



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Linguistic identity and English as Lingua Franca: Issues and implications for Southeast Asia**Chester B. Esnara¹¹Benguet State University, Philippines*Correspondence: Chester B. Esnara**ABSTRACT**

This descriptive-exploratory-reflexive study investigated the dominant issues related to English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in the Southeast Asian context and drew the critical implicatures from the intra/transnational ELF demographics of the current status quo. Guided by the Kachru's Circles Model, the Schneider's Dynamic Model and the critical World Englishes (WE) perspectives, the study explored on the impact of ELF on linguistic identity and the related notions of ethnicity, culture, multilingualism, diglossia, mutual intelligibility, and acceptability. To achieve this goal, content analysis was carried out on the WE-SEA literatures and studies. A checklist on content analysis sampling strategy (CASS) facilitated the selection of the texts. The reflexive approach's introspection and retrospection modes were employed to enrich the research discourse. The study's most significant finding revealed the challenging yet encouraging linguistic terrain of ELF in Southeast Asia, with the exponential growth of speech and discourse communities of English, the region seeing the emergence of the New Englishes. Given the complex dynamics of language teaching, ideological influences, and power play, the study recommends continuous scholarship and investigations on ELF and the relevant linguistic developments in Southeast Asia, to keep pace with a rapidly changing world.

KEYWORDS: contemporary English literature, corpus stylistics, workplace narratives, labour, technology, Industry 4.0, narratology, digital humanities

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 7, Issue 2, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 21 December 2025

Accepted: 11 April 2026

Published: 25 May 2026

HOW TO CITE

Esnara, C. B. (2026). Linguistic identity and English as Lingua Franca: Issues and implications for Southeast Asia. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.58256/4108dr10>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1.0 Introduction

With the fast spread of English worldwide in the past forty years (Bolton, 2012), there grew many varieties of the language, and its speech and discourse communities have likewise expanded and diversified (Terkimbi, 2016; Buschfeld & Kautzsch, 2017; Bolton, 2012; Felker, 2004; Schneider, 2007; Kachru, 1976, 1978, 1985; Smith, 1979). In Southeast Asia, the accommodation of English as an official language and as a medium of instruction has been perceived both as a bane and boon; and the English-spread phenomenon is often viewed vis-à-vis globalization taking place in the region (Joseph & Matthews, 2016; Schneider, 2018; Bolton, 2012). Just like the rest of Asia, which has welcomed and accepted the English language to staggering proportions, the countries in Southeast Asia (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Laos, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand) have opened their doors to the greater role of English in every sphere of their societies: political, social, cultural, economic, and in their educational systems (Bolton, 2012; Schneider, 2007, 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2012). The Concentric Circles Model of Kachru of the World Englishes, or WE (1976, 1978, 1985), clusters several of the Asian Englishes (AEs) or New Englishes (NEs) (Bolton, 2012; Schneider, 2007) as Outer Circle Englishes or English as a Second Language (ESL). Those varieties of Indian English, Philippine English, and Singaporean English are examples of Outer Circle Englishes, while the Inner Circle includes the native speakers' contexts of English (UK, North America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). The Expanding Circle refers to those countries that use English as a foreign language (EFL) on a limited basis such as for international business communication or foreign diplomacy. The Expanding Circle includes China, Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea. While the new varieties of English have helped facilitate global modernity in Asia, there are also corresponding problems and grave costs these World Englishes (WE) have brought upon each of these states (Bolton, 2012; Schneider, 2007, 2013, 2016, 2018; Phillipson, 1992). In line with this, the study sought to examine the dominant implications and critical issues of using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in Southeast Asia. Since there have developed quite a number of speech and discourse communities of WE in the region, the assumption that guided the investigation focused on English as a Lingua Franca between and among Southeast Asian contexts. Aside from their intra-national use of the language, which might be the solution to greater mutual intelligibility and acceptability, possibly mitigating the resistance, inhibitions, and fear in promoting the Southeast Asian varieties of English, particularly in addressing the concern for linguistic identity, the perceived greater degree of complexification in the region's linguistic demographic needs further and continuing investigation, and this study attempted to contribute to this goal.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This descriptive-exploratory study examined the implications and issues of using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in Southeast Asia. Specifically, it purported to answer the following questions: What are the dominant issues confronting Southeast Asia's use of English both at the intra-national and transnational (between or among SEA countries) levels? Is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in various domains of activity in Southeast Asia perceived more as pragmatic or as an ideological tool? Do Southeast Asian English speech and discourse communities find themselves confident and comfortable using the language that they share mutual intelligibility and manifest greater acceptability of the language? What are the critical implications of using English as a Lingua Franca in the societies of SEA nations? In its scope, this investigation explored the interrelated variables of linguistic identity, ethnicity, multilingualism, culture, diglossia, mutual intelligibility, and acceptance as impacted by ELF in the SEA context or vice versa. The extent of data gathering focused on four selected relevant publications on SEA and ELF. It did not include the rest of Asian Englishes in its emphasis such as all those in the Expanding Circle of Braj Kachru (1976, 1978, 1985).

In answering these questions, the study should be of significance to various stakeholders in the region. The findings will help the SEA Region to launch more relevant language programmes for their respective learners, and facilitate transnational communication between and among the states. Language planners and policymakers will use this study to evaluate, assess and design language curricula and general educational systems that accommodate the current and emerging languages in SEA, such as the New Englishes or World Englishes for globalization or global modernity. Moreover, language teachers should be able to develop strategies in ELT informed and enlightened by the current and emerging Englishes or WE. On their part, the Learners in the SEA contexts will be empowered to communicate in the English language, particularly the SEA

varieties, which could result in higher levels of educational performance. The instructional materials writers and the curriculum design specialists will be helped to create and design compatible or complementary learning resources to WE, especially for the SEA language learners. Lastly, the SEA research communities will use this study to forge stronger relations and collaborations in the further investigation of the emergent SEA varieties of English.

1.2 Literature Review

Kachru (1985) claims that there no longer exists exclusive ownership of the English language by the native speakers of the language or the so-called sacred cows of English. In his paradigm of the Concentric Circles (Kachru, 1976, 1978, 1985), the spread of English worldwide has been phenomenal, and has resulted in the emergence of New Englishes or non-native varieties that are mostly found in Asia and Africa (Kachru, as cited in Bolton, 2012). The linguistic landscape has radically changed because of the impact of globalization in Asia (Felker, 2004). However, Bautista and Gonzales (2009) observe that the new varieties of English in SEA tend to be received with a colonial mindset or linguistic hostility, fearing cultural loss and issues of ethnicity and culture. Criticisms against the Circles Model of Kachru (1976, 1978, 1985) focus on the Western standards or Eurocentric orientation (Phillipson, 1992; Schneider, 2007; Crystal, 2003; Bruthiaux, 2003).

Ullah and Ming Yit Ho (2021) claim that globalization has impacted Southeast Asian cultures whose effects have been observed to result in either demise, fragmentation, or transformation. Felker (2004) writes that SEA has become prominent in discourses of globalization, mentioning the findings of comparative studies showing the region's capitalist economies as "exemplars of pro-globalization strategies." In line with this, Joseph and Matthews (2016) claim that a number of factors affect postcolonial education in SEA, such as issues of equity and opportunity, financing, as well as the content of textbooks and instructional materials. They identify ways how to address colonial histories, nationalist impulses, and forces of globalization that shape equity and access to education in the region, especially with respect to marginalized populations, such as ethnic and religious minorities and the indigenous people (Joseph & Matthews, 2016). In the same vein, Eng and Kuah (2016) discuss how to educate marginalized communities in the East and SEA, analysing the authenticity and commitment to the UN Declaration of Education For All. In light of this concern, Howig (2016) claims that bilingualism in Asian cultures tends to result in enhanced cognitive flexibility and an ability to better focus their attention, and that there is a further need to explore emergent literacy and bilingualism in children in the region. She cites the Hong Kong case wherein children are expected to develop triple language proficiency (Cantonese, English, and Mandarin).

A study by Zeng *et al.* (2022) investigated the attitudes of university students in Macau towards ELF. The findings revealed that there are now more speakers of English in the Expanding Circle than in the Inner Circle, as evidenced by the existence of a majority of English communication users being non-native speakers. The results of the study also pointed to Asia as a critical region for the development of ELF. An interesting finding related to this is the attitude of university students with respect to different accents in English, wherein students tend to maintain their own even if it does not sound like a native speaker's accent (Zeng *et al.*, 2022). However, a study by Hohsung and Lee (2021) found that North American English is widely pervasive in Korean ELT, and that Korean students show more positive attitudes towards the American native variety of English. Furthermore, they also revealed that Korean English teachers promoted this attitude and practice in their ELT (Hohsung & Lee, 2021).

Feng and Sass (2018) and Sung (2015) claim that ELT in Higher Education (HE) in Asia should look into the pedagogical implications of current issues. Bolton (2011), Feng and Sass (2018) and Jenkins (2014) underline the importance of language policy, specifically on the language model for intercultural communication. Jenkins and Wingate (2015) claim that higher education institutions (HEIs) should study the management response of international students as their customers. Lee and Kim (2020), in their studies, found a positive relationship between the English language and the variables of exposure, familiarity, and social expectations from the local academic communities.

In their study, Cheung and Sung (2016) also reported that ELF is a global phenomenon; and that in the Asian context, English has been increasingly serving an important role as a lingua franca. They focused their exploration of ELF in Asia by adopting the lens of identity, looking into the issues and concerns surrounding

ELF, and examining the Asian voices and experiences that they found under-represented on ELF and identity. Specifically, Cheung and Sung examined how identities are constructed and negotiated in lingua franca settings, how different aspects of identities are shaped by linguistic and sociocultural norms of various ELF contexts, as well as the complex interactions of power relations, language attitudes and ideologies.

Drawing insight from current literature on the subject, this study specifically investigated the impact of ELF in the SEA context, by identifying the dominant issues both at the intra-and transnational levels, as well as their critical implications to linguistic identity, ethnicity, multilingualism, culture, diglossia, mutual intelligibility, and acceptability, which were assumed to be interrelated and likewise impacting on ELF in the region.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The major theoretical frameworks on which this study was underpinned included the Concentric Model (Kachru, 1976, 1978, 1985), Schneider's Dynamic Model (2007), and the critical perspectives of Crystal (2003), Phillipson (1992) and Terkimb (2016).

With Kachruvian linguistics and its Circles Model (Kachru, 1976, 1978, 1985), which triggered the WE phenomenon, SEA contexts have been exposed to the linguistic developments, especially of English as a Global Language (EGL), and more recently, English as lingua franca (ELF) (Terkimb, 2016). Several of the SEA countries have developed their own varieties of English or the New Englishes classified by Kachru as Outer Circle varieties, like those of the Philippines (Philippine English in Bautista, 2015; Bautista & Bolton, 2008; Bautista & Gonzales, 2009), Singapore (Singaporean English), Malaysia (Malaysian English), and Indonesia (Indonesian English). According to Kachru (1976, 1978, 1985, 2009), these postcolonial Englishes have emerged with the rapid spread of the English language worldwide, due to globalization and other sociocultural, political, and economic factors. The Outer Circle-speaking contexts have developed their nonnative varieties of English through the past four decades, and Schneider (2007) identifies the stages of development through his Dynamic Model.

The Dynamic Model of Schneider (2007) emphasizes the linguistic evolutionary process that takes place, identifying five crucial and interrelated phases: 1. Foundation, where English is brought in by settlers (STL) and used in non-English setting; 2. Exonormative Stabilization, where the STL stabilize and English is used regularly, and formally established as official language of education and legislation; 3. Nativization, where STL's ties with land of origin weakens and colonized land seeks independence; 4. Endonormative Stabilization, which is the stage of cultural self-reliance; 5. Differentiation, where there is an established nation, state of stability from external threat, room for internal differentiation. This paradigm has become an important perspective and guideline in evaluating, assessing and describing the New Englishes in Asia and Africa and the rest of the Outer and Expanding Circles of the English language. It has helped linguists, sociologists, educators and language policymakers to determine the linguistic status quo, and the overall thrust of their respective educational systems, as well as the transnational sphere of communication and cross-cultural interaction.

Phillipson's (1992) critical perspective of World Englishes (WE), specifically his accusation of the Kachruvian Concentric Circles Model as largely Eurocentric in language orientation, has caused tension and debate over the New Englishes that have emerged or are emergent in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia. He claims that the Kachruvian paradigm serves to promote linguistic imperialism, and that the postcolonial Englishes only perpetuate the dominance of the Old English varieties, or the native speakers' English, as well as the Western culture to the detriment of authentic cultures and languages in multilingual settings like SEA. Phillipson (1992) proposes a critical and reflexive language education in non-native contexts of English. Crystal (2003) agrees with the observations of Phillipson. He suggests the Outer and Expanding Circles gather adequate baseline data of their linguistic environments, and determine the appropriate language policies and programs for their learners without sacrificing their linguistic identities, ethnicity, and cultural heritage.

Terkimb (2016) proposes that non-native contexts of English should arm themselves with empirical information and current knowledge on the varying functions and uses of English in all the domains of globalization, as the language now "serves wider purposes in different contexts". He identifies seven new linguistic developments that have taken place, replacing or enhancing the old paradigms. These seven linguistic occurrences are as follows: 1. English as a Global Language (EGL) considers English as the legitimate language of the world; it emphasizes the status of English in the world; 2. English as a World Language (EWL) considers

the worldwide lingua franca status of English; 3. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), a paradigm that invokes the relationship of language and communication, serves the communicative ends or purposes of nonnative speakers of English who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds; it looks at growing speech and discourse communities of such nonnative English speakers; 4. English as an International Language (EIL) focuses on the functions of the language in the world; it looks at English with worldwide coverage. It is the variety of English that is “habitually spoken in the United States of America, the British Isles, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, and Liberia, and implies English used as official, or semi-official language, and English as foreign language in the educational system” (Terkimbi, 2016; Crystal, 2003); 5. English as Everyone’s Language (EEL) concept is a further extension of EIL. It implies the spread of the language to the whole world, and that ownership of “the English language is no longer the exclusive heritage of a particular group of people who speak it in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, North America, and some more other native English speaking countries (Terkimbi, 2016); 6. World Englishes (WE) began with Kachru (1976, 1978, 1985) and Smith (1979) describing and classifying the spread of English in the world, and the groups that speak these varieties of native and non-native English speakers, putting them into three interrelated concentric circles, and 7. New Englishes (NEs), the subtype of WE, or the emergent varieties of postcolonial Englishes (PCEs), or non-postcolonial Englishes (non-PCEs), is found in Asia and Africa. Examples are those Englishes used in Nigeria, Kenya, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. In this study, the NEs, or PCEs, or non-PCEs, refer to the Southeast Asian Englishes (SEAEs) that are still young and fast-changing.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

With the assumption that SEA countries have joined the rest of Asia in the move towards global modernity, thus their positive response to the English language as Lingua Franca (ELF) in the region, this investigation explored the impact of ELF on linguistic identity, and the related notions of ethnicity, multilingualism, culture, diglossia, mutual intelligibility and acceptance. Further, it was assumed a significant niche of the New Englishes or SEA varieties exists in the prevailing linguistic landscape of the region. Below is the schematic illustration of the conceptual framework.

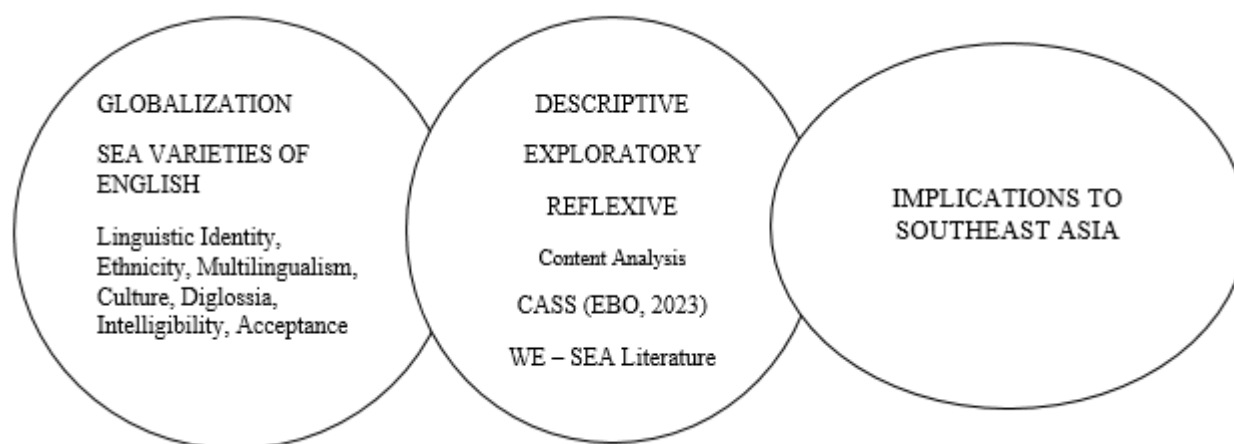


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

2.0 Methodology

This research adopted the descriptive-exploratory-reflexive design. It investigated the dominant issues and critical implications of using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) at the intra- and transnational levels of communication in Southeast Asian contexts, particularly with respect to linguistic identity, a subject that persistently remains to be very controversial in the field of WE, and, in its analysis, the related notions of ethnicity, multilingualism, culture, diglossia, mutual intelligibility and acceptance. To achieve this goal, selected critical publications on the topic were reviewed, using content analysis procedures, which commenced with the sampling strategy directed by the researcher-designed Checklist (adapted from EBO 2023) for content analysis sampling strategy or CASS as employed in the investigation. The checklist was shown below.

1. Is the publication in any of the research/scholarly genres such as journal articles, academic essays, field reports, research abstracts, textbooks, specialist's books, or book/article reviews?
2. Is the publication relevant to the research topic as it talks of similar or related notions?
3. Does the publication provide scholarly/critical views on the research topic?
4. Are the information/evidences presented in the publication scientific/empirical, or from research in the field?
5. Is there a scholarly/ scientific degree of reliability, validity, authenticity, or accuracy about the information/ evidence presented in the publication?
6. Are the cited works in the publication verifiable, complete, and accurate?
7. What are the best strengths of the publication?
8. Does the publication offer varied or diverse perspectives on its own topic?
9. Is there a convincing research discourse in the publication?
10. Do the strengths of the publication outweigh its perceived weaknesses?

The CASS scale as adapted from EBO 2023 was as follows:

1. If most (7/10) of the responses were in the affirmative, the publication was acceptable for the study.
2. If most (7/10) of the responses were in negative, the publication was rejected.

The sample publications included Bolton's *World Englishes and Asian Englishes: A Survey of the Field* (2012), Buschfeld, Kautzsch and Schneider's *From Colonial Dynamism to Transnationalism: A Critical View of Postcolonial and Non-Postcolonial Englishes* (2018), Prescott, Kirpatrick and Hashim's *English in Southeast Asia: Varieties, Literacies and Literature* (2007), and the academic essay of Hairianto (2014) titled *Models of World Englishes*.

The above publications were chosen as main sources of data because of their critical appraisal of Southeast Asian realities and World Englishes, especially with respect to linguistic identity and current trend of using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Their in-depth treatment of WE as applied in Southeast Asia helped provide the needed baseline data, which were clustered in three tables: 1. Dominant Issues of ELF in SEA (Intra-National); 2. Dominant Issues of ELF in SEA (Transnational), and 3. Critical Implications of ELF in SEA. From these three tables, the critical discussion of linguistic analysis and ELF was extrapolated, using the cause-effect rhetoric of exposition, enriched by the argumentative-assertive discourse, then the recommendations were made as to the possible solutions. Only the chapters of the books that highlighted SEA Englishes and linguistic identity were analyzed to facilitate the content analysis of the sample book publications. The academic essay of Hairianto (2014) was scrutinized, focusing on its thesis, also in line with SEA and linguistic identity. Moreover, the researcher-designed content-analysis checklist or CASS (adapted from EBO 2023) guided and facilitated the final selection of the sample publications. Both introspective and retrospective modes of content analysis were employed, which substantiated and augmented the reflexive approach of the research discourse, especially in drawing the critical implications of ELF in SEA contexts. Introspection and retrospection were achieved facilitated by observation and a survey of SEA Conference Papers on English Language Teaching in the region for the past three decades since 1996 (Prescott, Kirpatrick & Hashim, 2007). Both the introspective and retrospective analyses were adopted in the treatment, analysis and interpretation of data, as they were found compatible or complementary with the reflexive design of the study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

From conducting the exploratory content analysis of the determined sample publications, the initially culled data were subsequently clustered according to the set categories of the study for data collation. Below are the results and discussions of the exploratory investigation:

Table 1: The Dominant Issues of ELF (Intra-National) in SEA

ELF in SEA (Intra-national)	Cultural loss or ethnicity
	Linguistic identity, ultra-nationalism, hegemony, and colonial mentality
	Perceived difficulty with the English language, inhibitions, fear toward the English language, reservations, feelings of inferiority
	Limited or vague language policy and government support, instructional materials, and other learning aids
	Economic and other sociocultural factors such as multilingualism, diglossia, religion, the attitude of teachers, and learner attitudes and motivation

As shown in Table 1, the dominant issues of ELF in SEA at the intra-national level are highly interrelated sociolinguistic variables in ELT, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. While concerns for cultural heritage confronted by cultural loss emerged more highlighted in the sample publications of the study, linguistic identity came closely tied up in the discourses, as a cause or consequence for cultural loss before another perceived stronger culture that tends to dominate the perceived weaker culture by virtue of the colonizer/settler-colonized/indigenous resident framework. The issues of hegemony, colonial mentality and nationalism/ultra-nationalism were found embedded in the entire picture, and were thoroughly and critically explained by Buschfeld, Schneider and Kautzsch (2018), Bolton (2011, 2012), Prescott, Kirkpatrick and Hashim (2007), and Hairianto (2014) in their respective works. Nevertheless, Hairianto's academic essay was limited by the genre of his discourse, compared to almost the entirety of the longer journal articles of the rest of the authors.

Unanimously, all the authors concurred that in non-native English-speaking contexts, the cultural aspect serves to pose challenges in the learning and use of a new or foreign language, especially in multilingual settings, where numerous languages/dialects are spoken by different ethnic groups within the larger and smaller cultures. Attitudes and motivation were discussed as critical issues related to culture and identity. The more prestigious languages become the dominant language of the elite members of society, while the mother tongue or first language or the dialects of marginalized communities are maintained and preserved by these groups for communication. However, this was not the case for Singapore, with its strict language policy of mandating Mandarin as the mother tongue representing all the dialects of the various indigenous members of the Singaporean Chinese society.

Bilingualism was discussed as facilitating ELF, given the effective implementation of bilingual education programs. However, the authors expressed alarm on the impulsive tendencies of SEA states to make English their official language of instruction at all levels for there might be linguistic groups that get neglected and suffer resulting in cultural suppression, cultural loss and language death, with adverse effects to mother tongue speech communities and sense of identity. For one, Malaysia's language policy was cited as an example of the abrupt English-Only Policy.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) was tackled in the study publications sample as a more potentially practical approach for professional or educational discourse communities for communication, considering the growing speech communities, and the growth of new vocabularies such as neologisms, and subtypes of New Englishes as pidgins and creoles than the rigid and standardized English. Despite this, it tends to be met with some degrees of hostility, scepticism, and fear by the ultra-nationalist sectors of SEA societies just like in Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. Criticisms in relation to the continued hegemony of Western culture and the Old varieties of native speakers' English were tackled objectively and comprehensively but also with perceived reservations in light of historical, geopolitical and socio-cultural realities, given that most of the authors come from the origin of the native English variety. Whereas the discourses exhibited extensive knowledge of ELF, the limitation observed was on the empirical studies of ELF in the SEA region that needed to be cited. However, the substantial analysis of the interrelatedness of the dominant issues pointed to the complex interplay of language learning and teaching to ideology and power relations.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), just like EGL, EIL, was reported to be challenged by the lack of clear, strong and consistent political will to support its successful implementation in various domains of national

activity and social life. The authors claim that the fast-changing linguistic landscape in every SEA country seems to cause more problems than solutions due to the dearth of research and scholarly endeavours, or even the difficulty to keep pace with the developments. Worse, most if not all SEA nations seem confused about the real status quo of the English language variety in their societies. They seem unsure on whether it is still in the nascent evolutionary foundation phase of Schneider's Dynamic Model, or it has reached the endonormative or even the differentiation phase where they use their English variety or New Englishes with overt confidence, pride and cultural self-reliance, distinguishing them as an independent sovereign nation, and no longer a colony despite the physical absence of the colonizer. Perceived difficulties with the English language with respect to its form and function were also identified as a major issue in the SEA region; for example in the rural communities or countryside where language contact, familiarity and exposure are more limited, and which also lack instructional resources to facilitate ELT. While the SEA countries tend to be more open to the new status of English as EGL, there are expressed inhibitions among learners to communicate using the New Englishes like feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, culture shock and language shock, especially so with the marginalized communities.

Table 2: Dominant Issues of ELF (Transnational) in SEA

ELF in SEA (Transnational)	Geopolitics, and economic conditions
	Linguistic Imperialism and linguistic identity
	Mutual intelligibility and acceptability in the SEA variety of ELF
	Attitudes, motivation, and instructional/ learning materials
	Perceived complexities of the English language, and the changing world

Table 2 shows almost similar results as does Table 1. However, the concern for greater mutual intelligibility (making sense and shared meaning), as well as acceptability (confidence and positive attitude in using ELF), were emphasized by the authors. The notions were discussed with respect to the fast-changing linguistic terrain or landscape in the SEA region, which poses difficulties for ELF as the intercultural, transactional and interactional language of communication between and among SEA countries.

Further, the role and influence of geopolitics were highlighted in the discourses, with the covert or overt pride as unique Asian countries with distinct cultural heritage and identity amid globalization or global modernity in the region. Interestingly, the case of South Korea's attitude in favour of the American variety of English in their ELT was pointed out as a strategic economic advantage, and the close relations and alliances of the country with the United States. However, an alarm was expressed on the downside of denigrating the emerging New Englishes or the Asian varieties of English, which could further create linguistic difficulties and stigma among their Korean learners who covertly prefer their own norms or natural uses of the English language, compatible with their social realities, culture and identity.

Table 3: Critical Implications of ELF in SEA

Critical Implications of ELF (Intra-national and Trans-national) in SEA	The need to evaluate, assess, and translate transnational and intra-national language policies to successful and genuine collective action toward effective implementation
	Recognition of the growing World Englishes (WE), particularly of the SEA Englishes or varieties, and open-mindedness in addressing the current language demands, and trends, as well as both the old and the new linguistic problems and challenges
	Developing greater levels of intelligibility and acceptability of the SEA Englishes such as creating dictionaries, modules, and textbooks to facilitate their function and use of SEA Englishes as ELF
	Continuous training of teachers on current approaches and methods of ELT to facilitate the second language acquisition or SLA of learners, and boost their confidence to communicate in the SEA variety of ELF
	Mentoring the mentors' national and transnational language conferences to forge stronger networks and alliances
	Funding for the different language programmes/projects, as well as the development of relevant instructional materials/learning aids complementary to the varying and changing language needs of various speech and discourse communities of English
	Tapping the commitment and support of the local communities and the larger societies towards the development and growth of the SEA variety as ELF
	Extensive and intensive research endeavours on the current status of the New Englishes, particularly the Asian varieties of English
	Addressing the prejudice and stigma against World Englishes in general, specifically the sub-varieties (pidgins and creoles) of the SEA Englishes at the intra- and transnational levels
	Developing models of the New Englishes compatible with the linguistic and socio-cultural demographics of SEA
	Creating more inclusive speech and discourse communities of the SEA Englishes to combat feelings of linguistic alienation, inhibitions, culture shock and language shock
	Creating well-represented bodies of language experts, academics, the government and private sectors, as well as enlisting the participation and involvement of student-leaders in line with language planning and legislation in the SEA context, both at the intra-and transnational levels

Table 3 presents the critical implications drawn from Table 1 and Table 2. The awareness and knowledge of the dominant issues related to ELF both at the intra-national and transnational levels, as observed, identified and discussed in the sample publications of the study, could very well impact language planning and language policy in individual SEA countries and the region as a whole. Greater success could be achieved in the language programmes, such as bilingual education if all the stakeholders come together to forge greater collaborations and united collective efforts as these concerted actions would mitigate if not eradicate feelings of alienation, inhibitions, neglect, fear, or even marginalization. Since most of the SEA varieties of English or the New Englishes are still growing and fast-changing due to the impact of a changing world, there exist huge challenges for the development and promotion of greater levels of mutual intelligibility affecting acceptability.

With the increasing speech and discourse communities of English, linguists and scholars should work together to study the emerging pidgins and creoles as they play a significant role in the evolutionary development of the New Englishes. This development could potentially serve as a more effective lingua franca in the SEA region. Instructional materials/resources/learning tools likewise need to be designed compatible with the language needs of today's learners, the linguistic developments, and the changing linguistic landscape. Ethnicity could become the enhancing variable in SEA-ELT, serving as motivation for confident self-expression, and the appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity, henceforth addressing the issues of perceived linguistic imperialism and cultural loss in the various functions and uses of English at the intra-and transnational levels.

The diglossic ecology and demographics in each SEA country can be redirected by addressing the emerging linguistic needs of growing speech and discourse communities.

4.0 Conclusion

The results of the study revealed a significant growth in the SEA Englishes in the SEA context for the past decades. Meanwhile, there is still some degree of scepticism and the perennial issues of linguistic imperialism and hegemony. This development is a strong indication of the pervasive use of English both at the intra-national and transnational levels, justifying the emerging SEA variety of English as lingua franca in and among these societies. Moreover, the rise of speech and discourse communities is facilitating mutual intelligibility and acceptance of the New Englishes, all the exciting linguistic phenomena tied up with the concerns for authentic linguistic identity as Asians communicating with one another and the rest of the world.

Given the significant results of the investigation, it is evident that SEA countries have increasingly been using the English language for transactional and interactional purposes, creating more opportunities for the development of the SEA varieties of English as lingua franca or SEAEs-LF (Southeast Asian Englishes as lingua franca). Moreover, there still exist issues of colonial mentality, linguistic imperialism and Western hegemony in SEA contexts, which impact the successful implementation of the language policies and programmes, and the overall educational system of SEA countries. Additionally, linguistic identity is perceived as politically influenced and determined by the multilingual societies of SEA, and ELF serves to promote Western hegemony. Mutual intelligibility of ELF in the SEA region has been problematic due to such factors as culture shock, language shock, inhibitions, fear and difficulties with the language. The study also revealed that many teachers in the SEA region lack sufficient knowledge, training and skills to move towards the new WE paradigm. On their part, learners in the SEA exhibit reservations for the SEA Englishes.

Instructional materials and the other learning tools were also found to be limited and wanting of complementariness to the changing linguistic landscape of the SEA region. Further, research and scholarship on the Asian Englishes, specifically the SEA varieties, is scarce among the SEA linguists or the SEA academic communities. The study also revealed that the diglossic patterns of ELF in the SEA context mirror the conflicting forces toward the WE paradigm. Lastly, the SEA region has been moving forward in tune with globalization for economic gains, and so the recognition and acceptance of ELF in very important domains of activity. However, there still exist strong ultra-nationalistic sentiments and ideology.

5.0 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that SEA language planners and policymakers recognize the continuously changing linguistic landscape of their respective countries and the region in general to create and implement relevant and effective language programmes and the overall educational system. Language teachers should also be given more opportunities to upgrade their knowledge, training and skills towards the WE paradigm. Meanwhile, learners must be provided with more instructional materials and learning tools compatible with the WE paradigm, especially the New Englishes or the SEA varieties, to develop their confidence and motivation in learning these Englishes as their second language.

Further, stronger support and funding should be extended to the SEA research communities and independent researchers in line with the New Englishes and current language paradigms to build a more concrete, valid, reliable and rich baseline and stockpile of empirical data for the design of dictionaries, for codification as well as the standardization purposes. It is crucial for the SEA local communities and the larger societies to work together to support the growth and development of their SEA Englishes as lingua franca to boost economic and social progress. On their part, the speech and discourse communities of the SEA varieties of English should help develop and foster greater mutual intelligibility and acceptance of the New Englishes as second language (L2) or as lingua franca. Moreover, learners' difficulties with the English language should be addressed with greater expertise and open-mindedness, considering their multi-lingual backgrounds and ethnicities. English language campaigns also need to work towards effective use of the English language and the healthy appreciation of languages, whether WE or the Pidgin English or creole, as all these varieties play a role in the social realities and contexts of the speakers. Lastly, those proper and sufficient orientations towards the status of the English language in the world today, and in the SEA region should be provided to all stakeholders to form successful partnerships between and among the public and private sectors.

References

- Bautista, M. L. S. (2015). *Studies of Philippine English*. Mandaluyong: Anvil Publishing, Inc.
- Bautista & Bolton, 2008) Bolton, K., & Bautista, M. L. S. (2008). Philippine English and literary perspectives. In M. L. S. Bautista and K. Bolton. Eds. *Philippine English and Literary Perspectives* (pp. 1-10). Hong Kong University Press.
- Bautista, L., & Gonzales, A. (2009). Southeast Asian Englishes. In B. B. Kachru, Y. Kachru and C. Nelson, *Handbook of world Englishes*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bolton, K. (2011). Language policy and planning in Hong Kong: Colonial and post-colonial perspectives. *Applied linguistics review*, 2(1), 51-71.
- Bolton, K. (2012). World Englishes and Asian Englishes: A survey of the field. In *English as an international language in Asia* (pp. 13-26). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278687469-world-englishes-and-asian-englishes>
- Bruthiaux, P. (2003). Squaring the circles: Issues in modeling English worldwide. *International journal of applied linguistics*, 13(2), 159-178.
- Buschfeld, S., & Kautzsch, A. (2017). Towards an integrated approach to postcolonial and non-postcolonial Englishes. *World Englishes*, 36(1), 104-126.
- Buschfeld, S., Kautzsch, A., & Schneider, E. W. (2018). From colonial dynamism to current transnationalism: a critical view on postcolonial and non-postcolonial Englishes. In S. C. Deshina (Ed). *Modelling world Englishes: assessing the interplay of emancipation and globalization of varieties*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.
- Cheung, C., & Sung, M. (2016). *English as a lingua franca in the Asian context: perspectives on identity in a multilingual world*. Retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/306076136>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge encyclopaedia of the English language* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Felker, G. (2004). *Globalization and Southeast Asia*. Presented at the Workshop on Southeast Asia and Political Science: Region, Theory, Method, Stanford University Asia Pacific Research Centre.
- Feng, L., & Sass, T. R. (2018). The impact of incentives to recruit and retain teachers in “hard-to-staff” subjects. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(1), 112-135.
- Hairianto, D. (2014). Models of World Englishes. Retrieved from <https://www.Medium.com/@hairianto/models.of.world.englishes-7c4d203d73>
- Hohsung, C., & Lee, S. (2021). Experiences of non-North American teachers of English in American English-dominant Korean ELT: How the context of English teaching affects teachers’ lives and work. *English Today*, 1-8.
- Howig, A. S. (2016). *Literacy, storytelling, and bilingualism in Asian classrooms*. UK: Routledge.
- Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Jenkins, J., & Wingate, U. (2015). Staff and students’ perceptions of English language policies and practices in ‘international’ universities: a case study from the UK. *Higher Education Review*, 47(2), 47-73.
- Joseph, C., & Matthews, J. (2016). *Equity, opportunity, and education in postcolonial Southeast Asia*. UK: Routledge.
- Kachru, B. B. (1988). The sacred cows of English. *English today*, 4(4), 3-8.
- Kachru, B. B. (1976). Models of English for the third world: White man’s linguistic burden or language pragmatics? *Tesol Quarterly*, 221-239.
- Kachru, B. B. (1978). English in South Asia. *Advances in the study of societal multilingualism*, 9, 477.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk and H. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. B., Kachru, Y., & Nelson, C. L. (Eds.). (2009). *The handbook of world Englishes* (Vol. 48). John Wiley & Sons.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English as an Asian Lingua Franca: the ‘Lingua Franca Approach’ and implications for language education policy. *Journal of English as a Lingua franca*, 1(1), 121-139.
- Eng, K., & Kuah, T. (2016). *Educating Marginalized Communities in East and Southeast Asia*. Routledge.

- Lee, S., & Kim, A. (2020). Experiences and practices of English as a lingua franca communication in the international university: An integrative view of student voices. *Applied Linguistics Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2020-0072>
- Phillipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Prescott, D., Kirpatrick, A., & Hashim, A. (2007). *English in Southeast Asia: varieties, literacies, and literature*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schneider, E. W. (2013). English as a contact language: The 'New Englishes'. *English as a contact language*, 131-148.
- Schneider, E. W. (2016). Grassroots Englishes in tourism interactions: How many speakers acquire 'grassroots English' in direct interactions, and what this may mean to them, and perhaps to linguists. *English Today*, 32(3), 2-10.
- Schneider, E. W. (2018). World Englishes. In *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*. Retrieved 28 Jan. 2023, from <https://oxfordre.com/linguistics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.001.0001/acrefore-9780199384655-e-270>
- Smith, L. E., & Rafiqzad, K. (1979). English for cross-cultural communication: The question of intelligibility. *Tesol Quarterly*, 371-380.
- Sung, C. C. M. (2015). Implementing a Global Englishes component in a university English course in Hong Kong: Student perceptions and implications for course development and implementation. *English Today*, 31(4), 42-49.
- Terkimbi, A. (2016). An Investigation into the State of Status Planning of Tiv Language of Central Nigeria. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(2), 129-142.
- Ullah, A. A., & Ming Yit Ho, H. (2021). Globalisation and cultures in Southeast Asia: Demise, fragmentation, transformation. *Global Society*, 35(2), 191-206.
- Zeng, Y., Wallace, M., Fodi, C. W., & Guo, Y. (2022). *University students' attitudes towards ELF in a multilingual sustainable society*. Retrieved from <https://ideas.paper.org/a/gam/susta/v14y2022i8p4435:d789501.html>