

## **English Teachers' Conceptions of EIL, the Associated Principles and Corresponding Instructional Practices: A Theory of Planned Behavior Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

Despite English teachers' acknowledgement of the plurality of English and the emergence of different varieties of the language, the actual manifestations of this plurality and the associated principles do not seem to be equally embraced in their classroom approach. Against this background, this study investigated Iranian English teachers' conceptions of English as an International Language (EIL) and their corresponding instructional practices through semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations. Drawing upon the theory of planned behavior (TPB), as the theoretical/analytical framework, the researchers explored the participant teachers' behavioral, normative, and control beliefs underlying their intentions and actual classroom practices with regard to EIL. Findings revealed that although the teachers acknowledged the importance of raising learners' awareness of EIL in different aspects of their language use, they still leaned towards standard American or British English in their actual instructional practices. Such propensity was informed by their attitudes toward the inclusion of EIL principles, their perceptions of the existing social pressures, and their perceived difficulty of adopting an EIL-aware pedagogy. Moreover, the participant teachers' actual classroom instructions were found to be incongruent with their beliefs about the importance of raising students' awareness regarding different English varieties. Implications for language teacher education are discussed.

**Keywords:** English as an international language; L2 teachers' conceptions; EIL principles; the theory of planned behavior; behavioral beliefs; normative beliefs; control beliefs

Motivated by the universal belief that learning English would entail social, educational, and economic growth (Bayyurt & Dewey, 2020; McKay, 2003, 2017; Rueda García & Atienza, 2020), the language has spread to a large number of countries and cultures and is currently used by people with different first languages (L1). The geographical spread of English has been so expansive that the non-native users of this language have been estimated to outnumber its native speakers (Matsuda, 2018). This unprecedented spread has facilitated cross-cultural exchanges, access to scientific and technological information, and internationalization of higher education, among others. In essence, all dimensions of human activity, “from language in education to international relations”, have been influenced by such global spread of the language (Kachru, 2005, p. 155). Therefore, the role of English in this globalized world, its status, and the purposes that it serves in different contexts need to be explored further.

As a consequence of the numerical dominance of the non-native English speakers (NNES), the status of the language as a medium for cross-cultural communication has radically changed (Baker, 2015). This trend has motivated the use of such terms as ‘English as a lingua franca’ (ELF) to refer to communication in English among the speakers with different L1s or the more general term ‘English as an international language’ (EIL), which refers to the use of the language “between L2 speakers of English regardless of whether they share the same culture or not, ... [or] between L2 and L1 English speakers” (House, 2012, p. 186). The term EIL has been used by a number of scholars (e.g., Higgins, 2003; McKay, 2010) as an umbrella term encompassing interactions in World Englishes in their ‘home’ countries and in ELF contexts (House, 2012). For the purposes of the present article, EIL and ELF will be used almost interchangeably while acknowledging the nuances of differences.

Given that a substantial number of English users do not manage to achieve a desirable command of the ‘standard’ grammar and a norm-based lexis and pronunciation, the so-called ‘substandard’ and internationalized versions of the language are getting more and more common. In other words, ELF or EIL has now developed an independent life of its own, not necessarily based on the norms assumed by the native users of English (Seidlhofer, 2004).

A recognition of English as an international language and the diverse ways that bilingual speakers of the language use it need to inform English language teaching (ELT) in Expanding Circle countries (Bayyurt & Dewey, 2020; Lowe & Kiczowski, 2021; Matsuda, 2020). As revealed by previous studies (e.g., Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2018; Matsuda, 2020; Young & Walsh, 2010), the standard English varieties, or the so-called prestige models, have been used as benchmarks of correctness in ELT in many Expanding Circle countries (e.g., Iran). However, since the purpose of most English learners nowadays is to know enough English to meet their communicative needs (McKay, 2003, 2017), an effective EIL pedagogy should cater to the specific needs and goals of learners who aim to study English without attaining a native-like competence in the language.

Such pedagogy should follow a number of principles, which are outlined by McKay (2018) as follows:

1. Given the varieties of English spoken today and the diversity of L2 learning contexts, all pedagogical decisions regarding standards and curriculum should be made in reference to local language needs and local social and educational factors.
2. The widely accepted belief that an English-only classroom is the most productive for language learning needs to be fully examined; in addition, careful thought should be given to how best to use the L1 in developing language proficiency.
3. Attention to the development of strategic intercultural competence should exist in all EIL classrooms.
4. EIL is not linked to a particular social/cultural context in the same way that French, Korean or Japanese are intricately associated with a particular culture. In this way EIL is or should be culturally neutral. (p. 3)

One of the crucial factors in the “successful implementation of an English as an International [language] (EIL) approach to teaching English is the teacher” (McKay, 2002, as cited in Renandya, 2012, p. 65). Teaching English in an international context imposes considerable demands on the teachers. They need to come to terms with the requirements of an EIL pedagogy, recognize the global nature of the language, and adopt teaching roles that are compatible with its principles. Although the relationship between EIL and ELT has long been debated, there still remains gaps between research findings and their practical applications in language instruction. In other words, teaching EIL has not been put into practice widely while it has attracted considerable scholarly attention (Bayyurt & Dewey, 2020).

In fact, despite the globalization of English, as a factor contributing to the advent of EIL, in Expanding Circle countries, standard American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) still have a dominant status in the field of ELT (Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2018; Ishikawa, 2016). Therefore, English language teachers’ beliefs regarding different varieties of the language, EIL-related teaching principles, and their implementation in actual classroom practices need to be explored. This is important because in spite of the large body of empirical research and theoretical scholarship on classroom implications of EIL, there appears to be little change in the actual instructional practices of the teacher with regard to EIL (Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2018), implying that the implementation of an EIL-aware approach to English instruction has not been well established in the Expanding Circle countries. Therefore, in such contexts where, according to the research evidence, most ELT teachers have not recognized the emerging varieties of English as legitimate instructional models and do not attend to the EIL-related principles in their classroom approach (Bernaisch & Koch, 2016; Tajeddin et al., 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2020), exploring the English teachers’ conceptions of EIL and the factors/reasons which hinder adopting the principles underlying EIL in their actual instructional practices is called for. This aim takes on further importance in light of the fact that the alignment of conceptions/practices or lack thereof as they relate to EIL have remained rather under-represented in the previous research.

Moreover, although there are increasing calls to incorporate EIL-informed pedagogy into the ELT classroom (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Matsuda, 2019) and teachers’ acknowledgements of the existence of different English varieties have been reported in previous studies (Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2018), discussions around EIL teaching have largely remained at the level of theory rather than practice. In addition, to shed light on the various dimensions and provide

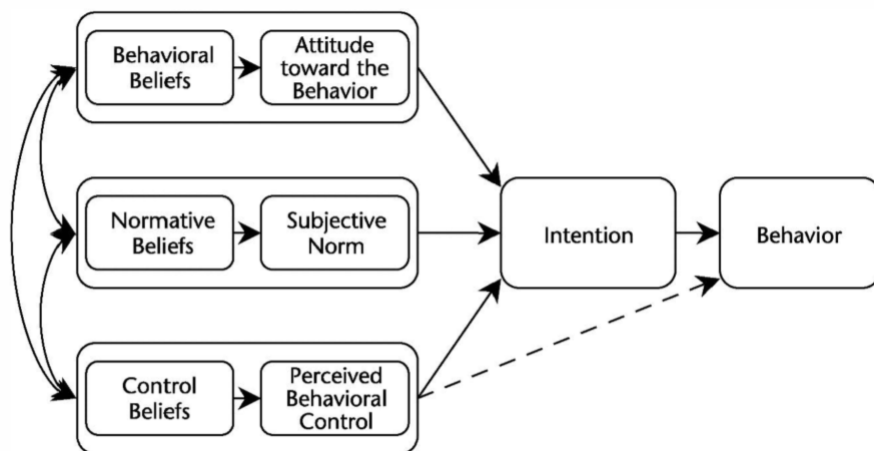
multi-faceted understandings of EIL, it is important to employ different theoretical perspectives. Therefore, a thorough analysis of teachers' wariness about teaching EIL and incorporation of EIL principles in their pedagogical practices is required which can be achieved through implementation of a theoretical perspective that is capable of delving into the underlying reasons for any kind of human behavior. One such perspective, which, we assume, can provide a robust framework for understanding teachers' conceptions and practices of EIL is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991, 2002, 2005, 2011, 2012). In this model, people's beliefs regarding an issue of concern are considered the most influential factors in their behavior and decision making (Ajzen, 2012). Given the centrality of teachers' conceptions in directing their behaviors, exploring language teachers' underlying beliefs regarding EIL and their EIL-related practices in the light of TPB can provide interesting insights.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2002, 2005, 2011, 2012) assumes that human beings' behaviors and actions are reasoned and planned in the sense that all human actions are based on their knowledge of the implicit or explicit consequences of their actions, and postulates that "a person's intention to perform (or not to perform) a behavior is the most immediate determinant of that action" (Ajzen, 2005, p. 18). As stated by Ajzen (2002), the TPB maintains that the intentions and behaviors of human beings are guided by three types of considerations: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behavior and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioral beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of significant others and the motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may further or hinder performance of the behavior and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs). These three types of beliefs are known as the determinants of any human behavior. While people can hold a series of different beliefs regarding any behavior, there is only a relatively small number of them readily accessible in memory. These accessible beliefs, which are called "salient beliefs", have been assumed to be the major determinants of a person's actions in TPB (Ajzen & Cote, 2008, p. 291).

It is noted by Ajzen (2002) that the behavioral beliefs result in favorable or unfavorable *attitudes toward the behavior*, the normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure or *subjective norm*, and control beliefs give rise to *perceived behavioral control*. Based on the TPB, while people may have unfounded or biased beliefs regarding a behavior, "their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control are thought to follow spontaneously and reasonably from these beliefs, produce a corresponding behavioral intention, and ultimately, result in behavior that is consistent with the overall tenor of the beliefs" (Ajzen, 2011, p. 76). Figure 1 below presents the schematic representation of this theory.

Therefore, as a general rule in the TPB, "the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 2002). Additionally, in the TPB, several background factors are considered influential in people's behavioral, normative, and control beliefs, which, in turn, affect one's intentions and actions (Ajzen, 2005). These background factors are divided into personal (e.g., general attitudes, personality traits, emotions, etc.), social (e.g., gender, race, education, etc.), and information (e.g., experience, knowledge, etc.) categories (Ajzen, 2005).



**Figure 1. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2005, p. 126)**

Ajzen (2002) argued that since some behaviors are assumed to pose difficulties of execution that are likely to restrict the extent of volitional control over its conduct, perceived behavioral control needs to be considered in addition to intention. Therefore, a measure of perceived behavioral control can serve as a proxy for the actual control and determine a behavior of interest to the extent that people hold realistic judgments of the difficulty of the behavior.

### **Empirical Studies Adopting the Theory of Planned Behavior**

Researchers have employed the TPB in a number of studies in mainstream education (Heuckmann et al., 2018; Kim, 2009; Knauder & Koschmieder, 2019; McFarlane & Woolfson, 2013) and also in other domains like healthcare, tourism, and marketing. While there is a significant body of research employing the TPB as a conceptual framework for the study of human action in social sciences, it has rarely been used in the field of applied linguistics and language education, resulting in a limited number of studies on language teachers' beliefs (e.g., Huang, 2009; Keranen, 2008; Underwood, 2012; Wallestad, 2009), and learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in an ESL classroom (e.g., Zhong, 2013).

In an attempt to investigate Chinese learners' WTC, Zhong (2013) adopted the TPB in a multiple case study, whose data were collected longitudinally over 18 weeks through classroom observations, and semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews. The participants' WTC was revealed to vary across different classroom contexts including teacher-fronted situations and collaborative learning settings. Such variations, which were interpreted to be the result of the context-dependency of the WTC construct, were accounted for through Ajzen's TPB. In this study, the Chinese learners' behavioral beliefs, resulting in different attitudes toward collaborative learning, were revealed to be the only influential factor in their WTC and oral communication in collaborative learning situations. However, considering teacher-fronted situations, the findings indicated that all three sets of learners' beliefs (i.e., behavioral, normative, and control beliefs) jointly exerted a considerable influence on learners' WTC, which in turn affected their actual oral communication.

In a study on the beliefs and conceptions of prospective language teachers regarding cooperative learning, drawing upon Ajzen's TPB framework, Wallestad (2009) investigated the complexity of the teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and actions, and how the social nature of human learning directed their thought process in a given context. The findings revealed that teachers' beliefs

regarding the positive outcomes of cooperative learning were influential in their actions and teaching performance. Teachers' beliefs were also reported to change through a TESOL methods course as a result of different personal controlling factors, such as teachers' self-consciousness and their critical thinking ability.

In another study focused on English grammar instruction in Japan, Underwood (2012) employed the TPB to examine the teachers' beliefs regarding the personal, social, and context-related factors that were likely to influence their grammar instruction in communication-oriented classroom settings under the new national curriculum reforms. The study indicated that adoption was impeded for some teachers as a result of their behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. It was further found that the teachers' misconceptions about high-stakes examinations resulting in unfavorable attitudes, their perceptions of social pressure to reject reform, and insufficient resources such as time and training were some of the inhibiting factors in Japanese teachers' adoption of national curriculum.

### **English as an International Language (EIL)**

Due to rapid increase in the number of non-native users/learners of English around the world, "people from the so-called 'core' English speaking countries are now in the minority among English users, and 'native speakers' of the language no longer determine how the language is being used internationally" (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008, p. 28.2). Thus, English is viewed as a pluricentric language in today's globalized world with different phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical, and pragmatic norms corresponding to different national varieties (McKay, 2010). The pluricentricity of English is well captured by Kachru's (1986) concentric model which holds that the English-using world can be categorized into three different concentric circles: (a) native users of English for whom English is the first language in almost all functions (as in 'Inner Circle' countries such as the USA and the UK); (b) non-native users of English who use an institutionalized second-language variety of English (as in the 'Outer Circle' countries such as Singapore or India); and (c) non-native users of English who consider English as a foreign language and use it in highly restricted domains such as media or science (as in 'Expanding Circle' countries such as Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, among others).

The concept of EIL has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention (e.g., Alsagoff et al., 2012; Jenkins, 2009; Sharifian, 2009; Sifakis, 2019; Wang & Jenkins, 2016). Some of the current work has concentrated on the nature of ELF, investigating the phonological features (Jenkins, 2000), pragmatic features (e.g., Björkman, 2011; House, 2009, 2010; Kecskes, 2019; Polz & Seidlhofer, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004), and grammatical and lexico-grammatical features of ELF (e.g., Jenkins, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2004) resulting in a compilation of a corpus of non-native interactions named Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE).

Some of the attention has also been drawn towards teaching EIL. For example, considering the crucial significance of pronunciation in teaching EIL and effective communication in English, and its marginalization in many EIL programs, Low (2021) argues how previous research on EIL pronunciation teaching can be translated into classroom practice. By drawing upon a range of current issues regarding EIL pronunciation modelling and theorizing, Low argues that native English speakers (NES) teachers and NNEST teachers need to be equipped with the pedagogical tools and knowledge required to succeed in EIL teaching through TESOL programs, teachers who are speakers of different English accents and pronunciation models need to be employed

for teaching EIL, and mutual intelligibility should be prioritized over native-like proficiency in EIL communication and pronunciation teaching.

In response to a call by EIL scholars to language practitioners to reconsider their current pedagogical practices and employ appropriate EIL-oriented pedagogical approaches in their local contexts, Sung (2017) implemented an out-of-class communication component in a university ELT course in Hong Kong to raise students' awareness of EIL. The researcher explored how out-of-class EIL communication activities affect students' understandings of English in a global context. The findings indicated that the student participants appreciated the diversity of English existing in their surrounding environment, questioned the relevance of native-speaker norms, and recognized the significance of communicative strategies in EIL communication.

As another attempt to raise students' awareness of global Englishes, Boonsuk et al. (2021) introduced a compulsory course called global Englishes to Thai university students with the aim to challenge the dominant conceptualization regarding EFL-oriented pedagogies and native speakerism. To this end, students' perceptions before and after the course were investigated, which revealed that their biased native-speaker-oriented mindset changed to a viewpoint that acknowledged the diversity of the language and appreciated the value of 'Thai English'.

Investigations of non-native English teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding EIL in the Expanding Circle contexts were absent in the literature until recently. A number of studies have recently focused on teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of EIL in English instruction (e.g., Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; Cheung et al., 2015; Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2021; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019; Sang, 2020; Wang, 2015) and specifically, on Iranian language teachers' perceptions of EIL (e.g., Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015; Monfared, 2018; Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018; Rahatlou et al., 2018; Sang, 2020; Sarandi, 2020; Tajeddin et al., 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2020). As posited by Jenkins (2009), the "staunchly native speaker ideology" (p. 203) seems to be prevalent in ELT practices; and the teachers' preference for native varieties of English rather than emerging varieties has been a consistent finding of the existing body of research. Such inclination towards a standard variety is likely to be due to the teachers' lack of knowledge about EIL and an EIL-informed pedagogy (Jenkins, 2005; Low, 2021; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019), the scarcity of EIL-oriented teaching materials (Galloway, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018), students' and their parents' attitudes toward EIL, and the policy makers' and stakeholders' expectations (Jenkins, 2005; Lim, 2019; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019; Young & Walsh, 2010). Additionally, Matsuda (2020) has argued that the English practitioners conceive of an assessment plan that is compatible with the pluricentric view of language as an impossible undertaking, which can discourage them from implementing an EIL-aware pedagogy altogether.

The so-called 'native speaker ideology' was evident in some of the studies conducted in the context where the present study was conducted (i.e., Iran). For example, Monfared and Khatib (2018) investigated the awareness and attitudes of Outer and Expanding Circle teachers towards their own variants of English. The findings revealed that the Expanding Circle teachers had exonormative orientations (believing in the supremacy of native speaker pronunciations such as Received Pronunciation and General American as the 'best' or the only 'correct' forms of the language) while the teachers in the Outer Circle showed endonormativity (acknowledging educated local forms of using English as the goal of language training).

Tajeddin et al. (2018) also examined the idealized native-speaker linguistic and pragmatic norms in the Expanding Circle context of Iran, which revealed that the teachers held strong beliefs in the supremacy of native-speaker norms. The pervasiveness of standard English preference among the English teachers in Iran was also accentuated in Tajeddin et al. (2020). Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019) also explored the perceptions of English language teachers about WEs and their inclusion in ELT in the context of Australia. The findings revealed that the teachers believed WEs should not be included in ELT curriculum except for some slight instances of awareness-raising explanations regarding the existence of diversity in English. Some contextual factors such as time constraints and students' expectations were found to be influential in teachers' reluctance to incorporate WEs.

### **The Rationale of the Present Study**

Teaching has always been considered a complicated cognitive activity in second/foreign language education; and teachers, according to Borg (2003) are “active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (p. 81). Since teachers' beliefs play a significant role in second/foreign language education and affect their instructional behaviors (Young & Walsh, 2010), it can be argued that incorrect and biased beliefs that teachers hold about language instruction (e.g., a strong belief in exonormativity) can influence their classroom practices, and thereby their students' language learning.

The TPB has been proved to be an efficient analytic framework to delve into the beliefs underlying human behavior. Considering the importance of teachers' conceptions in second/foreign language education, the application of the TPB can provide insights into the antecedent beliefs underlying the teachers' intentions to/not to adopt an EIL-informed pedagogy in their classroom approach.

While EIL has presented itself as a viable alternative to the standard varieties in theoretical discussions in academia, the standard varieties of English still have a prevalent status in the actual practice of ELT. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has examined the conceptions of Expanding Circle English teachers regarding EIL and the interface between their beliefs and classroom practices through the lens of the TPB. Against this backdrop, this study aimed to explore Iranian English teachers' conceptions regarding EIL and an EIL-aware pedagogy through a TPB analytic approach, which can yield a thorough understanding of the behavioral, normative, and control beliefs underlying their actions. More specifically, the study investigated the following research questions:

- 1) From a theory of planned behavior perspective, how do Iranian language teachers conceive of (the necessity of) EIL and EIL pedagogy?
- 2) From a theory of planned behavior perspective, how do Iranian language teachers realize their conceptions of EIL in practice?
- 3) From a theory of planned behavior perspective, what behavioral, normative and control (sub)factors comprise (and define) the antecedents of teachers' EIL-related conceptions?



## Method

### Participants

Seven non-native Iranian English teachers, including four females and three males, were recruited through purposive sampling to participate in the study. All teachers had university degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). More specifically, three teachers held master's degrees, while the other four were PhD candidates in TEFL. All the participants had a high level of proficiency in English and taught at different levels, from elementary to advanced. Their experience ranged from 8 to 20 years of teaching in private English language institutions, where language learners enroll in non-compulsory English courses. A profile summary of the participants is presented in Table 1. To cater to the participants' privacy and confidentiality, all real names were substituted by number pseudonyms (i.e., Teachers 1-7).

**Table 1. Teachers' Profile Summary**

Pseudonym	Gender	Age range	Qualifications	Years of teaching
T1	Male	25-35	PhD candidate in TEFL	>5
T2	Female	25-35	PhD candidate in TEFL	>15
T3	Male	35-45	BA in TEFL	>20
T4	Male	25-35	PhD candidate in TEFL	>5
T5	Female	25-35	MA in TEFL	>5
T6	Female	25-35	PhD candidate in TEFL	>10
T7	Female	25-35	MA in TEFL	>10

### Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews and non-participant non-structured classroom observations (Cohen et al., 2000). Given that conception is an unobservable mental construct, the teachers can be the most informative source of information about it (Birello, 2012). Considering that people can hold a wide range of beliefs regarding any given behavior, and only a limited number of them are readily accessible in memory—which determine the behavior (Ajzen, 2011), an appropriate data collection technique should be utilized to elicit such salient beliefs. Since providing participants with a list of belief statements is unlikely to lead to comprehensive findings and some important accessible beliefs might be missing (Ajzen, 2012), semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable data collection instrument which facilitated accessing the so-called salient beliefs. The interviews aimed to elicit teachers' demographic information (e.g., age, years of teaching experience, and field of study), beliefs on the native speaker model, English as an international language, and the legitimacy of other English varieties, and beliefs about different issues related to teaching EIL through the lens of TPB framework. Prior to the interviews, the teachers' consent to participate in the study as well as their permission for recording the interviews and using the recorded data for publication purposes were sought and secured. They were informed about the aims of the study and were assured that their answers would be used solely for research purposes. The interviews had a general and a more specific target. The

general target addressed the teachers' propensity to follow the native-speaker norms versus incorporating EIL principles in their classroom approach, but the more specific target was informed by the three sets of beliefs reflected in the TPB including behavioral, normative, and control beliefs regarding the inclusion of EIL principles in their instructional practices. Each interview, consisting of 14 questions, lasted about 30-50 min per teacher. A neutral stance was adopted by the researcher—the first author—during the interviews and the data were collected unobtrusively by keeping the researcher's contribution to a minimum to avoid influencing the participants' responses.

In order to enhance the credibility of the findings and triangulate the data, and to investigate the actual practices of the teachers, two instructional sessions (each lasting for one hour and 45 min) taught by five of the participant teachers were observed. The non-participant observations aimed to compare the teachers' stated beliefs in the interview stage with their actual classroom behaviors. The teachers' instructions were audio-recorded and transcribed while some field notes were also noted down by the researcher during the observations.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the interviews were regarded as the primary source of data, and in-class observations were employed to supplement the findings and explore the likely (in)congruencies between teachers' stated beliefs regarding EIL principles and the actualization of such beliefs in their practices. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and coded for analysis. Thematic qualitative content analysis through a constant comparative method (Creswell, 2012) was adopted to analyze the interview data, which led the researchers to follow a systematic coding method by extracting the recurring themes and sub-themes within the codes. The themes were generated by the recurring patterns within the participants' answers invoked by the interview questions based on the TPB, and the sub-themes were generated through continuous within-case and between-case comparisons in the coded data until no new sub-theme emerged. Finally, labels were given to each theme. While coding the data, careful attention was devoted to the choice of words used by the participants, enabling the researchers to figure out those beliefs and attitudes towards EIL that might indicate the participants' own marginalizing mindset. Interview excerpts presented in this paper have been translated into English from Persian, except for T2 who preferred to answer the questions in English.

As to the observation data, a deductive approach was adopted to analyze the recorded observed sessions because, as mentioned earlier, the non-participant observations were aimed to investigate the likely (in)congruencies between the participating teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices regarding EIL principles. Therefore, to find out about the teachers' belief/practice alignment and to see whether the observation data confirm the themes and sub-themes discovered in the interviews analyses, a deductive approach was implemented.

In order to ensure validity of the data, member checking was conducted through debriefing with three participants. Additionally, the dependability of the findings was confirmed by conducting interrater coding agreement (Ary et al., 2010) to ensure that the utilized methods as well as the coding procedures were appropriate. For this purpose, a second coder, who was a PhD candidate in TEFL, independently coded three interview transcripts, and then the emerged categories and themes were compared between the two coders' thematic framework.

## Findings

As discussed above, the interview data were collected with a focus on participant teachers' conceptions of EIL and plurality of English on one hand, and their behavioral, normative, and control beliefs about incorporation of EIL principles into their classroom instruction and practice from a TPB analytic perspective, on the other hand. After careful analysis of interview data, four major themes and eleven sub-themes emerged. The major themes derived from participants' responses were (a) acknowledging the legitimacy and importance of EIL, (b) teachers' behavioral (c) normative, and (d) control beliefs regarding the inclusion of EIL principles in English instruction and practice. In what follows, brief accounts of the themes that emerged from the data along with some teacher responses to interview questions are presented.

### **Acknowledging the Legitimacy and Importance of EIL**

The fact that different varieties of English are spoken by speakers of other languages across the world was acknowledged by all teachers; however, they did not believe that English is 'owned' by the countries that are using it in varied ways. In fact, they claimed that English learners need to approach the native speaker standards rather than "*inventing their own Englishes*" (T6). Exploring the participant teachers' beliefs as to the legitimacy and importance of EIL, the following sub-themes emerged from the data.

**Acknowledging the plurality and variations in English.** Almost all teachers concurred that nowadays, English is used as an international language by speakers from different countries whose native language is different from English. In this regard, the participants stated that:

*Actually, nowadays English is not used in its standard form by many people in the world. Having a quick search in YouTube, we can clearly see that Indians speak their own version of English, Koreans speak English with their own special accent, and there are many other versions as we see. (T1)*

*I think people from different countries speak English differently. But the important thing is that they mostly communicate meaning and when you listen to them, it's not as if you are listening to a completely different language. So, maybe that could be considered as a kind of plurality. (T2)*

While six teachers approved the plurality and legitimacy of different variants of English, T4 emphasized the importance of adhering to native speaker norms even in non-academic contexts:

*I think we should decide based on the existing reality. When the principles of native speakerhood are strictly followed and promoted both socioculturally and at the institutional level all over the world, why should we insist that there are different varieties of English which are valid and acceptable? The notion of EIL is now spreading through academic research in ELT, but I guess it remains in research and cannot be put into practice in real English classes. (T4)*

Therefore, T4 held an extreme view towards EIL claiming that when one speaks English with a native-like accent, that person is superior to others which results in wealth, social status, etc. which makes him more successful in different social aspects of life in a foreign country.

**Acknowledging the importance of mutual intelligibility over native-like use of the language.** The second sub-theme of the major theme ‘acknowledging the legitimacy and importance of EIL’ echoed the participants’ beliefs in the priority of mutual intelligibility among different English interactants compared to enjoying a native-like accent. For instance, T2 stated:

*What is the purpose of learning a second language? Is it anything except making communication happen? Therefore, as long as mutual intelligibility is observed, I have no problem with deviations from standard English norms.*

Consistent with the same idea, T5 posited that:

*In the first place, why do we use English? We use it to convey a message to the people whom we talk to. When people use different English varieties like Indian English, Singaporean English, etc., to communicate with each other and they are able to get their message across, there is no problem with it.*

The other four teachers’ remarks also reflected their agreement with the priority of mutual intelligibility over speaking with a native-like accent. However, all participants confirmed that they conceived of the primacy of mutual intelligibility as being merely applicable to real world communications. In other words, they all agreed that when people with different L1s are to communicate with each other in the EIL context, there is no need for a native-like accent as long as communication is not impeded, but when it comes to classroom instruction, the teachers expressed a biased viewpoint toward accented varieties and stressed the importance of native-oriented standard English teaching. This was also evident in the teaching performance of all five teachers whose classes were observed. They did not value mutual intelligibility over native-like speaking while their students were engaged in conversations, and kept on emphasizing the correct norm-based pronunciation of the words which had been uttered ‘wrongly’, as they called it. Therefore, as evidenced by the findings, there is still a monolithic view of English dominating the field of ELT as the teachers expressed a strong desire for promoting standard English in their instructional practices for a number of reasons:

*But I prefer standard American because it has a wider audience. EIL is international, whatever, but how many speakers of English in an Arabic version, for example, are you going to face in your life? (T2)*

*The native people living in the countries where these standard varieties are spoken, I mean people from America and England, have become our learners’ role models whom they aspire to be like. And also, most of the language learners plan to move to one of these countries for living or education. So, they need to be trained to speak like them in order to merge in socially. (T7)*

In the same vein, T4 commented on the primacy of native English:

*Mutual intelligibility is more important than speaking like a native AmE or BrE speaker. However, membership within the target context is what really matters. Even if you get mingled academically with the target culture by getting a job or whatever, you cannot succeed in getting socially mingled as long as you speak an accented variety.*

**Acknowledging the importance of raising awareness regarding EIL.** Out of the seven participants, six agreed that the students, and also teachers, need to be aware of the plurality of English, and becoming familiar with different varieties is important to their academic and

social success. Therefore, they claimed that they would include EIL-related materials in their classroom instructions. One of the teachers (T3) commented that:

*I may not seek materials representing other English varieties. But when I come across a listening task, for example, in which two non-native English speakers are talking, I usually attract my students' attention to their accents to make their ears familiar with other versions of the language they are learning.*

Another teacher's remark regarding the importance of EIL awareness was:

*I try to promote it in my classes. If possible, I encourage my students to read about it, give lectures about it in the class, I even introduce TV series and films about other cultures, which are addressed in English. Look, I believe in instructing teachers and not just suppressing them with some methodologies, some textbooks, some kind of policies imposed on them. So, I believe in creating this awareness in students, teachers, in decision makers and policy makers who are not aware of this concept, or are not willing to accept it, I believe in persuading them that this should happen. (T2)*

Therefore, for the most part, participants felt that learners and teachers need to be familiar with different English varieties because “if you want to cook something well, you need to know what ingredients you have available, and what each ingredient does to the food you are making” (T6). As evidenced in the data, the significance of raising awareness regarding EIL was transparent in teachers' conceptions. However, in the actual classroom practices, these awareness raising activities were just limited to enhancing learners' knowledge as to the differences between BrE and AmE linguistic and cultural norms. An excerpt from the classroom observation of T6 teaching intermediate learners is presented below:

*T6: You know elevator is used to refer to the machine that carries us to different floors. Have you ever heard of any other word with the same meaning?*

*Ss: (Thinking)*

*S1: I think lift is its synonym.*

*T6: Well. Can you tell me what the difference is?*

*Ss: (Keeping silent)*

*T6: Ok. Let me tell you. Both elevator and lift have the same meaning. Both refer to the machine that takes us from one floor to another. However, there is a point here...*

*Ss: (looking confused)*

*T6: The difference is between AmE and BrE. If you are speaking in AmE, you have to use 'elevator', and in BrE, it is called 'lift'. There are many other words like this. For example, we have 'trash' which is American and 'rubbish' as its British counterpart. And you need to be able to differentiate between them.*

As to the focus of the second set of interview questions, which aimed at exploring the participants' conceptions regarding EIL through a planned behavior theoretic perspective, substantive information regarding the considerations that guide people's behavior was obtained by examining the behavioral, normative, and control beliefs which were salient in the participants' interviews. In this regard, the three following themes emerged from the data:

## Teachers' Behavioral Beliefs regarding the Inclusion of EIL Principles in Their Instruction/Practice

As a very influential determinant of any human action, beliefs about the likely consequences of a behavior are assumed by TPB to regulate one's intentions to perform the behavior. These behavioral beliefs result in a favorable/unfavorable attitude toward any given behavior which guides human actions.

To address the teachers' beliefs regarding the outcomes and consequences of the inclusion of EIL principles in classroom instruction and materials, they were asked whether or not they would like to incorporate the stated principles. Almost all teachers commented that it would depend on their learners' level of English proficiency and the purpose of the task that they are doing. Here are some of the participants' remarks regarding these two issues:

*I should add that how I would react to EIL definitely depends on my learners' level of proficiency. I would introduce this concept just to advanced English learners. (T2)*

*It totally depends on the level of the class. It is because if low-proficiency learners listen to non-native speakers' talk in a listening task, for instance, they would get distracted by their accent and would not comprehend what is said. The other reason is that English is not internalized in the low-proficiency learners' mind. So, if I expose them to any non-native accent, they would pick it up, and I cannot teach them the standard version anymore. My main focus in instruction is teaching them the standard variety and it can be a hinderance in low levels. (T5)*

T1, when asked about the inclusion of EIL principles in English instruction, argued that it depends on the focus of the task, as well:

*Since EIL questions the idea of providing students with norm-based corrective feedbacks, as all English varieties can be deemed acceptable, I would like to say that I don't incorporate this principle in my instruction and I would not like to, even. However, I don't say I correct my students all the time. For example, when the focus of an activity is promoting learners' fluency, I would not correct them at all.*

T1's belief regarding the implementation of corrective feedbacks was evidenced in observations of his classes. When completing a vocabulary exercise in an upper intermediate class, which required the learners to fill in the blanks with the words that they had learned in the previous section, the following conversation took place:

*S: Number 2. The students depicted a strong sense of unanimity /anə'nɪməti/ in their protest.*

*T1: Thank you very much. Would you please repeat the word in the blank?*

*S: /anə'nɪməti/*

*T1: That is read as /junə'nɪməti/*

*S: Oh. Sorry. Unanimity*

Therefore, instances of correspondence between teachers' beliefs regarding the employment of EIL principles and their classroom practices were observed in the data.

The rest of the questions regarding the participant teachers' behavioral beliefs, which aimed at eliciting their favorable/unfavorable attitude, resulted in two categories of beliefs, namely beliefs about positive outcomes and negative outcomes of incorporating EIL principles in Iranian teachers' English instruction and classroom practices. These two sub-themes are presented below with a number of excerpts presented for clarification.

**Beliefs about the positive outcomes.** Six out of seven participants concurred that raising English language learners' awareness regarding EIL would prepare them for living or studying in a non-native context. Some of these remarks are presented here:

*My students may happen to move to a country that has an institutionalized version of English as its prevalent language of communication. So, making them familiar with different varieties would help them communicate with people from other nationalities better. Also, introducing other varieties' cultures would improve their intercultural competence and prepare them to live with people from different cultures. (T6)*

*Most of our learners aim to move to another country. So, it would be really beneficial to promote their awareness regarding EIL. (T7)*

One participant went further and commented that:

*Even if our learners move to America or Britain, there are always NNES who are not originally born there, and our learners need to make sense of what those NNES say. Incorporating awareness-raising activities regarding NNES' culture and accent can enable them to comprehend what they would hear in the target contexts. (T5)*

In the same vein, T2 claimed that using EIL principles in classroom instruction and familiarizing learners with other cultures and varieties not only improve their intercultural competence, but also help them promote their own culture when contacting people with different cultural backgrounds. She made a remark which was also consistent with T5's beliefs regarding promoting the sense of de-centralization through introducing EIL in classes:

*I think one positive outcome is having more successful and more open-minded learners. It's important to me to know that I myself and also my students are not the center of the world, and the world is really big, multi-dimensional, and it does not revolve around us. Many people are involved, many events are involved, and we shouldn't just see ourselves. And this is also the case about learning English. So, I would like to promote this sense of multidimensionality in them. (T2)*

While almost all teachers agreed that familiarizing learners with other varieties of English and their specific cultural norms, and raising their intercultural competence entail beneficial outcomes, their classroom practices were not congruent with their stated beliefs. In sessions taught by T1 and T7, it was observed that when it came to talking about cultures, the teachers preferred to include different cultural notions dealing with American and British contexts, which clearly indicated that the teachers' mindset was solely limited to the culture of America and Britain. For instance, when talking about different festivals, T1 mentioned the Christmas day, Thanksgiving, and Halloween and explicated the way each is celebrated in USA and Britain, without taking account of many other festivals that are common in other countries such as China, Korea, and India.

Washback effects were also reported as one of the reasons for teachers to introduce other English varieties in their classes. T1, T2, T3, and T5 stated that, since most learners are getting

prepared for IELTS or TOEFL examinations and some NNES talk might be included in the listening tasks of IELTS, they conceived of this awareness-raising an important and useful classroom activity. Additionally, as a principle of EIL-oriented teaching, incorporating learners' L1 in English instruction was reported to be an effective strategy to help learners learn the language more effectively. The participants believed that some concepts cannot be conveyed easily in the target language, especially in lower-level classes, which makes them rely on Persian to help learners understand. However, they believed that inclusion of learners' L1 in English instruction should be kept to a minimum and must not be overused at all since it may turn out to be counter-productive. As T5 stated:

*Using L1 can be really helpful but it shouldn't be overused because it makes the learners lazy. In one of my classes, my students knew that if they don't understand a grammatical pattern, I would teach it twice in English and if it cannot help them, I would switch to Persian to make them comprehend the lesson. In that class, whenever I taught them any grammatical point, they wouldn't listen to my explanations at all for the first two times, until they received the instruction in Persian.*

T3's actual classroom teaching showed evidence for the congruence between his beliefs and instructional practices. In one of the observed sessions in which he was teaching conditionals, he tried his best to make learners understand the difference between different structures. When all his attempts failed, he had no other choice but to translate the example sentences on the board into Persian to enable learners to distinguish different types of conditionals better.

It was also pointed out by participants that employing EIL principles in Iranian teachers' English instruction has some emotional effects on the learners. The participants believed that making their learners familiar with different English varieties would motivate them and decrease their level of anxiety since, by listening to some NNES- NNES or NES-NNES conversations, they would understand that there are people in the world who are able to express themselves and communicate with others even if they cannot speak the way native American or British people do.

*In a sense, it shatters that prestigious face of the English language, that far-fetched dream, that impossible dream that they have of being like a native speaker in order to be understood by others, and all those difficulties about the language that they have in mind; when I create this awareness in them about different possibilities, they don't find it that much far-fetched anymore. (T2)*

**Beliefs about the negative outcomes.** Among the principles of an EIL-oriented approach to English teaching, the effect associated with using learners' L1 was further reported as a double-edged strategy. The participants held the belief that although inclusion of learners' L1 in instruction can help them express difficult concepts more easily, it may cause learners to become lazy and less responsible for what they produce. As pointed out by T6,

*One disadvantage is that... what I'm really afraid of is that it could be threatening to have some sloppy lazy English, you know, when people just say anything in any way they find comfortable, and they may say for example "I like to speak like this and I should be understood". I think people should be held responsible for what they say and how they say it; and they should be a bit clear in what they want to say. They shouldn't speak a difficult language, they shouldn't speak any way they want and think "others should understand me"; rather, both interlocuters should work toward understanding.*



It needs to be noted that among the seven participants, T4 held radical beliefs regarding the negative consequences of employing EIL principles in class. He totally disagreed with the concept of EIL, although he believed that it can make learners develop intercultural competence and become more “culturally educated” as he put it. He believed that incorporating an EIL-oriented approach for English instruction would prevent learners from getting assimilated into the target culture, make them get far from learning real English, and result in linguistically less competent English speakers.

### **Teachers’ Normative Beliefs regarding the Inclusion of EIL Principles in Their Instruction/Practice**

The second set of beliefs which determine any person’s action includes beliefs about the normative expectations of others which may result in perceived social pressure. In other words, the subjective concept of a norm describes the social pressure of how referent individuals value performing or not performing a specific behavior and the need to act in line with this evaluation. In this study, the participants were asked whether there is any social pressure to/not to incorporate the principles of EIL in their instruction and practices. The three following sub-themes emerged from their responses.

**Injunctive normative beliefs: The beliefs of individuals/groups who approve/disapprove of incorporating EIL principles.** The TPB highlights the importance of two types of normative beliefs in one’s actions: injunctive and descriptive normative beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Injunctive normative beliefs refer to the expectations of referents, individuals, or groups that may support or oppose performance of a given behavior. In this study, almost all participants held unanimous beliefs with regard to the people who may disapprove of their incorporation of EIL-oriented tenets into their instruction. The teachers asserted that among such social pressures, the expectations of the learners, their parents, the policy makers and decision makers of the institutions, as well as the expectations and instructions of the supervisor in the institution where they teach are the most crucial. Here are some remarks regarding the influence of these significant others:

*I think there are many of them. There are some policy makers and decision makers at institution levels who still are not OK with incorporating the principles of EIL. You know, they are OK with incorporating culture; but when it comes to pronunciation and grammar, they back off; and one more point is supervisors in the English institutions. And what they say and what they do is influenced by those decision makers. I think if we try to work on that part, many things would be solved. (T2)*

*I have never implemented EIL principles in my teaching, but I’m a hundred percent sure that it leads to the supervisor’s and manager’s dissatisfaction with my teaching, and they may even not allow me continue working there. (T3)*

*The learners themselves would object and of course, their parents. They would come and say “we have registered our children here to make them competent English speakers. What is this that you are teaching them?” (T6)*

*We are living here in Iran. In institutions here, teachers are not provided with that much autonomy to do whatever they like. The supervisors always object to the use of Persian in class, let alone other EIL principles. (T7)*

**Descriptive normative beliefs: The conception of other colleagues' behavior regarding the inclusion of EIL principles in their instruction/practice.** Descriptive normative beliefs are concerned with one's conceptions of the performance of others who do or not do a certain behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). One of the underlying assumptions of the TPB is that besides the people who would (dis)approve of one's particular behavior, one may sometimes refer to the other people in the same situation (e.g., colleagues) as other normative referents. In the present study, the participants were asked about their conceptions regarding their co-workers' opinions and behavior as to the implementation of an EIL-informed instructional approach. Nearly all participants asserted that their colleagues are not interested in employing innovative teaching methods or principles, and they considered them as resistant to any change and development. For instance, T4 commented that:

*I have barely seen agentive teachers in my workplace. Almost all teachers tend to follow the instructions dictated by the institution's supervisor and manager.*

A comparison was drawn between young and old teachers by T2 who conceived of younger teachers as more receptive to change:

*Whenever there was some kind of innovation or some kind of change in the methodology, the younger ones were more receptive to it. They didn't necessarily accept it, but they were ready to learn about it and then decide if they want to accept it or not. But unfortunately, the older ones and also the ones who don't have teaching as their main job, you know... many of them are teaching as their secondary job, those people are really resistant to any kind of change because they do not want to leave their comfort zone. But younger ones are at least interested in listening to it and learn about it and then decide if they want to accept or reject it.*

**Motivation to comply with each of these normative referents.** All participants asserted that they would act according to the institution manager's and the supervisor's expectations. However, some argued that if they find their learners interested in getting familiar with EIL, they would not neglect this interest and would respond to it out of class hours.

*I would teach according to the supervisor's demands, I would also be in touch with that specific learner out of the class and would answer his/her questions, provide him/her with materials, links, and stuff like this. I wouldn't suppress that learner, I wouldn't disobey the rules, I would try to keep the balance in a way. (T2)*

When questioned about the participants' motivation to comply with their colleagues regarding their use of EIL principles in their instruction, six teachers remarked that their teaching approach would not be affected by their colleagues' teaching methods, except for one participant who showed a tendency to comply with the other teachers. In fact, T5 held conflicting views compared to other participants:

*When in Rome, do as Romans do. I may try to keep my own style to some extent, but I try not to be different from others. (T5)*

*The difference among me and other teachers would not have any effect on my decisions in teaching. I teach my class; they teach their class. And I don't care if I'm going to be compared with other teachers in such terms. (T4)*

## Teachers' Control Beliefs Regarding the Inclusion of EIL Principles in Their Instruction/Practice

Another determinant of human behavior and action is their beliefs regarding the presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder performance of any given behavior. These beliefs give rise to perceived behavioral control which indicates the degree of control one has over performing any action while considering the obstacles. In other words, people's actions are argued to be "strongly influenced by their confidence in their ability to perform" them (Ajzen, 1991, p. 184). Therefore, with regard to the control factors facilitating or impeding the implementation of EIL principles in Iranian teachers' English instruction, the following sub-themes emerged from the interview data.

**Situational control beliefs regarding incorporation of EIL principles.** When questioned about such control factors, participants regarded the students' mindset and motivation to know about other varieties, the materials, class time, the classroom ecology, the dominance of an Expanding Circle country wherein an institutionalized English variety is spoken, and the plurality and diversity of EIL as influential situational factors which can effectively determine the extent to which they may incorporate EIL principles in their teaching. They conceived of high student motivation, the existence of EIL-related content in the materials, and interested learners as facilitating situational factors. The excerpts below represent some of these findings:

*In case of making learners familiar with EIL, the students' motivation to learn about other English accents and cultures may make it easy for me to do that. Moreover, the... for example, economic dominance of an Expanding Circle country, such as China, may be another facilitating factor. (T1)*

*If the materials contain some activities that promote EIL, that would be much easier to incorporate the principles because mostly the students tend to follow their coursebooks very rigidly. (T6)*

*The ecology of the classroom I teach really matters. I mean if I have a class with just two interested students and five distracted learners who are not after learning anything, I cannot employ any of these principles. But with learners who are receptive to innovative concepts, it would be more likely. (T4)*

While the above-mentioned control factors were revealed to be facilitating, the participant teachers conceived of time constraints and the diversified nature of EIL as the most significant impeding factors that make incorporation of EIL principles in classroom instruction very difficult.

*In institutions, we have very limited time and a fixed number of units that need to be covered during a semester. It is barely possible to include any extra-curricular activity considering such time constraints. I prefer to spend my time on introducing more new vocabularies, working on students' grammatical knowledge, and developing their accent based on the native-speaker benchmarks. (T1)*

*But the thing about EIL is that it somehow is not teachable, it's so varied, and we may not teach it. Like, if you want to teach it, what do you want to teach? If I had the option, I would definitely incorporate a module on EIL in a TTC to raise the awareness of teachers about it. (T2)*

*There are too many varieties and one cannot handle teaching all of them. I don't know what I should teach if I am asked to. This is one of the reasons that make me doubtful whether to include it in my English teaching at all. (T5)*

**Personal control beliefs regarding incorporation of EIL principles.** Within the interview data, a number of influential factors related to the teachers' personal skills and abilities were revealed to exert considerable influence on the participants' perceived behavioral control regarding implementation of EIL principles, which can be referred to as personal control beliefs. The teachers conceived of teacher cognition and knowledge as very crucial factors which can be main hinderances to such an approach. In fact, five of the participant teachers asserted that teachers in Iran need to receive training with regard to EIL and its instruction. Three of the participating teachers confessed that they had not been familiar with the notion of EIL in the sense it was introduced to them before the interviews.

*Honestly, I had a very limited conceptualization of EIL in mind before this interview. I used to think that EIL is just a number of different varieties of English. And if I want to teach based on EIL principles at the moment, I have to say that I still lack knowledge and the required skill which makes me not approach it at all. (T5)*

*I think teachers need to be informed about what EIL is, what its principles are, what the advantages are, how they could incorporate it in class, etc. If this doesn't happen, they cannot incorporate it efficiently in their classroom instruction. (T6)*

Moreover, the teachers' ability to persuade learners' parents and the supervisor was reported to be another personal control factor.

*Another important thing is that, even if I have enough knowledge to include EIL in my teaching materials and instruction, it is nearly impossible if I do not have the sufficient theoretical support for what I do. It is because for sure my learners, their parents, and definitely, the supervisor would object, and I have to talk them into accepting the advantages of this approach. (T1)*

**Control belief strength.** Each of the above-mentioned control factors was reported to differ in its power to influence the behavior of concern. When requested to specify what they believed to be of more strength in determining their instructional behaviors with regard to EIL, the participants stated similar remarks. While five teachers viewed the policies of the institution as the main hinderance to the implementation of EIL principles in language instruction, to two of the participants, teacher knowledge and cognition was considered the most important facilitating/hindering factor. Such paramount significance attributed to teacher knowledge and cognition was reported to be on the ground that when a teacher does not have a sufficient command of EIL and its principles, he cannot employ an EIL-oriented pedagogy even if all the normative referents expect him to do so.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study suggest that 'standard' versions of English such as AmE and BrE still appear to have a dominant role in norm orientation among Iranian English teachers. As the results showed, the teachers acknowledged the plurality and diversity of English in today's globalized world (e.g., Tajeddin et al., 2020), while disagreeing with the belief that English is owned by other non-native countries, which diverged from findings of earlier research (e.g.,

Tajeddin et al., 2020). Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Ishikawa, 2016; Monfared, 2018; Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2018, Tajeddin et al., 2020; Wang, 2013; Young & Walsh, 2010), the findings of this study suggest that although the new emerging varieties of English are well acknowledged by the participants who reported some degree of priority for mutual intelligibility in effective communication, sticking to native-speaker norms and an idealized native-oriented standard English instruction is still a dominant propensity in Iranian English teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g., Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015; Lim, 2019; Murchadha & Flynn, 2019). As discussed by Galloway and Rose (2018), while English ownership has been challenged by different emerging varieties, ELT practices are still resistant to this paradigm shift. This was evident in the results of the study which indicated that the participant teachers deemed the learners' non-native-like utterances as deviations from the native-speaker English norms which indicate negative transfer or interference from the L2 users' first language (Low, 2021). The findings further demonstrated the participant teachers' preference for a native-like accent as a benchmark for achievement concerning social and academic success. The teachers believed that to be socially successful and able to get well-paid jobs and receive a high professional status in an English-speaking country, it would be better to avoid a foreign accented variety.

The participant teachers showed an inclination towards promoting the pluralistic view of English in their learners on the ground that the real-world contexts which they will be experiencing are not confined merely to English-speaking countries and the learners may need to communicate with NNEs who speak varieties other than AmE or BrE (e.g., Lee, 2019; Matsuda, 2019; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). However, this belief did not lead the teachers to incorporate EIL principles in their classroom instruction. As indicated by the observation transcripts provided in the Findings section, the teachers tended to introduce American or British linguistic and cultural norms rather than familiarize the learners with other English varieties and their associated cultures. Therefore, although there was a uniform and unanimous agreement that raising both teachers' and students' awareness regarding EIL and its diverse varieties would result in beneficial outcomes in terms of their social, academic, and economic success, no single instance of an EIL-informed approach was evidenced in their classroom practices, except for negligible doses of L1 inclusion for further clarification of instructional content. This finding substantiated what previous studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2005; Lim, 2019) had revealed regarding the gap between theory, teachers' beliefs, and their instructional practices suggesting that the teachers are "prejudicial about Englishes other than those from the Inner Circle" (Lim, 2019, p. 8) while acknowledging the importance of familiarizing learners with as many English varieties as possible. The significance of educating teachers about EIL and its principles has also been indicated by Llurda (2009) who stated that a key requirement of developing the concept of English, as not being limited to any single country and promoting a novel paradigm in ELT, is a constant involvement of English teachers in discussions concerning the re-nationalization of the language. The field of ELT needs to promote EIL by maintaining an effective presence of different English varieties in the models taught in English teaching contexts.

The second set of findings in the current study concerned the Iranian English teachers' underlying behavioral, normative, and control beliefs as analyzed through the TPB framework. The conceptions of the participant teachers regarding the outcomes associated with incorporating other English varieties in classroom instruction were consistent with previous literature. As stated by Matsuda (2019), English learners need to understand that there exist

multiple varieties of the language which may be different from the variety that they are learning, and also, they may find themselves in contexts wherein such varieties are considered more desirable than a native-like variety. As evidenced by the findings, the teachers expressed their desire to raise their learners' awareness concerning different English varieties based on the fact that in the target context, they may not encounter only English native speakers and are likely to have to behave on the basis of the other varieties' cultural norms. They argued that their learners' awareness regarding different varieties and cultures would be extremely beneficial for improving their linguistic, communicative, and intercultural competence. This necessity of familiarity with other English varieties along with their cultural norms has been advocated by Sifakis (2004) who argued that real-life NNEs-NNEs and NNEs-NES communication is not norm-based and different varieties are involved.

As one of the positive outcomes of an EIL-oriented pedagogy, the participants conceived of attaining a sense of de-centralization by the learners (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019) as well as a feeling of confidence in their own English accents a significant achievement, which has been emphasized by Monfared (2018), as well. In his words, an undeniable effect of raising teachers' awareness regarding varieties of English can be an increase in the learners' confidence in their own accented varieties of the language, "and in turn it can help them to believe that an IC [Inner Circle] pronunciation variety is not necessarily the best pedagogic model to follow" (p. 12). As stated by Low (2021), since teachers need to promote mutual intelligibility rather than native-like speaking in EIL communicative contexts, achieving native-like proficiency for L2 learners should be recognized as being an unrealistic objective.

As to the participants' normative beliefs regarding incorporation of EIL principles into their classroom instruction and practices, they conceived of policy makers and decision makers of the institutions as the most important determining factors. Since they believed that language policy makers deem Inner Circle varieties, especially BrE and AmE, as the most prestigious varieties (Lim, 2019), they tended to follow a strict norm-based standard English approach in language instruction. The realization of such an approach to language teaching was evident in the teachers' actual classroom instructions which treated deviations from the standard variety as incorrect utterances which needed to be fixed, indicating a sense of agreement between the participants' stated normative beliefs and their actual teaching practices. Additionally, the teachers believed that the learners' and their parents' expectations were the second important set of factors and must be taken into account (e.g., Sifakis, 2004; Wang, 2015). This over-emphasis on the policy makers', learners', and their parents' expectations which guided the participant teachers' classroom instructional activities indicated the prevailing role of their normative beliefs, compared to their behavioral beliefs which acknowledged the importance of raising students' awareness regarding EIL.

The findings of the current research indicated the importance of some personal and situational control factors which may facilitate or hinder the incorporation of EIL principles in language classrooms. The participant teachers conceived of class time and teacher knowledge (e.g., Young & Walsh, 2010) as two most important inhibiting factors. Time constraints have previously been reported as one of the influential factors that undermine teachers' motivation to implement EIL principles in their instruction (e.g., Phan, 2016). Moreover, Matsuda's (2012) argument that "receiving lack of professional training in teaching English as an international language (EIL) leaves teachers apprehensive about changing the conventions of traditional

ELT” (as cited in Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019, p. 252), was confirmed by the findings of the present study.

As another inhibiting factor, the teachers stated the plurality and diversity of EIL which leaves them confused as to what they should teach to their learners. According to Dogancay-Aktuna and Hardman (2018), the teachers are not familiar with the classroom specifics of working with a plurilithic language, and although they may agree with EIL in principle, they are not sure how to implement it (Matsuda, 2020). The manifold nature of EIL along with the disconnection between teachers’ theoretical and practical knowledge on how to incorporate its principles into ELT was revealed to be a reason for their lack of competence to include EIL in their teaching (e.g., Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019). In a similar vein, the participants in a study conducted by Young and Walsh (2010) were reported to see the operationalization of EIL as a challenging undertaking. To cater to this issue, the teachers in the present study argued for the necessity of providing teachers with sufficient training regarding EIL principles, different English varieties, and different approaches for their incorporation into ELT within teacher training courses.

According to Ajzen’s (2005) TPB, perceived behavioral control is assumed to have motivational implications for intentions, indicating that when people believe there is a lack of resources or opportunities to perform a particular behavior, they “are unlikely to form strong behavioral intentions to engage in it even if they hold favorable attitudes toward the behavior and believe that important others would approve” (p. 119) of their action. Therefore, although the participant teachers expressed their positive attitudes toward EIL and acknowledged the necessity of raising learners’ awareness in this regard, their lack of motivation to incorporate EIL principles in their teaching practices was evidenced in the data, which can be due to the existence of the above-mentioned inhibiting factors. It can be concluded that teachers’ perceived behavioral control has an indirect effect on their intentions to take an EIL-oriented approach through affecting their motivation.

Overall, this study revealed that sticking to a norm-oriented standard English is still a dominant approach among Iranian English teachers. Therefore, although recently advocated in different parts of the world, the concept of EIL and its implementation in English instruction has not received due attention and support in Iranian English teaching contexts.

## **Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications**

The present study sought to explore the teachers’ conceptions about EIL and how they approach this concept in their classroom practices from a TPB analytic perspective. The results indicated the participants’ reluctance to incorporate other English varieties in their classroom instructions. This reluctance towards the inclusion of EIL principles and a strong tendency to follow native speaker ideology for ELT purposes were shown to be informed by the participant teachers’ negative attitudes, their conceptions of other normative referents’ expectations, and their perceived behavioral control, reflected through their behavioral, normative, and control beliefs, respectively. Teachers’ beliefs, especially their behavioral beliefs as to the advantages of utilizing an EIL-oriented pedagogy, were revealed to be incongruent with their actual instructional practices. It can be concluded that this belief/practice tension resulted from teachers’ behavioral beliefs regarding the disadvantages of an EIL-informed pedagogy, their normative beliefs about the expectations of others (e.g., institution supervisor, learners, parents, etc.) to deliver a standard norm-based instruction, and their perceptions of different impeding factors.

This study highlights the importance for language teachers to re-appraise their instructional practices to incorporate a multilingual orientation towards language use. Given the necessity of both teachers' and learners' familiarization with the concept of EIL, which was clearly indicated in the findings, EIL-informed teacher education programs may be required for pre-service and in-service teachers to transform their cognitions about EIL and EIL-informed teaching. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to take into account the undeniable effects of raising learners' awareness regarding different English varieties and their cultural norms, and adopt a more EIL-oriented approach in their instructional practices. Additionally, a radical change in the content of English teaching materials seems necessary for the present context, to promote learners' linguistic and communicative skills for more intelligible and effective intercultural communication.

It should be noted that, due to some limitations of the present study, further research into English teachers', students', supervisors', and other stakeholders' underlying behavioral, normative, and control beliefs with regard to EIL and its inclusion in the classroom contexts is required. Since the application of the TPB can provide valuable insights in investigating the effects of teacher training on their beliefs and classroom practices, future studies on the effectiveness of EIL-informed teacher education programs are recommended.

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