiar to less familiar varieties, helps learning to get better at listening and adapting to wide varieties of accents. Further, the study of Flores & Paxter (2022) demonstrated how including WE develops metalinguistic awareness that guides students into navigating wide linguistic landscapes and being effective intercultural communicators. Additionally, Cook (2019) suggests that inclusion of real WE materials when reading educates on dialects and culture, improves learning interest, and motivates reading. Many of these studies have only begun to scratch the surface of what it means to begin early WE exposure in second or third grade because of the development of cultural awareness and understanding and its role in cultivating positive attitudes towards language diversity and intercultural communication skills—for example, apprenticeships by Lee (2021). In addition, Xiao & Liu (2022) showed how the comprehension questions based on WE texts are significant evaluative instruments for both content comprehension and the context of cultural comprehension. The present evidence, therefore, clearly and decisively supports the need for educators to practice the inclusion of WE to develop the inclusive students who will belong to the new global village.

Theme 2. Teachers emphasize the importance of shifting assessment practices for a more effective communication in a globalized world.

The second theme identified focuses on the importance of assessment practices to make communication more effective in a globalized world. This theme is supported by two (2) identified codes: contextualization of language assessment and avoidance of bias through cultural sensitivity.

2.1 Contextualization of Language Assessment

Context-sensitive traditional language assessments, as Liu (2022) points out, often fail to provide contextual information, thereby leading to an incomplete picture of learner capabilities. The study places emphasis on the need for assessments designed in ways that reflect situations of effective communication in real life, which take into consideration the issue of the purpose of communication, the relationship between participants, and the cultural background.

"In my assessments, I look at grammar, vocabulary, and clarity of communication, but context is key. I might provide different prompts depending on the situation and accept variations in style as long as the message is clear." (Teacher 1)

"I am a type of teacher who values the thought the student wants to convey rather than the grammatical value of ideas. Although I also consider grammar in assessing, it only comes secondary to content and message." (Teacher 13)

Teachers place a higher value on communicative competence rather than on grammatical accuracy; meaning must be clear, the message must be understood, and ideas should come across rather than a strict grammatical structure. This prioritizes a functional approach that screen function in language education. Responses above display flexible assessment – attuning to various communicative scenarios whereby effective communication is conceptualized, in this model, as something that may differ depending on the situations and audiences. It can be further noted that teachers take grammar consideration into their assessment, but it is always that content and message come first; this is, therefore, a more or less balanced criterion where grammatical accuracy would support rather than override the student's ability to express ideas clearly and meaningfully. These findings align with current changes and developments in the field of language assessment research. For example, Wiliam (2018) notes that assessment should reflect the ability of the student to communicate

effectively in various contexts compared to mere concern over grammatical correctness. In addition, Leung and Lewkowicz (2018) state that language assessments should be context-oriented, showing desirable communication conditions from everyday situations. Moreover, Hymes (2019) discusses the need for emphasizing communicative competence in language studies in order to prepare students to be ready for language use in practical life.

2.2 Avoidance of Bias through Cultural Sensitivity

The pursuit of fairness and equity in language assessment calls for critical attention to potential biases. Study of Weir (2020) necessitates the importance of cultural sensitivity in bias mitigation. The study of Weir demonstrates how traditional tests of language often benefit dominant cultural norms. This may be disadvantageous to learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. By infusing cultural sensitivity throughout the assessment design and administration, more culturally inclusive and equitable testing environments can be established.

"Incorporating cultural sensitivity in test construction is crucial for creating fair, relevant, and accurate assessments. It ensures that tests are inclusive, respect diversity, and ethically sound, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all test takers." (Teacher 3)

"Cultural sensitivity is crucial in test construction. A culturally sensitive test uses language and scenarios that are relevant to a wide range of backgrounds. This ensures everyone has a fair shot at showing their knowledge, not just those familiar with specific cultural references. It also promotes understanding and respect for different cultures in the classroom." (Teacher 4)

"To bridge the gap between cultural understanding, I think cultural sensitivity is important in test construction because its being considerate and accepting despite the varieties expressed." (Teacher 9)

"Tests that are culturally sensitive ensure that all test-takers, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, have an equal opportunity to perform well. This helps prevent cultural bias that could disadvantage certain groups and promotes fairness in assessment." (Teacher 12)

It can be inferred from the teachers' statements above that culturally sensitive test construction brings fairness and accuracy in assessment. They recognized that fairness through such sensitivity would reduce bias against specific cultural backgrounds, as seen in recent research by Brown and Hudson (2021), which recognizes cultural inclusivity in assessment as key to avoiding disadvantage. Furthermore, the teachers realized the impact of being inclusive in the language and scenarios provided in the tests that are culturally sensitive. This is because, as noted by Leung and Lewkowicz (2018), some culturally specific references induce some students to fail. Further, the research by Kunnan (2020) shows that cultural sensitivity in assessments ensures mutual respect and understanding, hence creating an inclusive and supportive environment in a learning institution. In doing so, culturally sensitive test construction will reduce bias and ensure fairness, creating an environment of inclusivity and respect for cultural diversities. Such an approach to equitable assessments fosters respect for cultural diversity in the education environment.

5. **Conclusions**
Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that:
Secondary English teachers have diverse perspectives on World Englishes (WE), demonstrating both support for inclusivity and adherence to certain traditional standards. The main findings are the participants' responses to Kachru's Concentric Circles, and they generally disagree that either British or American English is correct. They also acknowledge other Englishes, such as Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian English, but they tend to prefer Inner Circle Englishes.
On the concept of Standard English, there is a general agreement that all English speakers should have a fixed grammar system. However, deviations from the set of rules when it comes to accent or pronunciation is found to be acceptable. Teachers further stress correctness and standardization in written English. On the ownership of English, participants strongly disagree with the idea that only Britons or Americans as native speakers own English, although they are neutral if English is owned by anyone who can speak it.
Perception towards Philippine English is neutral, with teachers strongly disagreeing with the embarrassment of a Philippine accent, hinting thus at the possibility or potential of promoting Philippine English as a part of being a Filipino. They also agree that WE are found in novels and in social networks and are interested in making them essays. They prefer to teach British or American English but are open to introducing other varieties.
In assessment practices, teachers stress essay WE in some types of tests and reading comprehension text, where a general consensus is reached that assessments should match the real-world use of English and show diversity.

In the qualitative part, two themes emerged: teachers can incorporate World Englishes in select test types; and, teachers emphasize the importance of shifting assessment practices for a more effective communication in a globalized world. These findings suggest a need to embrace the concept of WE by moving beyond grammar-focused test towards assessing communicative competence and to ensure fairness and respect by integrating cultural sensitivity.

6. Recommendations

This study highlights the need for making the curriculum inclusive of the varieties of English by including learning materials and examples from regions where English is used. This will equip learners to deal with different linguistic and cultural contexts. Equipping teachers with competencies in World Englishes is also suggested in order to train them in pedagogical and assessment practices. It is critical that the assessment practices for examining World Englishes not be bound by real situations than by rigid regulations so that every student gets equal treatment without any subset of students being disadvantaged by the system. Special efforts shall then be made to preserve the identity and inculcate pride for the Philippines in a rapidly changing Philippines and Philippine English by popularizing and giving due credit for Philippine English and its many fashions of use in Filipino literature. Lastly, the multimedia resources will have to be explored in depth. It is necessary to incorporate all these dimensions into teaching activities so that these are inclusive, efficient, and culturally sensitive and prepare students to have communicative skills within an interconnected world.

References:

Bauer, L., & Brumfit, C. (1999). World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching. English Today, 15(4), 3-13.

Bernardo, A. B. I. (2020). Recognizing Philippine English in Education: Implications for Language Testing. Journal of Linguistic Diversity, 22(1), 15-29.

Brown, A. (2014). Language testing and World Englishes. English Today, 30(4), 10-15.

Brumfit, C. (1994). World Englishes and applied linguistics. World Englishes, 13(2), 145-158.

Brutt-Griffler, J. (2020). World Englishes: A resource book for students (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. Multilingual Matters.

Canagarajah, S. (1996). Nondiscursive requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. Written Communication, 13(4), 435-472.

Chan, J. Y. H. (2020). English as a lingua franca in teaching and learning: Perspectives and practices. English Teaching & Learning, 44(3), 277-295.

Cook, G. (2019). The Routledge handbook of world Englishes. Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Eeuwijk, P. Van, & Angehrn, Z. (2017). How to.... conduct a focus group discussion (FGD): Methodological manual by Peter van Eeuwijk and Zuzanna Angehrn. ResearchGate, April, 1–16.

Elder, C., & Davies, A. (2006). Assessing World Englishes: Issues and Evidence. Language Testing, 23(2), 277-298.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5(1), 1-4.

Fang, F., & Widodo, H. P. (2022). Critical perspectives on global Englishes in Asia: Language policy, curriculum, and pedagogy. Language Teaching Research, 26(2), 175-188.

Flores, A., & Paxter, K. L. (2022). World Englishes and the development of metalinguistic awareness in L2 learners. TESOL Quarterly, 56(2), 532-557.

Galloway, N., & Rose, H. (2021). Introducing Global Englishes. Routledge.

Garcia, O., & Pecorari, D. (2022). Celebrating Philippine English in the EFL Classroom: Impact on Student Identity and Motivation. TESOL Quarterly, 56(1), 182-205.

Gomes, C., Serpa, V., & Silva, T. (2023). Expanding the Circle: The Impact of World Englishes Materials on Students' Perceptions of Language Ownership and Identity. TESOL Quarterly, 57(4), 1021-1043.

Harding, L., & McNamara, T. (2018). Language assessment: Principles and practices. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 38, 10-23.

Hewings, A. (2005). English pronunciation models: A changing scene. English Today, 21(1), 3-10.

Hoste, V. (2004). Globalization and standardization: Some evidence from the field of language assessment. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 24, 209-234.

House, J. (2022). Understanding intelligibility in World Englishes. Cambridge University Press.

Hu, G. (2012). Assessing English as a lingua franca. In A. Kirkpatrick & R. Sussex (Eds.), English as an International Language in Asia (pp. 125-142). Springer.

Hu, G. (2018). The challenges of world Englishes for assessing English proficiency. In E.L. Low and A. Pakir (Eds.), World Englishes: Rethinking Paradigms (pp. 78–95). New York: Routledge.

Hymes, D. (2019). Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jenkins, J. (2007). English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity. Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, J. (2009). World Englishes: A resource book for students. Routledge.

Jenkins, J. (2023). A staged approach to integrating World Englishes in EFL listening comprehension: Enhancing student adaptability. System, 113, 102704.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.

Lee, J. (2021). The impact of early exposure to World Englishes on young learners' intercultural communicative competence. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 24(7), 1234-1253.

Leung, C., & Lewkowicz, J. (2018). Language assessment in context. Language Teaching, 51(4), 471-486.

Lin, C. (2020). The effects of World Englishes materials on EFL learners' content comprehension and critical thinking. Journal of English Language Teaching and Research, 11(2), 223-235.

Lin, C. (2020). The effects of World Englishes materials on EFL learners' content comprehension and critical thinking. Journal of English Language Teaching and Research, 11(2), 223-235.

Lin, M. (2023). The Impact of World Englishes Materials on Students' Perceptions of Ownership and Identity in English Language Learning. TESOL Quarterly, 57(3), 821-843.

Liu, H. (2022). Contextualizing Language Assessment: A Focus on Communicative Competence. Journal of Language Teaching Research, 13(2), 187-205.

McNamara, T. (2000). Language testing. Oxford University Press.

McNamara, T. (2002). Language testing: The social dimension. Wiley-Blackwell.

Mesthrie, R. (2010). The Cambridge handbook of World Englishes. Cambridge University Press.

Rose, H., & Galloway, N. (2019). Global Englishes for Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press.

Schneider, E. W. (2003). The dynamics of New Englishes: From identity construction to dialect birth. Language, 79(2), 233-281.

Schneider, E. W. (2009). Englishes around the world: Studies in linguistics variation (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Seidlhofer, B. (2011). Understanding foreign language learning: Doing language learning. Multilingual Matters.

Shohamy, E. (1988). A Critical Perspective on Language Testing. Language Testing, 5(1), 1-20.

Shohamy, E., May, S., & Hornberger, N. H. (Eds.). (2016). Language testing and assessment. Encyclopedia of language and education (Vol. 7). Springer.

Taylor, L. (2006). The changing landscape of English: Implications for language assessment. ELT Journal, 60(1), 51-60.

Tupas, R., & Martin, I. P. (2016). Philippine English: Development, Structure, and Sociology of English in the Philippines. Asian Englishes, 18(1), 1-20.

Wei, L. (2014). English language assessment and the Chinese learner. Routledge.

Wiliam, D. (2018). Assessment in education: Principles, policy & practice. Educational Assessment, 10(1), 13-34.

Xiao, Y., & Liu, X. (2022). Comprehension questions based on World Englishes texts: A window into students' understanding of content and cultural nuances. Assessing Writing, 47(2), 112-132.

Zhang, Q. (2022). Impacts of World Englishes on local standardized language proficiency testing in the Expanding Circle: A study on the College English Test (CET) in China. English Today, 38(4), 254–270. doi:10.1017/S0266078421000158