



## Attitudes of Students in the Eight ASEAN Free Flow of Labor Professions towards World Englishes

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This research study aimed to examine the attitudes of students in the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions towards the notion of World Englishes and to investigate the role of universities in promoting World Englishes to prepare students for the ASEAN marketplace. The study sample comprised 1504 fourth-year students studying in the fields related to the eight professions: engineering, nursing, dentistry, architecture, surveying, medicine, accountancy, and tourism. Data collection was via questionnaires and semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The findings reveal both a pluricentric view and a centric view of the English language with these participants. The students seem to be aware of the existence of English varieties and realize the benefits and significance of knowing non-native English varieties for their future careers, particularly in ASEAN context. Nevertheless, they claim that either British or American English should be used in ASEAN for the most intelligibility. This study also found that education institutions currently still play only a minor role in promoting non-native English language varieties to students. The students' responses also indicate their need to learn non-native English varieties.

**Keywords:** World Englishes, ASEAN, free flow of labor professions, attitudes

### Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 and set out a declaration to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region. The 10 member states of ASEAN include Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Cambodia. In order to create a harmonious and peaceful Southeast Asian community, the member states agreed to the core principle of strengthening the economic status and binding spirit among Southeast Asian nations. To foster a successful regional integration, three pillars of the ASEAN community were established: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASEAN, 2009).

As one of the three pillars of the ASEAN community, the AEC aimed to achieve regional economic integration by 2015. Its primary goals were to establish a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development, and a region fully integrated into the global economy (ASEAN, 2008). In particular, a single ASEAN market and production base was to include the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital, and skilled labor. Accordingly, mechanisms and measures were implemented to facilitate the movement of business persons, including skilled laborers across the region.

Recognizing the opportunity for Thailand to gain benefits from this liberalization, graduate students entering the workforce are able to work freely throughout the ASEAN region. With the first step to facilitate the free flow of skilled labor, eight professional fields were approved by ASEAN Economic

Ministers including engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying, medicine, dentistry, accountancy, and tourism. Skilled workers and graduates in these particular fields are permitted to work freely across the AEC under the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) (University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2012). To be able to compete in the ASEAN job market, the workers from these fields therefore need to develop career-related knowledge and skills, especially English language competence. The ASEAN acknowledges the importance of the English language, as evidenced in the statement in chapter 10, article 34 of the ASEAN charter, which states that the working language of ASEAN shall be English (ASEAN, 2007). In a competitive global economy, multilingual speakers are more likely to gain greater benefits from being able to speak both their native language and English (Burns, 2003; Pakir, 2009).

A strategic objective for human development is to support citizens of member states to communicate with one another regionally and internationally. In turn, this objective is achieved by supporting citizens to be proficient English language speakers (ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, 2009). Hence, it may be argued that promoting students to be competent in the use of the English language is critical in the region.

Additionally, to enable people to communicate effectively in the region as well as with people from other nations, they need to understand the varieties of English spoken in the ASEAN region. It is not surprising that British or American English are widely considered as the most desirable forms of English, and are most widely taught in educational institutions around the world (Jenkins, 2009). Nevertheless, the trend among non-native English speakers has shifted from knowing just one standard form of English – typically British or American English – to knowing a variety of English forms. It is apparent that most non-native English speakers today use English mainly to communicate with other non-native speakers. Therefore, efforts to adapt native speakers' accents seem unnecessary (Coskun & Arslan, 2011; Jenkins, 2000).

As 'English' transforms into 'World Englishes' (WE), the English language is becoming more diversified across different contexts around the world as it is influenced by local conditions and other languages (Jenkins, 2009). WE stresses the importance of linguistic diversity, meaning the pluricentricity of English. It recognizes multiple identities and multiple voices, and the increasing use of hybrid forms of English (Burns, 2003; Pakir, 2009). Although the legitimacy of the hybrid forms of English continues to be debated, multiple varieties of English are accepted as legitimate and worthy of study in the field of Applied Linguistics (Matsuda, 2003a).

Several varieties and sub-varieties of English have emerged in the ASEAN due to the internationalization of the English language (Wiliang & Teo, 2012). In the context of Thailand, although English is not an official second language, it is widely used in many domains within the country. To illustrate, it is compulsory to learn English as a second language in schools and universities, and it remains the most popular foreign language for most learners in many tutorial institutions (Wongsothorn et al., 1996, 93-95). Moreover, English is also used in media such as newspapers, radio stations, websites, and TV networks. Even some government publications are translated into English alongside the Thai language. Notably, Butler (1999; 2005) asserted in his studies that Thai English may not yet be fully developed. However, based on the extensive role of English use in Thailand, it may be argued that a Thai variety of English is developing in response to intracultural and intercultural communication (Baker, 2009; Kachru, 2005; Tan, 2005).

The different forms of English are characterized by variations in phonological features including rhythm, pitch, tone, assimilation, and intonation (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Munro et al., 2006). The numerous accents which originate in the region are accompanied by each ASEAN member state's historical background, nationalism, and cultural traditions (Wiliang & Teo, 2012). Recently, the paradigm shift from the monocentric approach to the pluricentric approach when teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) learners has been promoted by WE and EFL researchers. Its core objective lies in enabling learners to reflect on their own sociolinguistic background rather than that of native speakers (Jenkins, 2006).

It could be said that speakers of English in ASEAN settings should be encouraged to maintain the

pragmatic norms shared by interlocutors rather than merely adopting the native speaker's norms. Additionally, it is essential to consider the aim of language learning when English is used as a *lingua franca* (Kirkpatrick, 2009). That is, instead of attempting to achieve the standard forms and native speaker-like proficiency, the emphasis should be put on the non-native speaker's ability to use language successfully in *lingua franca* or multilingual contexts (Cook, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2009; Widdowson, 2003). From this view, multilingual English language teachers may offer a more appropriate linguistic model than is offered by native English teachers. Acquiring native-like competence appears to be unnecessary in this case.

The multilingual model allows people in the ASEAN region to speak English using their own accents. There is no need for them to imitate the sounds made by native English speakers in *lingua franca* contexts. Rather, they need to be internationally intelligible (Kirkpatrick, 2009, 2010). Thus, multilingual speakers who can successfully communicate in regional and international contexts should be the linguistic benchmark rather than native speakers (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Therefore, exposing students to the various versions of English is likely to encourage them to be more confident in speaking their own form of English (Jenkins, 2006). It could be said that students who have limited exposure to various forms of English in the classroom may encounter difficulties when they meet other English speakers who come from outer or expanding circles (Matsuda, 2003a).

In other words, exposing students to various Englishes in the classroom helps them to develop a better attitude toward their own English form (Chiba et al., 1995). It is claimed that even though English is the second language (L2) for most bilingual speakers, many lack the confidence to speak English. As such, this affects their attitudes toward their use of English (Jenkins, 2009). EFL instruction by speakers of multiple English varieties could assist students to feel more confident in speaking English in their own styles and varieties as they see examples of non-native speakers who can communicate effectively. Additionally, interacting with successful EFL users may help students to realize that it is not necessary to be a native speaker to communicate effectively (Matsuda, 2003a).

The changing face of English demonstrates that the language can be conceptualized in a more comprehensive, pluralistic, and accepting way compared to the conventional and monolithic perspective. This broader conceptualization allows for a foreign English accent to emerge, whereas the conventional perspective seems to demand that all speakers of English use the language in a standard way (Coskun & Arslan, 2011; Matsuda, 2003a).

Nevertheless, previous studies related to learners' attitudes towards English as an international language, such as Matsuda (2003b), Adolph (2005), Friedrich (2000), Timmis (2002), and Rattanaphumma (2012), found that learners' conventional beliefs towards the English language reflected similar perspectives. The results from these studies show that the participants view British and American English as superior to other English varieties, and that they do not feel ownership of the English language. They believe that to be successful communicators in English they should try to be as native-speaker-like as possible. In Asia, the development of localized varieties of Asian Englishes is of growing interest to WE scholars (Bolton, 2012). Asian Englishes varieties are distinctive in terms of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and intonation, for example. Therefore, studying the attitudes of Thai learners towards the notion of WE – especially those who study in the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions – will reflect their awareness and recognition of English varieties before entering the ASEAN marketplace. Additionally, the role of educational institutions in promoting the various forms of English is crucial in preparing students to successfully communicate with other people in the ASEAN region.

## Research Questions

This research study aims to examine the attitudes of students in the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions towards the notion of WE in the ASEAN region and to investigate the role of the university in promoting WE to prepare students for the ASEAN marketplace. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of students in the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions towards the notion of World Englishes?
2. To what extent do educational institutions help to promote knowledge of World Englishes to students in the eight professions for free flow of labor in the ASEAN?

## **Research Instruments**

In order to obtain rich data, a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The instruments used in this study were a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was divided into five sections: participants' background, their attitudes toward English varieties and their ownership of English language, intelligible varieties of English for ASEAN communities, the benefits and significance of WE in the ASEAN region, and the role of educational institutions in promoting English varieties. Participants were requested to consider each item carefully and to indicate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement on a scale from strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was approved by three experts in the field of English language teaching. After revising some of the questionnaire items in accordance with the experts' comments, the pilot questionnaire was tested with 50 fourth-year students studying Engineering and Tourism at a university in the northern part of Thailand (the researcher's workplace). Following the pilot study, some parts of the questionnaires were adjusted and modified.

The semi-structured interview questions had the same aims as the questionnaire and were subsequently designed to correspond to the questionnaire items. That is, they focused on the interviewees' backgrounds, their attitudes toward English varieties and ownership of English language, which varieties of English were suitable for ASEAN communities, the benefits and significance of WE in the ASEAN region, and the role of educational institutions in promoting English varieties. However, additional questions were embedded in each section. After piloting the semi-structured interviews, some changes were made to make the questions as clear and simple as possible. Moreover, some leading questions were deleted to avoid bias or to eliminate apparent assumptions by the researcher.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The fieldwork for this study took place from July, 2015 to November, 2015. The sample comprised 1,504 fourth-year students studying in the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions at 11 universities across four regions of Thailand. Hence, the participants included future engineers, nurses, dentists, architects, surveyors, medical practitioners, accountants, and tourism officers. The questionnaire was sent by post to the students, and 17 students were randomly selected for interview, including two students each studying nursing, accounting, tourism, engineering, and surveying; three students each studying medicine and dentistry; and one student studying architecture. All interviews were conducted in Thai, took approximately 45 minutes' duration, and were audio-recorded with the interviewees' permission. They were conducted at the interviewees' universities, and all interviewees were very cooperative, providing very useful information for this study.

## **Results and Discussion**

The quantitative results of the questionnaire were first analyzed by descriptive statistics to determine the mean (M) score and standard deviation (SD). In terms of the demographic results, 669 males (44.48%) and 835 females (55.52%) participated in the survey. Representation of the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions was: nursing (11.97%), accounting (13.10%), engineering (13.30%), architecture (10.17%), surveying (11.70%), medicine (13.50%), dentistry (13.16%), and tourism (13.10%). Regarding the qualitative data, nine females and eight males participated in the survey interviews. Content analysis of the student interview responses was performed using the five main themes addressed in the interview

and questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes the students' responses towards English varieties and ownership of the English language.

TABLE 1  
*Attitudes toward English Varieties and Ownership of English Language (n=1504)*

| Language Attitudes   | X    | S.D.  | Level    |
|--|------|-------|----------|
| 1 You recognize the varieties of English (e.g. Chinese English, Thai English, Singapore English).        | 3.94 | 0.926 | High     |
| 2 You feel positively toward the varieties of English.   | 3.75 | 0.855 | High     |
| 3 You feel uncomfortable when listening to other varieties of English which are not British or American. | 3.30 | 1.060 | Moderate |
| 4 The variety of English that you prefer is either British or American.                                  | 4.05 | 0.851 |          |
| 5 As an English user, you think that you have a right to change or invent new English words.             | 3.17 | 1.065 | Moderate |

Table 1 shows that on average interviewees' prefer British or American, with item 4 demonstrating the highest mean ( $M=4.05$ ,  $SD=0.851$ ). This result is similar to the opinions expressed by the students during interview. As one student explained:

I have studied English with British teachers since I was young, so I am quite familiar with British English and I personally think that its sound is more beautiful than American English.

This finding corresponds to the studies of Friedrich (2002), Matsuda (2003b), and Galloway (2011) which reveal that learners in the Expanding Circle countries of Argentina, Brazil, and Japan view 'English' primarily as British English or American English. Given Thailand is one of the countries in the Expanding Circle, this result may reflect similar viewpoints of learners toward the native English variety.

Regarding attitudes toward ownership of the English language, most interviewees claimed that the right to modify or invent new English words belonged to English native speakers. As non-native English speakers, they believed that they had no right to make such modifications or inventions. This sentiment is expressed in the following comments from participants during interview:

In my opinion, this is the native speakers' job. They are owners of the English language and we are just followers. It will be no use if non-native speakers create new English words and no other users understand the meanings.

I don't think I have a right to do that because it will make things more confusing. Native speakers may not understand what I am saying if I create my own vocabulary and this will lead to a communication breakdown.

The interview data seems to be aligned with the questionnaire result in item 5, "As an English user, you think that you have a right to change or invent new English words," which showed the lowest mean ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=1.065$ ). The results appear similar to those reported by Matsuda (2003b), who found that although the students agreed with the idea of English as an international language, they viewed only the British and Americans as owners of the English language.

TABLE 2  
*Benefits of World Englishes and Intelligible Varieties for ASEAN Communities*

|   | Language Attitudes  | X    | S.D.  | Level    |
|---|---|------|-------|----------|
| 1 | Having many varieties of English is beneficial for creating good understanding among ASEAN members.   | 3.59 | 0.954 | High     |
| 2 | Having many varieties of English promotes a good atmosphere in learning the English language and decreases the pressure to speak English like a native speaker. | 3.69 | 0.885 | High     |
| 3 | We should pay attention to other varieties apart from British or American English.  | 3.59 | 0.918 | High     |
| 4 | Recognizing many English varieties is necessary for you in the ASEAN context.   | 3.75 | 0.853 | High     |
| 5 | The variety of English that you think will be used widely among ASEAN members for the most intelligibility is either British or American English.               | 4.12 | 0.767 | High     |
| 6 | The way people in the ASEAN community speak English in their own variety does not cause any problems in communication.  | 3.34 | 1.062 | Moderate |

The results presented in Table 2 show that although the students tended overall to have a positive attitude towards the benefits of WE (items 1 to 4), some of their responses (items 5 and 6) reflected the centrist view that posits British and American English as the norm-providing standard. This is evidenced by the highest mean score for item 5, “The variety of English that you think will be used widely among ASEAN members for most intelligibility is either British or American” ( $M=4.12$ ,  $SD=0.767$ ), and the lowest mean score for item 6, “The way people in the ASEAN community speak English in their own variety does not cause any problems in communication” ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=1.062$ ). This finding is in accordance with the views expressed by the students during interview, which indicated that they thought either British or American English should be used widely among the ASEAN members to achieve the most intelligibility. Additionally, while some of the interviewees indicated that American English should be used in ASEAN communities because it was currently used throughout the world and was easy to understand, some participants pointed out that people in ASEAN communities should be able to use any variety of English that they liked for spoken language. In terms of written language, however, the interviewees indicated that they should use either British or American English. Interestingly, the idea of using Asian Englishes among ASEAN countries was also mentioned, as illustrated in the following claim from one interviewee:

We might have our own accents which are especially used in ASEAN. At first, we may speak Thai English integrated with Singapore English and then it will become our ASEAN accents in the end.

Furthermore, one interviewee proposed the idea of opening a public forum for people in ASEAN communities to vote for the variety that they would like to use as a standard.

Data from the interviews provided more detail, revealing more of the participants’ centrist views toward British and American English as their favorite. There was a perception that if people in the ASEAN community spoke English in their own varieties, it would cause some problems in communication, especially in a meeting which required precise and accurate information. Some interviewees claimed that people should use standard English – either British or American – when communicating with people internationally; however, they should also be allowed to use their own varieties in unofficial or informal contexts such as contacting friends online. Only a few were of the view that the way people spoke their own varieties did not create a problem in communication. They suggested that the person merely had to take the time to understand the varieties that they were not used to.

TABLE 3  
*Role of the University in Promoting English Varieties*

|   | Language Attitudes   | X    | S.D.  | Level    |
|---|--|------|-------|----------|
| 1 | It is necessary to promote knowing many varieties of English apart from British or American English at the university level.                                       | 3.78 | 0.958 | High     |
| 2 | Universities should promote and encourage students to know other English varieties apart from British or American English.   | 3.72 | 0.947 | High     |
| 3 | Your university supports you to know many varieties of English apart from British or American English.   | 3.31 | 1.079 | Moderate |
| 4 | You would like the university to provide more chances to practice and familiarize yourself with other varieties of English apart from British or American English. | 3.73 | 0.995 | High     |

The main finding to emerge from the data analysis on the role of universities in promoting English varieties is that most students believed that it was necessary for universities to support students to know many varieties of English apart from British or American English. This is shown in Table 3, with the highest mean score ( $M=3.78$ ,  $SD=0.958$ ) achieved for item 1, "It is necessary to promote students to know many varieties of English apart from British or American English". One student also expressed the following view during interview:

I think it is necessary for the university to promote other English varieties apart from British and American for the most effective communication, especially when contacting people in ASEAN communities. For example, if we go to work in Singapore, we need to be familiar with Singapore English. It will help us to better understand what they are saying.

Only a few participants stated that universities should promote native English varieties, either British or American, as the first priority, suggesting that when the students were proficient in one of these English varieties they would better understand different English varieties. As one student explained during interview:

In my opinion, I think it is not necessary. The university should first promote the varieties used most widely such as British or American. When the students are proficient in the English language, they would understand other varieties.

Regarding university support of other English varieties apart from British and American English, the students' responses suggested a lack of institution support. This is shown in Table 3, with the lowest mean in the section coming from item 3: "Your university supports you to know many varieties of English apart from British or American English" ( $M=3.31$ ,  $SD=1.079$ ). Likewise, most interviewees perceived that there was currently limited support from the university to encourage students to know non-native varieties of English. Mostly, what the university attempted to do was to promote the history, culture, and national languages of ASEAN countries.

Finally, when the students were asked whether they would like the university to provide more chances to practice and familiarize themselves with other varieties of English, most claimed that the university should help them to know many English varieties as this would benefit their careers. They indicated that they would like the university to provide a workshop to practice listening to many English varieties by inviting speakers of those varieties to inform them of WE. Some commented that they would like to establish a community which included students from different countries and convene monthly to do speaking activities together. They believed that in this way they could simultaneously learn varieties of English and cultural values from the native speakers of each variety. In addition, some interviewees indicated that they would like to learn English varieties through e-learning programs. They reported that it was convenient for them as they could learn anytime and anywhere.

It is clear from the research results that even though the opinions of most students do not reflect the pluricentric view of WE, their responses appear to support the promotion of non-native English varieties,

and especially those that exist in the ASEAN countries. Their comments also show their awareness of many English varieties including accents, grammar, and vocabularies. This is crucial for students studying any of the eight ASEAN free flow of labor professions as it will help them to minimize miscommunication problems. In addition, most participants perceive that familiarizing themselves with many English varieties will benefit their careers in the ASEAN context. Thus, to prepare students for global uses of English, teaching them non-native varieties of English will help them to use English in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. As Gallaway and Rose (2015) claim, English language learners will use English to communicate with other non-native English speakers more often than with native English speakers. Therefore, teaching students to follow only one standard form of English may not be ideal.

### Implications of the Study

Procedures for incorporating WE in an EFL classroom in ASEAN contexts are proposed in Model 1 below:



Figure 1. Procedures for incorporating World Englishes in an EFL classroom in an ASEAN context.

Figure 1 demonstrates the procedures to implement the notion of WE in an EFL classroom. According to the model, the first stage is to develop students' understanding of WE. At this stage, the teacher may provide students with background knowledge of the history of the English language as well as its evolution as a global language. Also, the students need to become aware of their positions and roles as English users who can greatly contribute to the diversity of the English language. The findings to emerge from the interview data show the students believe that the right to change or invent new English words belongs to English native speakers. As non-native speakers, they think that they have no right to do so as they are just followers in the use of the language. In this respect, educating the students about WE may help them to see themselves as contributors or creators to WE. This is because ASEAN varieties of English are not only used as a means for communicating within a region, but also at an international or global level (Halliday, 2009).

In the second stage, exploring ASEAN Englishes, the participants were of the view that familiarizing themselves with many English varieties will benefit their careers in the ASEAN context. In addition, the research results indicated the participants' need to have more opportunities to practice and familiarize themselves with other varieties of English apart from British or American. Thus, to help the students to recognize the existence of English varieties in ASEAN communities, the students should be exposed to

the various English varieties, including the accents, grammar, and vocabularies that have emerged in ASEAN countries. This is in line with the opinions of Gallaway and Rose (2015), McKay (2012), and D'Souza (1999), who assert that it is the responsibility of English language teachers to prepare students to use different varieties of English which will benefit them during interactions in international contexts.

Third, reflecting on the key issues related to ASEAN Englishes is essential for students to expand their perceptions of ASEAN Englishes and WE concepts. In this stage, students should be enabled to discuss and express their opinions towards important issues relevant to ASEAN Englishes and WE concepts such as the standards and norms of WE or the issue of mutual intelligibility and identity. From the research findings, the participants' preferences for British and American varieties, together with their opinions that having one variety – either British or American – as a standard, would reduce communication (intelligibility) problems among ASEAN members reflects a centrist view that posits British and American English as the norm-providing standard. Therefore, discussing and sharing opinions on the topics relevant to WE, particularly the issue of mutual intelligibility, would be very much useful for developing the students' understandings of non-native English varieties in terms of both linguistic features and user perceptions. Moreover, it may broaden their perspectives about the possibility of using ASEAN varieties of English within ASEAN communities.

The final stage is to practice communicative strategies such as interaction and intercultural pragmatics, as they are important for communicating with people in international settings. This stage aims to develop students' knowledge of intercultural communicative competence to help them to “shuttle between communities” (Canagarajah, 2005, p. xxv). This study found that students use various strategies to help them to understand people from other countries such as non-verbal language and software applications such as Google translation. Moreover, they expressed during interviews that they would like to practice listening to various English varieties, particularly varieties which existed in the ASEAN region, and to speak with speakers of those varieties. Establishing a language club or community can be an activity which provides students with authentic experiences to communicate with people from ASEAN countries.

TABLE 4

*Suggested Activities for Incorporating World Englishes in English Language Teaching in an ASEAN Context*

| Stages of teaching                                       | Descriptions  | Suggested activities  |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Building WE knowledge                                 | Learners should be supported to develop their WE knowledge including history, the rise and spread of the English language, and its users.                         | ▶ Visual and audio presentations (pictures, films, wall charts, timeline)   |
| 2. Exploring ASEAN varieties of English                  | Learners should be exposed to different varieties of English from various countries in the ASEAN, including accents, grammar, vocabularies, and discourse styles. | ▶ Research reports<br>▶ Visual and audio presentations (films, video clips)<br>▶ Guest speakers who speak ASEAN Englishes<br>▶ ASEAN Englishes camps<br>▶ Reading literature from ASEAN countries |
| 3. Reflecting ASEAN Englishes key issues and WE concepts | Learners should be encouraged to discuss and express opinions about their cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews relevant to ASEAN Englishes and WE key issues. | ▶ Discussion groups<br>▶ Role plays<br>▶ Journal entries<br>▶ Essay writing<br>▶ Research report writing  |
| 4. Practicing communicative strategies                   | Learners should practice using communicative strategies for communicating with people from ASEAN communities.   | ▶ Role plays<br>▶ simulations/case study projects<br>▶ ASEAN Englishes communities  |

Table 4 above presents activities for incorporating WE in English language teaching in the ASEAN context. Firstly, a lecture format may be used to develop students' knowledge of WE, including its history, the rise and spread of the English language, and its users. This can be done using visual and audio presentations such as pictures, films, wall charts, and timelines.

Secondly, at the “exploring ASEAN varieties of English” stage, visual and audio presentations such as films and video clips from official and reliable sources are useful to expose students to different English varieties. Additionally, as suggested by the participants, inviting guest speakers who speak ASEAN Englishes or participating in ASEAN Englishes camps are activities that will assist them to familiarize themselves with different English varieties in the region. Moreover, reading literature from ASEAN countries is another helpful method to learn the characteristics of ASEAN Englishes in written forms. Students will have the opportunity to observe grammar usage, vocabulary, and idioms, as well as discourse styles in written texts, which can well-reflect the variations of English use in the Expanding Circle.

Thirdly, in “reflecting ASEAN Englishes key issues,” activities that will help students to explicitly articulate their own voices on ASEAN Englishes and WE concepts include discussion groups, role plays, journal entries, essay writing, and writing research reports. Through these activities, the students can be motivated to express their opinions about cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews relevant to ASEAN Englishes and WE key issues.

Finally, the “practicing communicative strategies” stage can be promoted through role plays, simulations, and case study projects, as well as by establishing ASEAN Englishes communities. The students can practice using communicative strategies for making contact with people from different English language varieties in the ASEAN countries.

## Conclusion

This research study examined the perceptions of students in the eight professions for free flow of labor in the ASEAN region toward the notion of WE as well as the role of educational institutions in promoting non-native English varieties. The findings reveal that the students hold both a pluricentric view and a centric view of the English language. The students seem to be aware of the existence of English varieties and realize the benefits and significance of knowing non-native English varieties for their future careers, particularly in the ASEAN context. Nevertheless, they claim that either British or American English should be used in ASEAN countries for the most intelligibility. If people in the ASEAN community speak English in their own varieties, it may cause some problems for communication, especially in meetings which require precise and accurate information. Additionally, this study found that educational institutions play a minor role in promoting non-native English varieties to the students. The students’ responses indicate their need to learn non-native English varieties. These findings have an implication for teaching WE in an EFL classroom as a preparation course to help students familiarize themselves with non-native English varieties. Therefore, a model for incorporating WE into the EFL classroom in an ASEAN context, including procedures and suggested activities, is proposed in this study. This is in response to the changing face of English language use in ASEAN and international contexts where British and American English varieties tend to dominate at the expense of emerging local varieties.

It should be noted here also that the limitation of this research lies in the small sample. This may limit the generalizability of the findings and make comparisons with other studies difficult. Another limitation is that the findings only report student perceptions of WE; thus, it should be considered that the students’ opinions may not reflect the reality of all language learning contexts.

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