

Unpacking Novice English Language Teachers' Cognitions about Global Englishes Pedagogy: An Activity-Theoretic Analysis

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Abstract

Within the last two decades, theorizing and research on language teaching and teachers have witnessed a fundamental shift of attention and orientation towards socio-cognitive aspects of teaching. This epistemic shift has been paralleled by the global reach of the English language, inspiring scholars to call for a paradigm shift in Applied Linguistics to drift away from Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) to Global Englishes (GE) Language Teaching (GELT). While the expanding body of the literature on GE pedagogy has focused on different aspects of this fundamental transformation, teachers' voices and cognitions have been often neglected in such discussions, despite their being an important element involved in the process. Against this backdrop, and guided by an activity-theoretic perspective as its analytical framework, the present qualitative study explored two Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' cognitions about GE and GELT using semi-structured interview, stimulated recall protocol, and non-participant classroom observation. Despite differences in the cognitions of our participants regarding GELT, the results generally indicated that both teachers tended to prioritize the use of standard American or British English in their teaching practice, bearing testimony to the fact that there is still a theory-practice schism between disciplinary reality and folk reality when it comes to GE-related issues in the English language teaching (ELT) enterprise. Our analysis offers a depiction of the challenges related to introducing GELT into the curriculum. The results are deliberated in relation to the feasibility of GE-oriented pedagogy, questioning whether it is achievable or is merely an idealistic notion. Implications of the findings for second language teacher education are discussed in the end.

Keywords: Global Englishes; Global Englishes Language Teaching; EFL teachers' cognitions; English as an International Language; English as a Lingua Franca; Cultural–Historical Activity Theory

During the 1970s and especially the 1980s, there was a significant transformation in the discussions surrounding teaching and teachers' knowledge. The 1980s, a decade identified as the *decade of change*, represented a major landmark in the studies of teacher cognition, and ideas that are now widely accepted, such as the notion of teaching as decision-making or the significance of presumptions, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs in teaching, emerged and gained traction during that period (Freeman, 2002). Admittedly, these two decades marked the demise of an era in which the teacher education profession was dominated by the process-product model rooted in behavioral and positivist conventions (Johnson, 2006) where the objective was to comprehend how teachers' instructional activities either facilitated or failed to facilitate student learning (Freeman, 2002). Although process-product studies could explain certain measurable and observable aspects of teaching, their approach was reductionist and took no account of teachers' "judgments, reasoning and decision-making processes" (Dadvand & Behzadpoor, 2020, p. 109). As a consequence, this tradition of teaching was frowned upon on the grounds that "teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching" (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 401). As a by-product of this line of theorizing, more qualitative methods of research situated within the sociocultural tradition (e.g., Cross, 2010; Uffen et al., 2022) have been employed to tap into the hidden and cognitive dimension of teaching.

Teacher cognition is a term which refers to "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching - what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). As such, teacher cognition research aims to examine all the aspects that are related to 'the mental lives' of teachers (Walberg, 1997), elements which affect teachers' conceptions of teaching. Teacher cognition research, in fact, contextualizes teaching and considers it as a complicated activity in which teachers are engaged, cognitive decision-makers who utilize intricate, real-world-oriented, individualized, and situationally-aware webs of understanding, ideas, and convictions to make instructional decisions (Borg, 2003). With this re-orientation towards a socio-cognitive interpretation of teaching during the past couple of decades, more hermeneutic and exploratory studies have started to emerge in the teacher education literature (Dadvand & Behzadpoor, 2020). As a result, the research agenda has changed from studying pedagogical actions to examining the potential impact of teachers' cognitive processes on their instructional behaviors (Freeman, 2002). That is, the focus of research has shifted from teaching behaviors to teaching beliefs, knowledge, and reasoning. This line of thinking and research has paralleled another paradigm shift in language education (discussed below), highlighting the influential socio-cognitive turn in the field.

Inspired by the emergence of English as a worldwide language due to its global reach during the colonial and postcolonial eras (Marlina, 2014), researchers and practitioners in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT) have broken the mold of native-speaker standards and norms and have dared to address the pluricentricity of English and cultural diversity awareness and appreciation (Chen & McConachy, 2021) to align with the current sociolinguistic milieu of the modern time (Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2012; Rose et al., 2020). This fundamental shift of orientation has been taken on board in the ELT profession in the form of Global Englishes (GE) (Widodo et al., 2020) which epitomizes this paradigm shift in theorizing, inquiry, and practice (Sharifian, 2009).

This 'epistemic break' due to the dissemination of English (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) has affected different areas of ELT pedagogy, including second language (L2) teaching and teacher education where a key concern is finding ways to the complex world of teachers' mental lives, including their cognitions, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge base (Sharma & Sievers, 2023).

The genesis of lively debates about the pedagogical ramifications of this shift of attention can be traced to the Kachruvian concentric circles which comprise a model proposed by Kachru (1985, 1986) and offer a useful framework for understanding the diverse functions of English across different regions. The model categorizes countries into three distinct circles of Inner Circle, Expanding Circle, and Outer Circle based on the nature of English usage, acquisition patterns, and the role English plays within each country. The first circle comprises countries where English serves as the primary language of communication within society (e.g., US, UK, and Australia). The second circle refers to countries where English is employed as an extra mandated language alongside other officially recognized local languages (e.g., Honk Kong and India). Conversely, the third circle encompasses countries like Iran and South Korea which are characterized by the absence of granting any official recognition to the English language, yet requiring English to be taught and learned as a foreign language. In Asia, which comprises a large portion of the Expanding Circle, the primary function of English is as a common language for communication, known as a lingua franca. According to Kirkpatrick (2012), rather than using English primarily to communicate with native speakers from countries where English is the first language, people across Asia use English to interact with each other. This means that individuals with varying linguistic and cultural experiences in Asia are utilizing English as a means of communication. Given this growing significance of English as a lingua franca in Asia, it has been suggested to thoroughly reassess old-fashioned policies, practices, and teaching methods related to English language education (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

While there is a heated debate regarding the similarity of and relationship among the terms English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as an international language (EIL), World Englishes (WE) and other related constructs in the literature (see Marlina, 2014; Pennycook, 2012), in the present study, we use GE as a generic term to epitomize, as mentioned above, the fundamental shift in perspective in ELT since it “is viewed as a more inclusive term that recognizes the fluid and hybrid nature of English not within but transcending borders in various contexts,” and since it can function “as a paradigm rethinking the relationship between World Englishes, English as an international language (EIL), and English as a lingua franca” (Widodo et al., 2020, p. 1). To be sure, due to the context of the present research which is an Expanding Circle country, i.e., Iran, for ease of clarity and discussion all these terms are used interchangeably here.

Due to the heightened interest in the GE paradigm, there have been so many calls for the incorporation of GE-oriented pedagogy to L2 education (e.g., Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Sharma & Sievers, 2023). In spite of such continued calls, the role of teachers in discussions about teaching English as GE is often neglected, despite being an important group of individuals involved in the process. As a large number of the calls for Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) are made by researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics instead of teaching practitioners and experts, a theory-practice schism has been conspicuous in this regard (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018).

Moreover, notwithstanding the surge in interest in these novel outlooks which comprise the interdisciplinary reality (Widdowson, 2009) of ELT, research indicates that many stakeholders representing the folk reality of the field, namely teachers, teacher educators, policymakers, parents, and students worldwide, and in the Expanding Circle particularly, have not accepted GE without demur, and language centers utilize teaching materials and instructional content that align with the native speaker norms and standards (Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2017; Sharma & Sievers, 2023; Widodo et al., 2020). This also holds true about ELT in Iran in spite of the fact that the Ministry of Education has recently taken steps to enhance the integration of Iranian culture into ELT materials and methods with the purpose of using English teaching as a tool to

help Iranian students better comprehend their own national cultural aspects and effectively communicate them on an international level (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018).

The foregoing accentuates the fact that L2 teacher education policy domain is still largely animated by popular perceptions and beliefs about how teachers go about teaching. Still, the theory-practice divide exists in the field of L2 teacher education and old-established perceptions are the driving force behind many teacher education initiatives. Against this backdrop, and anchored in an activity-theoretic framework, the present qualitative study was designed to investigate two Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' cognitions about GE and GE-oriented pedagogy to see if this pedagogy "is a possible reality, or whether it remains an ideological fantasy" (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018, p. 1) in an Expanding Circle country like Iran. More specifically, the following questions were subjected to scrutiny in this study:

1. From an activity-theoretic standpoint, what are Iranian English language teachers' cognitions about GE and GE-oriented pedagogy?
2. From an activity-theoretic standpoint, how do Iranian English language teachers enact their cognitions about GE in practice?

Literature Review

GE in L2 Pedagogy

GE, as a game-changing paradigm, has aimed to depoliticize the English language the way it used to be in the past (Mahboob, 2018). Traditionally, it was commonly believed that the main purpose of learning and teaching English was to prepare language learners to interact with native English speakers. Therefore, efforts were made to provide language learners with a solid understanding of linguistic and cultural norms practiced by native English speakers, particularly those from America and Britain (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018). However, due to the emergence of GE, the goal of learning English has now expanded to include communication not only with native English speakers but also with non-native English speakers (Suzuki, 2010). Therefore, GE, in essence, focuses mainly on practical adaptability across varied language systems, regions, and cultural traditions and is willing to embrace foreign standards (House, 2012), hence its contribution to inter-cultural communication (Mahboob, 2018).

As a prominent perspective on GE or English for international communication, ELF has greatly bolstered GE and EIL by giving equal consideration to both the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle concerning the use of language models (Hino, 2012). House (2012) refers to ELF as "a kind of 'global currency' for people from a great variety of backgrounds who come into contact with one another and use the English language as a default means of communication" (p. 187). Looking at ELF from a more ideological perspective, Jenkins (2006) depicts it as "an attempt to extend to Expanding Circle members the rights that have always been enjoyed in the Inner Circle and to an increasing extent in the Outer" (p. 38). Given the prominence of ELF, there has been a growing demand to integrate ELF-informed pedagogy into L2 teaching and teacher education. Widdowson, for instance, looks at ELF "as a catalyst for change in established ways of thinking" (2012, p. 5). Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015) have emphasized the need for teacher education models to incorporate an "ELF-aware" approach in their theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and practical applications in order to raise teachers' consciousness about important issues related to ELF, one particular concern being the ability of non-native speakers to effectively communicate with other non-native speakers by producing understandable speech. They argue that this "awareness challenges many teachers' deep-seated

convictions about language, communication, and teaching, but once achieved, it opens new possibilities for teaching and learning” (p. 55).

From pedagogical and research perspectives, GE and, by extension, ELF are now seen as a useful cognitive framework for both researchers and mentors as well as teachers to reevaluate teaching methods and strategies in English language education due to the significant transformations that English has experienced through its worldwide growth in recent years (Marlina, 2014; Sharma & Sievers, 2023). The overriding theme of criteria and guidelines for GE-oriented pedagogy is that the primary focus of discussions related to GE is the interactions among English speakers who come from different cultures and have diverse linguistic backgrounds, the interactions being centered around two fundamental elements: accent and culture (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018). According to Seidlhofer (2001), with regard to accent, the focus of English language instruction has transitioned from native speaker norms to global standards, and from striving for native-like English proficiency to aiming for appropriate and contextually relevant English usage. In a similar vein, it is believed that non-native English speakers have the privilege to express their local identity through their accent, as long as it does not compromise international comprehensibility (Jenkins, 2002). Moreover, according to Tarone (2005), the desired outcome of language learning should guide the inclusion or exclusion of cultural and linguistic aspects from native English speakers in language instruction. In other words, if the goal is to facilitate international communication through English, GE-related teaching materials should not solely focus on native cultures (McKay, 2003).

A glance at the literature on GE shows that although there are a few research studies that discuss the way GE should be approached, these studies mainly concentrate on materials for GELT (e.g., Rose & Galloway, 2019), GE-curriculum content (e.g., Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011), GE-conscious pedagogy (e.g., Ates et al., 2015; Baker, 2012; Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2012), raising awareness about GE (e.g., Jindapitak et al., 2022; Kubota, 2001; Rose & Galloway, 2017), pupils' attitudes towards GE (Kubota, 2001) and the content of GE (e.g., Galloway & Rose, 2014, 2017). To be sure, there is a lack of research on the perspectives of teachers. Therefore, GE research lacks input from this important group who are well-positioned to provide insights into the challenges faced when integrating GE approaches into English language classrooms (Rose et al., 2020). In other words, teachers' cognitions have been under researched in this new landscape, and as Young and Walsh (2010) aptly put it, “much of the research which has been conducted to date largely ignores what practitioners say, think or believe about varieties of English or about ELF and EIL” (p. 124).

English Language Teachers' Cognitions and GE

In the past four decades, many scholars in educational psychology and instructional design have moved away from cognitive approaches that focus on individuals' independent and decontextualized thinking processes, shifting towards theories that highlight social and contextual aspects of cognition and meaning-making (Barab et al., 2004). Couched within this latter line of thinking, L2 teacher education has reconceptualized teachers' mental lives and knowledge-base as encompassing a gamut of fresh pedagogical concepts, including “teachers' knowledge and beliefs, teacher cognition, teacher learning in formal and informal contexts, teachers' ways of knowing, teacher socialization, reflective teaching, teacher identity, values and ethical dispositions, and the nature of disciplinary knowledge” (Tedick, 2013, p. 1). Teachers' pedagogical decision making is a process that is highly influenced by their cognitions and is reflected in their teaching practice. Relatedly, a growing interest in a GE-informed curriculum requires a closer look at teachers' cognitions and understandings of GE (Matsuda

& Friedrich, 2011) since such cognition determines the level of teachers' acceptance of GE and their decisions as to whether or not opt for such pedagogy either in theory or practice.

In recent years, there has been a collection of studies examining the perspectives of teachers (and learners) towards GE in both international contexts and the Iranian setting, despite it being in its early stages particularly in the Expanding Circle (e.g., Coskun, 2011; He & Zhang, 2010; Khatib & Monfared, 2017; Lim, 2019; Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018; Sadeghi & Richards, 2015; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2017; Tajeddin et al., 2020; Wang, 2015). In most cases, the recurring results suggest that teachers of language in various English teaching environments show a proclivity toward Standard English, such as American or British English. They also tend to hold negative views towards accents associated with other varieties of English, considering them to be inferior, incorrect, and lacking. Teachers' preference for a standard form of English may arise from several factors, including the demands and requirements of stakeholders and policymakers. It could also be due to teachers' insufficient knowledge about GE and GELT. Furthermore, the stance of students and their parents on GE plays an important role in shaping this preference. This propensity may be also due to the limited availability of teaching materials geared towards GE. These factors have been discussed in various studies such as those by Galloway (2018), Jenkins (2005), Lim (2019), Low (2021), Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019), Sifakis and Bayyurt (2018), as well as Young and Walsh (2010). This inclination towards a *norm-dependent* pedagogical model stands in stark contrast to the ongoing expansion of English, as pointed out by House (2009), which involves accommodating diverse norms from both native and non-native speakers. Considering such congruent findings, exploring teachers' thought processes regarding GE becomes an important undertaking, as the way teachers think directly shapes how they conduct their teaching in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The present study utilized Cultural–Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a conceptual framework to explore the dynamics of EFL teachers' cognitions, practice, and enactment of GE within their sociocultural environments. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of mediation, CHAT postulates that individual behavior is inseparable from the social relations within a system; without these relations, behavior cannot exist (Leont'ev, 1981). Over the course of its development, CHAT has evolved to encompass the influence of different situational factors on individual functioning. Expanding the theory, Leont'ev (1981) differentiated between individual actions and collective activities leading to a “distinction between social motives at the level of activity, individual goals at the level of actions and operations drawn on to achieve goals” (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019, p. 124). Engeström (1987, 2001) further elaborated on this concept by illustrating a single activity system consisting of six interconnected components, namely subject, object, tools, rules, community, and division of labor, which together might or might not lead to an outcome (Figure 1). Such a system is a complex nexus of interconnected responses to questions such as: (a) Subject: Who is the focal point of the activity system and what are their characteristics? (b) Object: What is the desired knowledge or goal that motivates the engagement in this activity? (c) Tools: What conceptual or physical resources are utilized by individuals to attain their objectives? (d) Division of Labor: How is power and control distributed within the activity system? (e) Norms: What established practices or conventions limit or impede individuals' actions within the activity? (f) Community: Who collaborates with and supports individuals in their participation within the activity? (g) Outcomes: What are the significant outcomes resulting from the activity engagement? (Goodnough, 2016).

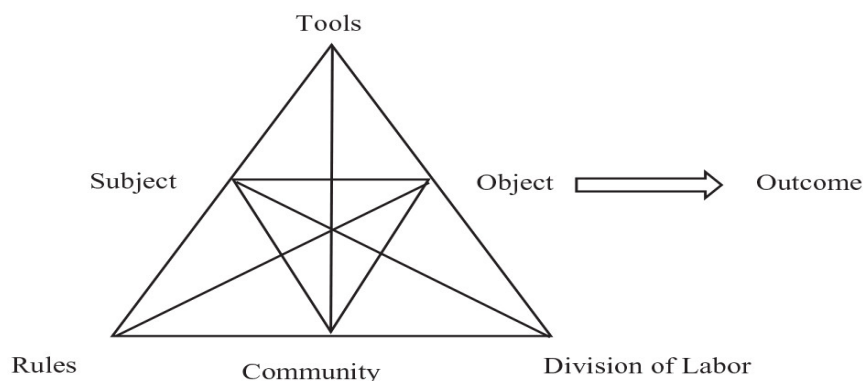


Figure 1. A triangle diagram of the components of activity theory (Engeström, 2015, p. 203)

An important construct in CHAT is the notion of contradictions that arise among “multiple motives embedded in and engendered by their historically evolving communities and objects” (Engeström, 2016, p. 3). The idea of contradictions plays a crucial role in activity theory as it provides a foundation for understanding how conflicts within human activity propel change and growth (Yamazumi, 2021). Engeström (2015) recognizes four levels of contradiction: (1) the primary internal conflict that exists within each individual part of the main activity; (2) secondary conflicts that arise between the different parts of the main activity; (3) tertiary conflicts which occur between the object or goal of the main activity and the purpose or goal of a more advanced form of the main activity within the culture of the community; (4) quaternary conflicts which arise between the main activity and other related activities.

Over time, CHAT has gone through developmental stages. As explicated in Engeström (2015), while the first generation highlighted the three components of tools, subjects, and outcomes, the second generation of activity theory explicates communities and social networks. Yet, a third generation, according to Engeström (2015), focuses on comprehending dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems. As a result, it employs a joint activity system, comprising a minimum of two interconnected activities, as the fundamental unit of analysis to address the profound and transformative changes in the objects of human activity. In the present study, our philosophy of activity systems corresponds to the second generation of CHAT, as depicted in Figure 1.

At the heart of the reconceptualizations of teacher cognition, which were discussed earlier, lies a focus on analyzing situated activity and continuous involvement as the fundamental units of analysis (Barab et al., 2004). This line of thinking is reflected in a generation of language teacher cognition research referred to by Burns et al. (2015) as the *sociohistorical ontological* generation which has its roots in Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural perspectives and, accordingly, in CHAT. Highlighting the role of context, this view has been applied in myriad research studies to investigate a multitude of teacher cognition-related constructs such as belief, identity, emotion, agency, and attitude (e.g., Cross, 2010; Feryok, 2012). The strength of CHAT in investigating teacher cognition and decision making lies in its ability to consider the personal perspectives and professional practices of teachers, which establishes a strong foundation for capturing the various institutional influences that contribute to such cognitions and practices. In other words, CHAT can effectively analyze the various beliefs, decisions, practices, and attitudes of teachers within the contextualized activity at work. Armed with this understanding of CHAT, in the present study, we explored teachers’ cognitions about GE and enactment of GE-oriented pedagogy using CHAT as our theoretical and methodological framework.

Method

Context

The educational system in Iran is structured into two main stages: primary education (grades 1-6) and secondary education (junior high school and high school). English is a compulsory subject in secondary education. Furthermore, there is a growing sector comprised of numerous private and semi-governmental language centers throughout the country (Mansouri et al., 2019; Mohammadian Haghghi & Norton, 2017). These centers offer evening language learning services to individuals of various ages and backgrounds, often as a supplement to the language instruction provided in public schools. Preferably, the main factor considered when hiring teachers in private institutes in Iran is their English language proficiency, with a strong emphasis placed on having a native-like level of fluency (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015); however, these institutes primarily employ EFL student-teachers or individuals with varying degrees of English proficiency, without strict certification requirements. Rather, teacher candidates must successfully complete the certification process specific to each institute in order to qualify for teaching positions. As argued by Mirhosseini et al. (2021), private language institutes in Iran heavily rely on their own Teacher Training Courses (TTCs) for teacher recruitment, with quality control being predominantly carried out through evaluations conducted by supervisors. It should be noted that achieving success in one institute's TTCs does not necessarily guarantee the same outcome in other institutes, requiring teachers to undergo the certification process anew if they switch workplaces (Mansouri, 2021). The responsibility for overseeing the education system at these levels lies with the Ministry of Education which is tasked with supervising and devising educational policies, including necessary curriculum reforms for K-12 schools. In recent times, there has been a notable transformation in the English education curriculum of Iranian public schools. This reform focuses on integrating elements of local culture into language classrooms, reflecting a shift towards embracing the principles of GE. The impact of Western societies and cultures, specifically those of the US and UK, on the Iranian education system has been a contentious issue since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Since then, authorities in Iran have consistently aimed to remove Western cultural aspects from the nation's educational framework (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018).

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of two EFL teachers teaching general English courses at the same private language institute in Tabriz, Iran. The forthcoming information provides a description of each participant involved in the study. To maintain anonymity, any potentially revealing details such as specific dates and names has either been excluded or modified.

Artin, a 24-year-old English language teacher from Tabriz, Iran, commenced his English language learning journey at the age of ten at a highly- prestigious semi-governmental language institute. He pursued English studies there for approximately eight years. Artin held a BA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and was currently pursuing an MA degree in TEFL at the time of the data collection. He had a teaching experience of four years. Additionally, he had completed two TTCs at renowned institutes in Tehran, the capital of Iran. Marjan, 27-years-old, was from Tabriz, Iran. She began learning English when she was nine years old at a famous private language institute in Tabriz. Marjan held a BA degree in Architecture Engineering. She had completed a TTC at the same institute that she was teaching during the data gathering period. Her teaching experience was about three years.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected in two phases with an interval of two months. In order to gain corroborating and/or disconfirming evidence as a way to improve the data analysis in terms of precision, multiple sources of evidence were gathered using data triangulation via three data collection methods: semi-structured interview, stimulated recall protocol, and non-participant observation.

As dubbed in Applied Linguistics inquiry, interview research is a fundamental and valuable method for understanding individuals' beliefs, emotions, and thoughts by directly asking them (Groom & Littlemore, 2011). In line with this philosophy, we utilized semi-structured interview as a primary tool to investigate our participants' cognitions regarding GE and GE-oriented pedagogy. Two face-to-face interviews were conducted, each lasting between 45 minutes to beyond an hour. The interview conducted in the first phase consisted of two sections: background interview and semi-structured interview. The background interview was conducted exclusively in Phase 1, while only a semi-structured interview was conducted in the second phase. The purpose of the background interview was to collect demographic information, including teaching experience and age, as well as to gain insight into the personal and professional lives of the teachers (Seidman, 2006). Consequently, this initial section explored the teachers' backgrounds, their perceptions of their own experiences of learning and teaching a foreign language, as well as their overall educational experiences. As for the second section, a set of questions covering various aspects of GE and GELT were developed and organized into groups. The main themes of the questions included: the influence of GE on teaching English, attitudes/beliefs about the native and non-native discourse, the legitimacy of different varieties of English, beliefs about L1 use in the classroom, beliefs about accuracy, error treatment, and corrective feedback, as well as the teachers' approach to teaching culture. The initial interview framework was reviewed and revised by an expert with a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Each interview began with open-ended questions to allow the participants to initiate discussion and focus on specific topics. *Probing*, a research strategy in interviews, was used to elicit more detailed responses from the participants. Probing was done through nonverbal cues such as gestures or pauses, as well as through verbal means (Given, 2008). Verbal probing included direct questions or requests for additional information, as well as indirect probes. Indirect probes were particularly useful when sensitive topics were discussed. The content of the second interview was adjusted based on the participants' responses in the first semi-structured interview, the stimulated recall protocols, and class observations.

Another data collection procedure of the study consisted of stimulated recall protocol. The stimulated recall protocol, an alternative to the think-aloud method, has proved to be the most suitable procedure to collect teacher data in order to understand their thoughts and cognitions during the teaching practice; in this method, since teachers cannot talk about their thoughts while teaching, which is the case in the think-aloud procedure, they rely on watching the recorded video to remember and share their insights later on (Meijer et al., 2002). In this approach, first, a class session taught by the teacher being studied is filmed. Then, there is a follow-up interview where each teacher describes the thoughts and cognition they had while teaching. To ensure the reliability and validity of the stimulated recall data, some practical steps were taken. First, the time gap between the video recording sessions and the recall interviews was kept as short as possible; this was done because, as Gass and Mackey (2000) point out, it has been recognized that teachers may not remember their exact thoughts over time. In this particular study, this time interval ranged from around an hour to three hours. Second, to minimize the impact of the camera on the natural classroom behavior of both the instructors and learners, video recordings were conducted during the third session. Prior to that, the camera had remained off on a tripod at the back of the class for two sessions. Additionally, to avoid any influence from the presence of the first researcher who was in charge of collecting the data,

the video recordings were done without the researcher being present, with the camera set to the recording mode. Finally, the participants were informed and educated about the purpose and process of the stimulated recall protocol prior to the interviews. This helped prevent the teachers' excessive and inordinate interpretations of their teaching behaviors (Meijer et al., 2002). The stimuli for this study consisted of videotapes of the participants' classroom sessions along with the follow-up interviews in which the participants' GE-related cognitions pinpointing their real practices were probed into. The researcher and the participant reviewed the entire recording together, with limited use of fast-forwarding. A remote control was placed on the table between them. Initially, the teacher was asked to select a segment and practice using the control to ensure familiarity and comfort (Gass & Mackey, 2000). However, instead of directing the teacher to specific segments for discussion, the interviewer encouraged them to have control over when to pause the video. In other words, a low-structure format was used for collecting stimulated recall data, which involved open interviews without predetermined researcher questions. A low-structure recall procedure enables participants to freely express their thoughts, choosing when and how much they verbalize. Additionally, the participants were not guided or directed, reducing the potential for interference from the researcher. Two stimulated recall interviews were conducted with a two-month gap between them. The interviews lasted between 80 minutes to 100 minutes each.

The non-participant observation strategy was employed as another data collection technique in this study. This approach has proven to be particularly effective in investigating the functioning of language classrooms within the context of ELT (Groom & Littlemore, 2011). Furthermore, in line with the objectives of this research, both the ethogenics and critical events approaches to classroom observation were utilized. The ethogenics approach aims to explore the underlying thoughts and beliefs that are manifested through various sequences of action (Wragg, 1999). On the other hand, the critical events technique allows for capturing and documenting the essence of classroom interactions (Richards, 2003). In each observation conducted for the study, meticulous attention was given to these critical events. Detailed notes were taken on a pro forma document, which included information on what led to each event, what transpired during it, and what its outcome was. The first author observed two teaching sessions conducted by the participant teachers. Each session lasted for one hour. The primary rationale for utilizing this technique was to identify potential conflicts between the actions of the teachers and their declared convictions and cognitions, as were revealed in the semi-structured interviews. These identified conflicts served as a foundation for the subsequent interview conducted with the participants in the second phase.

To elicit comprehensive insights regarding GE, the participants were encouraged to freely express their thoughts using the Persian language (Iran's official language) during the interviews. All the stimulated recall interviews, the semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations were recorded in audio format. Subsequently, these recordings were transcribed verbatim, translated, and finally coded for analysis. In order to investigate the credibility of the findings and increase their trustworthiness, we used respondent validation, also called member checking (Birt et al., 2016). Consequently, the translated version of the transcripts was provided to the participants for confirmation and clarification, ensuring accuracy in the representation of their responses and addressing any misunderstandings.

The Researchers' Positionality

The interviewer, who is also the first author of the study, was Artin's university instructor for three courses: Teaching Methodology, Language Testing and Assessment, and Practicum in an MA TEFL program. That said though, the data gathering occurred in a highly warm and welcoming environment, allowing both participants to freely express their narratives, perspectives and conceptions about the phenomena under scrutiny. Both authors of the study have extensive experience teaching English in the Iranian educational system and are well-versed in the current status of GE and GE-informed pedagogy in this specific context. While Author 2 left the teaching profession to pursue further education at a US university, Author 1 currently holds a position as an ELT faculty member at an Iranian university. Both authors specialize in L2 teacher education, which enhanced the credibility of the data analysis and strengthened the arguments and interpretations.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data pertaining to the participants' cognitions about GE and GE-informed pedagogy, and the way they enacted their perceptions in practice was undertaken within an activity theory framework. This theoretical framework provided the researchers with a comprehensive lens through which to examine the complex interactions and dynamics within the teaching and learning context. It equally enabled the researchers to explore not only the individual beliefs and practices of the participants but also the broader sociocultural factors, including disciplinary reality versus folk reality (Widdowson, 2009) as well as the contradictions that shaped the teachers' cognitions and instructional choices within the context of GE.

We utilized the constant comparison and thematic analysis techniques to code and analyze the data. The data analysis process involved several interconnected steps. Firstly, the collected data were carefully examined to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and contradictions. These themes were then categorized into the elements of the activity system. Following Cross (2010), here we defined 'activity systems' as "the sites within which thinking, doing, and context converge;" thus, activity here specifically referred to ELT where the locus of attention was our "thinking and doing teacher subject" (p. 440). The object, was teaching language skills and components. Moreover, we considered tools as both material tools such as instructional materials, technology, and social interactions, as well as psychological tools, also known as semiotic or sign systems, including teacher cognition and past experiences (Kozulin, 2003). Another component of activity systems, i.e., rules, has been defined as "both explicit and implicit norms and conventions that place certain limits as well as possibilities on the nature of interaction within the activity system" (Johnson, 2009, p. 79). Consequently, we regarded curriculum and educational policies as well as societal norms to serve as rules that establish limitations or impact teachers' choices and behaviors. Additionally, we considered certain resources like textbooks as functioning as rules by shaping a teacher's instructional activities within the classroom. Therefore, textbooks could function as both tools and rules in the context of our study. Relevant community members included students, colleagues, and parents. The distribution of labor here referred to power relations within the community as well as the delegation of duties, tasks, and roles within that community (Cross, 2010). As another constituent of the activity systems, outcome, defined as the final product of the activity systems, here referred to GE-informed pedagogy and its enactment. A caveat regarding outcome is that it is often uncertain and ongoing, a point also true about the context of our study as we were not certain if our participants believed in these notions. In short, CHAT illustrates a framework where, within a system of regulations and responsibilities, individuals or groups, known as subjects, utilize cultural artifacts and other tools to manipulate objects and achieve the desired outcome (Yamazumi, 2021).

It was hoped that by examining how these elements interact and influence one another, a deeper understanding of the participants' cognitions of GE could be obtained. Furthermore, the researchers explored the underlying motives, goals, and contradictions that shaped the teachers' engagement with GE. This entailed identifying tensions and contradictions within the activity system, such as conflicting expectations from different stakeholders or challenges posed by the integration of GE into the curriculum. By examining these contradictions, the researchers gained insights into the sources of the participating teachers' cognitions and the ways in which they navigated and negotiated the complexities of implementing GE in their teaching practices.

To ensure the dependability of the content analysis, following Gass and Mackey's (2000) recommendation, a colleague, holding a PhD in Applied Linguistics and familiar with CHAT analysis, was asked to review 30% of the whole body of the transcribed data. The results showed that there was an 83% agreement between our analyses and those of the independent reviewer. Additionally, this third-party analyst was consistently consulted throughout the analysis, especially when there were themes that could be mapped on to multiple interpretations and categories. The goal was to achieve greater objectivity in the analysis by reaching a consensus on which category best represented the cognition behind a particular statement or action. Any discrepancies and inconsistencies that arose were rectified through agreement among the researchers and the external examiner.

In what follows attempts are made to present the findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected for the purpose of the present study within the six components of an activity theoretic framework, with direct quotes from the participants to augment the results. Due to the interrelatedness of the research questions of the study, the findings and the pertinent discussion are presented together in the following section.

Findings and Discussion

The subject element of the activity systems in the context of the study included the participant teachers who acted within the instructional activities from which our data were collected. Due to its central and agentic role in the activity systems, the subject constituent took center stage in our inspection and was analyzed with respect to its relationship with the other components of the system.

The Subjects, the Object, and the Outcome

The analysis of the results revealed that there was a clear relation between the teachers and their motives and goal-directed actions that led to their views of the object, i.e., teaching English language skills and components. Both Marjan and Artin set enhancing their students' communicative competence and proficiency as their major goal of language teaching. Artin, for example, believed that:

In my opinion, speaking correctly is important. Now, whether someone speaks British or American, which one is better? I said it doesn't matter to me. Even when the kids are talking, I encourage them. I tell them, see, just try to speak correctly and intelligibly.

Along similar lines, Marjan believed in the correctness of the language learned by her students:

But as a teacher, I prefer that children pronounce correctly and move forward with proper grammar.

The instances above indicate that although such factors as teachers' instructional motivations and educational goals may leave an impact on the teachers' cognitions, the most recurring influential theme turned out to be their personal beliefs about the role of English in a globalized

world. In fact, the participants in this study clearly indicated that they believed in the importance of communicative competence and the practical application of language skills.

Regarding the outcome of the system, i.e., GE and GE-related topics, Marjan demonstrated limited understanding of concepts like GE and EIL. Her educational background in architecture meant that she had to rely on TTCs and her personal experience for professional growth. The reasons behind her lack of familiarity and awareness will be explored in subsequent sections. However, it is worth noting that although Marjan acknowledged some positive aspects of GE pedagogy after becoming acquainted with it during the project, she expressed that it would not be a viable option for her:

For example, I know we have English with accents like Filipino or Indian... I even mentioned that when I'm looking for videos on learning certain software, jewelry design, etc., and I find that it's not in English but instead in English with an Indian accent, I really struggle to understand it. I'm not saying it's bad or wrong.

Artin, however, was completely familiar with GE, EIL and World Englishes concepts thanks to having exposure to relevant materials in his MA classes. In what follows, we further investigate the teachers' understandings, the origins of their perceptions, and the contribution of their cognitions to their practice in terms of the different components of CHAT.

The Subjects and Tools

As a psychological tool, Marjan's past experience, e.g., when she was an English language learner, shaped her view towards a standard model of English. The institute in which she had learned English, along with the related materials, was based on either British or American English. Here is how Marjan depicts that situation:

At least our books were entirely British. That's why we also followed the same way. Now, even I am implementing this in my classes. Now we are trying to make an effort to move forward with either the British or American accent.

Another influential tool orienting Marjan's beliefs about an acceptable English model was one of her teachers who was indeed her role model:

The most influential and best role in continuing my language learning journey was one of our teachers, really, Mr. Namvar. He was excellent both in terms of accent and the information he provided us. His accent, especially, had a significant impact on my choice to use British accent. And now, in my classes, I prefer the children to progress more with a British accent.

Furthermore, referring to TTCs as another instrument affecting her cognitions about GE, Marjan expressed that she did not perceive a significant connection between the material covered in her teacher education courses, which primarily centered around teaching techniques, and topics such as GE, ELF, and EIL.

And then I had my TTC. They told us some tips about teaching and such, nothing special. To tell the truth, it was not very useful. Such things like GE, English varieties and the stuff like these were not discussed there at all. I believe such programs should be more inclusive in nature and include up-to-date issues.

Moreover, Marjan primarily focused on developing her learners' language proficiency for communication within settings where English is the first language. Her due emphasis on the acquisition of British or American English was the most evident manifestation of the conception of EFL. Marjan stated that she prefers to follow a "standard model" of English like British or American so as "to prevent any confusion on the part of the learners." This mentality

is in sharp contrast with Jenkin's argument for the inclusion of diverse English varieties. She states that language teachers need to expose their students to wider ranges of varieties of English such as different dialects and accents so as to enable them improve their intercultural comprehension and negotiation skills (Jenkins, 2015). Marjan's view could be traced back to both the cultural-historical context of her education and her intrapersonal visions:

I don't know, maybe that is the influence of the movies, or the series I watched, I like British English more. You know, we don't have better or worse; it is just a matter of preference. Someone may prefer to speak British, others prefer American English.

From an activity theory perspective, part of Marjan's cognitive system can be seen as formed by her ontogenetic history, i.e., what she has brought to the activity system (Cole & Engeström, 1993), which included her experience as a language learner and her intra-psychological mindset (personal preference). The cultural-historic domain, i.e., the aspect of development in relation to the wider external environment in which humans live, encompassing social, cultural, and historical factors that contribute to development (Cross, 2010), was another contributing factor to Marjan's perceptions stemming from her role model, the teacher education programs she received, the content of the coursebooks, and the socio-cultural milieu of the activity system (influence of movies and other cultural artefacts). This narrow conception of English is still widespread in many educational contexts. In fact, contrary to what GE proponents preach, in many contexts where English is seen as a foreign language, teachers may lean towards a more standardized and monolingual approach (Pennycook, 2010) and the "staunchly native speaker ideology" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 203) still appears to be the dominant belief in ELT. Therefore, this finding is consistent with those of previous research, discussed earlier, pointing to the fact that most language teachers, particularly in the Expanding Circle, still prefer native norms and standards despite being aware of GE.

As mentioned earlier, Artin noted that he had a thorough understanding of GE and other related concepts. This familiarity mostly came from his awareness of the disciplinary reality surrounding GE in ELT, which has embraced GELT instead of TEFL.

Yes, I became familiar with these concepts in your Master's classes, specifically in the English language teaching methodology class. In fact, my friend and I gave a presentation on one of the chapters of Celce Murcia's book that fully addressed this topic.

Artin seemed to embrace linguistic diversity and attempted to promote the acceptance of various English varieties. Conscious of the disciplinary reality, he appeared to recognize the existence of different World Englishes and emphasized the importance of understanding and appreciating these variations. He mentioned that:

I have no particular bias towards any variety of English, British, American, and Indian... I say, we need to speak correctly in whatever way you speak.

On this basis, Artin claimed that he encouraged his students to explore diverse linguistic models, such as American, British, or Indian English, and appreciate the linguistic richness and cultural nuances embedded within them. Such a perspective is in line with Kachru's assertion, who holds a pluralistic role for English and further discusses that each variety of English is legitimate for its own set of speakers (Kachru, 1986).

Like Marjan, Artin's belief system in this regard was largely informed by both the cultural-historic (MA program and materials) and ontogenetic (intrapersonal perceptions) domains. However, his contradictory comments about different varieties of English made it very baffling

to understand his real stance in this regard. He, for instance, expressed his thoughts regarding other English varieties as follows:

Some things go back to their accent, which is natural; everyone has an accent; speaking without an accent doesn't make any sense. But some things are related to pronunciation. And in my opinion, they can fix it. I say that if there is variety, it should be one, not having Chinese, Indian, or other things.

Artin's personal belief system, which serves as a conceptual tool, encountered a primary level contradiction (Engeström, 2016). He believed that different varieties of English should adhere to a standard model of English in terms of pronunciation. However, this contradicts Artin's previous acknowledgment of mutual understanding as a primary objective in his teaching. This contradictory assumption sharply contrasts with a fundamental tenet of GE-aware pedagogy, which emphasizes that “the native speaker of English is not the linguistic target,” and that “mutual intelligibility is the goal” (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 25). This principle applies to pronunciation as well, meaning it is not an exception. Moreover, at the end of his statement, Artin totally rejects the legitimacy of various varieties of English, again contradicting his previous convictions. These inconsistencies can clarify why there was a discrepancy between his professed beliefs and actual teaching behavior. Despite holding the belief about incorporating different varieties of English, in his educational practice, Artin preferred to introduce the linguistic norms of American or British English rather than exposing the learners to other English varieties. Recognizing the existence of new forms of English, he placed a certain level of importance on mutual understanding in effective communication. However, as was the case for Marjan, there was still a prevailing inclination to adhere to native-speaker norms and an idealized standard of English instruction that is focused on native speakers. When requested to further elaborate on these contradictions in a subsequent interview, he noted:

I have always accepted that it is important for it [the variety] to be established worldwide, like American and British English, and that they have really good books for that variety. The discussion is not just about accent; the books and materials must also be relevant. If it can move forward in harmony with them, compete with them, there is no problem.

As shown above, Artin's contrasting attitudes and practice indicate the influence of other constituent factors within the system, specifically materials in this instance. The absence of materials related to GE caused Artin to experience cognitive dissonance. Nevertheless, he seemed to have no difficulty incorporating GE-informed teaching methods into his instruction as long as suitable materials were available. This idea is also emphasized in the contradiction tenet of CHAT, which emphasizes the crucial role of contradictions in resolving conflicts and driving change and growth (Engeström, 2016). Supporting Artin's resolution of the contradiction, it is now a truism that an additional domain where teachers' conception of the status of English is directly translated into practice is the integration of authentic materials and multicultural literature. English teachers can incorporate authentic materials, such as newspapers, magazines, or online articles, representing a range of English varieties and cultural perspectives. They can also include multicultural literature written by authors from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This provides students with exposure to different English language contexts and fosters an appreciation for cultural diversity. In this respect, Seidlhofer (2011) advocates the use of authentic materials and exposing students to different varieties of English where such varieties are used globally. She continues to discuss that it helps learners develop their intercultural and international communicative competence.

A further striking difference between the teachers' views and enactments of GE pedagogy was related to their perceptions of teaching different cultures and intercultural communication skills as well as the inclusion of multicultural resources and materials into the curriculum. In this regard, Artin acknowledged that GE is not solely about linguistic competence but also encompasses intercultural competence. He emphasized that:

I believe that our goal is communication... When, for example, an Indian individual wants to come and talk to me, he should consider my situation and cultural context. He needs to speak in a way that I can understand, so that I can answer him.

Artin also indicated that the inclusion of multicultural resources fosters an appreciation for linguistic diversity and equips learners with the skills to engage in effective communication within a *globalized society*. When asked about teaching culture, he noted that:

Sometimes I see, for example, a book has a section on Christmas or Valentine's Day. Perhaps you have also seen that sometimes there are some language learners who are religious. I always like to respect different ideologies... I see when I talk about Christmas, for example, more than half of the class like it; two or three people don't like it. In order to maintain that balance, I also add a topic from our own culture. For example, I talk about Charshanbeh-Souri...

Some scholars like Holliday advocate for such an approach that goes beyond linguistic skills and fosters cultural sensitivity and understanding (Holliday, 2005). McKay (2004) believes that it is important for language teachers to allocate an adequate amount of time to the cultural aspects of language learners as it allows students to effectively convey and exchange their own cultural backgrounds with other English speakers. Additionally, Smith (1976) suggests that in contexts where GE is used, it is not necessary to conform to the cultural norms of native English speakers. As the aforementioned instances show, Artin seemed to view English as a means of cultural exchange, understanding, and collaboration. Such a perspective promotes the conception that English proficiency can empower students to participate confidently in international contexts. Such beliefs, also manifest in Artin's educational practice, can drive teachers to incorporate global perspectives, intercultural competence, and authentic materials into their teaching.

Marjan, however, had a radical view about teaching culture:

I disagree with that. I don't want them to mix up our culture because even I once asked the kids to bring one of their school books for me, their language textbooks... I was flipping through them to see what they were learning. I had this problem myself in high school, where names and famous figures used in the books were mostly Iranian and Persian. For example, there were some famous figures like Mr. Chaychi, it's okay to use some Iranian names; but it wouldn't hurt to have a Bob or George as well, for them to hear and get used to. When learning a new language, it is advisable for the learner to at least learn whatever is available in the target language they are learning.

She also held the same belief about teaching intercultural communication skills. No contradiction was witnessed between the teachers' stated beliefs about cultural issues and how they implemented those views in practice. Their attitudes were to a great extent a reflection of their assumptions and beliefs about other aspects of GE-oriented pedagogy some of which will be discussed in the following sections. Similarly, both the teachers' ontogenetic development and the cultural-historic milieu of their education can be accounted for shaping their views on culture-related topics.

The Subjects and Rules

In all the three modes of the data collected in the study, the concept of ‘norms and rules’ as a mediator in CHAT (Engeström, 2001) was expressed and demonstrated by both Artin and Marjan. Indeed, another noteworthy realization of the teachers’ conception of GE in practice had to do with the participants’ attitude toward the use of students’ mother tongue in the classroom context. The institute where they were employed had strict regulations regarding conducting classes based on a monolingual approach. Artin, who held a rather “English as a global language” perspective, encouraged the use of English as the primary medium of communication in the classroom. However, he did not impose any concrete limitations for the sporadic use of students’ first language (L1). Overall, he created an immersive English language environment to provide ample opportunities for learners to practice and improve their language skills. Yet, he also allowed for some use of the learners’ native language to facilitate comprehension and clarification, particularly when introducing new concepts or explaining complex instructions. This, in turn, encouraged the learners to actively engage in English communication and develop their fluency and confidence. He explained:

I allow them to express some particular things in Farsi, but this is limited to the cases they don't know the appropriate word or structure.

In addition, he took an active approach by renegotiating the rule of the institute. When questioned about his violation of the rule, he provided an explanation referring to his experiences as a language learner:

When I used to go to language classes, I had a lot of stress in those classes. For example, there was something that I didn't know... The teacher used to say, "If you don't say it in English, I won't respond." This was always a question for me why language teachers don't use L1 in their classes. Before, I didn't know that L1 can be used; you sent an article in the first semester of my master's program where it said that using L1 can be very good.

Although L1 was employed by Artin to foster communicative competence and provide additional explanation of the instructional materials, his agentive approach is in line with one of the principles of GE-aware pedagogy, accentuating the judicious use of the students’ mother tongue to enhance their skills in communicating globally (McKay, 2018). Artin encountered a secondary level contradiction as the institutional rule of the center did not allow him to use L1 as a mediating tool. However, the underlying conflicts were translated into his resistance to the mandated rule. This refers to the underlying assumption of the contradiction tenet of CHAT suggesting that people experience contradictions and subsequently restructure activity systems by adopting alternative solutions (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019).

On the other hand, Marjan elaborated on the issue of L1 use in class in two different scenarios. The first one is presented here, and the second one will be dealt with later under the title The Subjects and Division of Labor. In the first scenario, she adopted a radical perspective and entirely banned the use of L1 throughout her courses. Even students who had limited proficiency in English were highly expected to try to speak English so as to “learn how to express their thoughts in the target language.” She explained that:

It is completely forbidden [for students to speak Farsi in my class]. Even the supervisor of the institute reminded me a couple of time of this restriction... I always encourage them to express themselves in English, even if their English is really broken. Naturally, if they travel abroad where they speak English, they have already learned how to express themselves.

The following quote reveals that Marjan also showed an awareness of the significance of educational norms and standards on her understanding of GE when it comes to language assessment:

You know, the problem is that when it comes to assessment issues, everything will be based on a Standard version of English. Who cares? My students will be judged based on their British or American accent. If my students in the future wish to participate in global examinations such as IELTS, they must emulate native English speakers. Therefore, even if I go for GE pedagogy in some respects, I still prioritize the development of native-like accents in the classroom and encourage them to use native English speakers as role models for English learning. In our institute, the exams are based on British English not those varieties you talked about, Indian English, if I am not mistaken.

Marjan had no way out to reconcile this dissonance whose source was the conflict between interdisciplinary reality and the standards set by assessment systems which oppose this reality. Reconciling such cognitive dissonance requires focusing on a “located” approach (Johnson, 2006, p. 245) to the subjects’ formal teacher education to cultivate inner shifts to create an external transformation (Freeman, 2004).

Beyond the pedagogical norms, however, it seems that the assessment and evaluation systems employed by educational institutions can equally influence teachers' perception of GE. If exams and assessments primarily focus on a particular dialect or accent, teachers may feel compelled to prioritize teaching that specific form. This emphasis on a standardized version may overshadow the recognition of other English varieties. In the words of Jenkins (2015), "assessment practices are powerful determiners of how English develops" (p. 42). In the same vein, Canagarajah (2005) contends that the dominance of standardized tests and traditional pedagogical approaches in many educational systems restricts teachers from embracing the diversity of GE, reinforcing a monolingual mindset.

The above narratives are indicative of how teachers’ cognitions of teaching are influenced by curriculum guidelines, educational policies, and institutional expectations. Within an educational system, the division of labors is often set based on the social, official and bureaucratic rules and regulations. This highlights that teachers’ responsibilities are set off according to the expectations, social standards and cultural sensitivity. Adherence to these rules and norms can shape teachers' cognition by guiding their instructional decisions, encouraging/discouraging the inclusion of global perspectives, and fostering intercultural understanding. More particularly, teachers’ cognition of GE may also alter based on educational rules that emphasize the importance of standardized English. The focus on a particular variety of English as the "correct" or "standard" form may limit teachers' understanding and acceptance of linguistic diversity. As Graddol (2006, p. 19) discusses, while “languages are not standardized and codified but vary according to geography,” ELT has been associated with standardization for several decades. Within a local context, national or regional language policies can also shape English teachers' cognition of GE. For instance, if the curriculum mandates the teaching of a specific English dialect, teachers may prioritize that variety and neglect other forms. This can restrict their awareness and appreciation of the linguistic variations that exist worldwide. In this regard Kirkpatrick (2012) argues that the promotion of specific language varieties in the classroom is greatly influenced by language policies.

The Subjects and Community

Within the data, we also found compelling evidence in support of the role of community members in determining the teachers' cognitions of GE. Not being content with her former experiences as a novice teacher, Marjan discussed that "professional networks and online communities can foster a sense of belonging, collaboration, and shared commitment to promoting GE in ELT practices." When asked about the quality of the TTCs or professional development programs she had attended, she raised concerns that:

These types of programs are useful for me when they practically show me how to solve problems. Also, it is very important who teaches these courses. If someone cannot communicate with me, I unconsciously don't learn anything from them and ignore them. For example, as I mentioned, no one has told us anything about topics like GE and EIL.

Artin, however, contended that being an MA student, his participation in professional development activities such as TTCs and debriefing sessions significantly left an impact on his conception of GE. In addition, he implied "supportive relationships within the community can provide a nurturing environment that may in turn motivate them to embrace GE principles and strive for excellence in their teaching."

Essentially, every activity system consists of various perspectives from its members, making it a multi-voiced structure (Engeström, 1999). This multi-voicedness helps to understand the different ways in which individuals involved in an activity system perceive things. The above statements can also shed light on how Marjan and Artin proposed solutions to address the contradiction they encountered between interdisciplinary reality and folk reality. This idea aligns with the contradiction tenet of CHAT, which emphasizes the importance of contradictions as catalysts for change and resolution (Engeström, 2001).

The results of the analysis also pointed to another aspect of the community component in our activity system. Marjan referred to parents' expectations of the teachers and the institute when asked about her stance on native versus non-native-speaker English teachers:

I don't know if I would be happy or upset if someone preferred them over me in such a situation. Oh, something happened! I remember it completely, one semester one of the parents asked me what my major was and I had said architecture, well, I didn't lie to the kids, now I don't know maybe I should have lied because the school later said not to tell them about that. Oh yes, then his mother called the institute [and said] that this is not right at all, why bring someone who has not studied TEFL to teach my child the English language? So maybe this can be generalized to say that if there were native teachers around, it would be even worse. They were saying just dismiss her since she is a non-native speaker of English!

She also spoke about how many parents have the expectation that the education system should prioritize teaching a standard British or American model of English, and how this expectation also affects the policies and expectations of the institute. Additionally, she mentioned that most students aspire to speak English in an accent-free mode, which makes her hesitant to choose GE-aware pedagogy even if she personally wants to:

In registration forms, when parents write about their expectations from the institution, they mostly emphasize that they really want their children to eventually speak fluently and be like natives. And often, before or after class when they talk to us, they say they send their kids to classes from a young age so that they can speak without an accent.

Seen from a CHAT ideology, the particular activity of language teaching is undertaken by a distinct community as a social and collaborative endeavor (Cross, 2010). Therefore, training and professional development opportunities, as instances of ELT discourse communities, can play an outstanding role in the formation of teachers' cognitions about GE. As McKay (2002) recommends, our teacher education programs must be designed in a way to help teachers gain knowledge about various varieties of English. If such programs fail to emphasize the importance of GE or to provide adequate exposure to diverse linguistic forms, teachers may lack the knowledge and confidence to embrace the concept of GE. The above assertions suggest that teachers' cognitions of teaching are influenced by institutional and societal expectations. This well alludes to the significant role of community, as a structural component of activity systems, in mediating teachers' perceptions of the system. In the example above, these mediators created cognitive dissonance in Marjan's belief system in relation to acknowledging and promoting different English varieties, regardless of the fact that Marjan had repeatedly stated that she would not opt for GE-oriented pedagogy despite acknowledging its legitimacy.

In this context, the other members of the community did not embrace what interdisciplinary reality espouses, and instead clung to their own folk reality perceptions, leading them to rely on the native speakers' dependency position. This finding supports the previous research findings (e.g., Lim, 2019; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019) on the expectations of various individuals involved in L2 education, such as parents, students, policymakers, and supervisors. These stakeholders expect teachers to uphold the ideology of native-speaker norms in their teaching methods. With respect to the mediatory role of community in this activity system, one may argue that if there is an emphasis on incorporating GE perspectives in the curriculum, if professional development programs prioritize global competencies, or if parents and students recognize GE and its importance, then teachers' cognitions can be guided and influenced accordingly. Otherwise, it will not be logical, the way GE-theorizers and advocates do in a top-down fashion, to encourage and expect practitioners to appreciate and use GE-informed pedagogy.

The Subjects and Division of Labor

Our analysis of the data also bore witness to the significance of the division of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders as well as power relations within the educational setting. For instance, when asked about his willingness to allow the students to embrace other varieties of English or learn about other cultures, Artin generally talked about how he saw his role as a teacher:

I say that well this is the book we have to teach anyway. As a teacher, I cannot design all the course materials according to my own taste. In my position as a teacher, I tell the kids, "See, this text is your book and this is my opinion. I have also asked for your opinion. Now let's discuss these things and see if we really reach a conclusion or not." I tell them our goal here is language learning, being able to express these discussions in English, learning new words, and having various discussions such as political and cultural discussions alongside it.

This narrative, from an activity systems viewpoint, alludes to the horizontal division of duties among the community members (Engeström, 2001). Artin is discussing his educational philosophy and his identity as a language teacher. In his role as a teacher, he strives to exercise agency and make progress in accordance with the goals he has set for himself in teaching English. The way he views his role as a teacher greatly influences his thinking and determines whether he is open to or resistant towards various ELT-related subjects like GE and critical pedagogy. It is worth noting that Artin was conducting research on critical pedagogy for his

MA thesis during the data collection period, which he said further impacted his willingness to incorporate GE-aware pedagogy into his teaching practice.

Marjan, on the other hand, critically contended that her liberation as a teacher was once violated by the supervisor of the educational institute. What follows is the second scenario Marjan depicted with regard to the use of L1, which is totally different from the first one discussed previously:

Our supervisor had previously come to observe my class once, even though I didn't speak Persian at all. Yes, the kids spoke Persian. She said the kids don't have the right to use L1. I told her that they had studied here for so many terms before me, and if they had sufficient knowledge, they could speak English; it's not a matter of me giving them permission. After all, I didn't care and continued with my work the way I wished.

In the previous scenario, Marjan said she totally banned the use of L1 in her classes. Comparing the two scenarios, one can conclude that while Marjan tried to abide by the institute's rule as much as she could, she had a different belief about the use of L1, which created cognitive dissonance resulting from the contradictions between her belief system and the supervisor's mandate – as a reflection of educational policies.

The above assertion suggests that teachers' cognition of teaching and, by implication, their practice are also influenced by how power is distributed among the members of the community, which alludes to Engeström's vertical division of status and power (Engeström, 2016). Although this assertion is broadly made about language teaching in general, one may argue that if there is an emphasis on incorporating GE perspectives in the curriculum, or if professional development programs prioritize global competencies, teachers' cognitions can be guided and influenced accordingly.

Overall, the results indicated that although Marjan acknowledged that topics related to GE were valid for discussion and inclusion in TTCs, she did not believe in using GE-informed teaching methods and did not apply its principles in her own teaching practice, except for utilizing the students' L1 which was indeed done to enhance the educational content. Various factors influenced her beliefs about GELT, including her limited knowledge and awareness of GE, the content taught during her formal education, her role model and personal experiences, the content of English coursebooks, her identity as a teacher, power dynamics within the school system, assessment criteria, educational and institutional norms and policies, as well the attitudes and expectations of parents and students.

In Artin's case, there were some differences in his approach. While he was aware of GE and GELT and made an effort to abide by GELT principles, like Marjan, he did not prioritize the use of different varieties of English in his classes. He also followed suit and used L1 as a scaffolding technique to improve his students' overall communicative competence. However, he did choose to teach various cultures in his classes, including the local culture of his students, British and American cultures, as well as the cultures of countries within the Outer and Expanding Circles. Artin's beliefs about the outcome of the activity system can be attributed to several factors: his ontogenetic development (formal education and personal beliefs/experiences), the cultural-historic context of the education system (MA program and lack of GE-related materials), the contradictions he faced and the solutions he sought thereof (e.g., renegotiating rules on L1 use), input from community members (TTCs and debriefing sessions), as well as his identity and agency as a language teacher.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

The philosophy underpinning the theoretical analysis of the present study was that language teachers' cognitions within the *activity* of language teaching are intricately connected to various aspects of their working environment, including their instructional goals and motives, the students they teach, their own status as non-native English speakers, the subject matter they teach, and the school they work in. Against this background, we aimed to investigate our participants' cognitions about GE and GE-oriented pedagogy, and how they implemented/did not implement such pedagogy in their teaching practices, using CHAT as an analytical framework.

Our findings revealed that within the context of the study, our teachers' belief system and cognitions were shaped by a complex interplay of personal, educational, social, institutional, contextual, cultural, and practical factors which were a situated reflection of cultural-historic, ontogenetic, and microgenetic domains of the sociocultural school of thought. Recognition of these influences can provide opportunities to support teachers in developing a comprehensive understanding of GE and promote inclusive and effective language instruction in the classroom. English teachers who teach English as a foreign language often have mixed emotions towards a language that they can't claim full ownership of but has been a significant part of their professional lives for a long time. Introducing a GE perspective into teacher education in these contexts is essential, but it comes with the difficulty of establishing environments, opportunities, experiences, and encounters for teachers who struggle with developing *glocal* identities (context-specific representations of a universal trend) as both language users and educators (Willans, 2021). Our findings corroborated this fact, revealing that while the teachers were different in the degree of their awareness of and familiarity with GE, they were hesitant to include different varieties of English in their classroom teaching. Drawing on a range of pedagogical strategies, often inspired by scholarly insights particularly in the case of Artin, the participants seemed to navigate the intricacies of language acquisition, cultural sensitivity (only witnessed in Artin's cognition and practice), and contextual relevance to create effective and engaging learning environments in their classes. Although we were able to spot some similarities across the pedagogical strategies employed by the two participants in the present study, the majority of the differences in their instructional practices seemed to embody their cognitions of GE. Both teachers, for instance, emphasized educating competent and proficient learners who can engage in intelligible communications in the future, and, consequently, their practices shared certain levels of emphasis on developing communicative skills. To be sure, their instructions differed in terms of linguistic aims, instructional strategies, and cultural considerations.

The results also highlighted the existing divide between theoretical ideas and real-world factors. It is important to acknowledge that the realm of professional disciplinary knowledge and the real-world domain, where problems are encountered, are fundamentally different (Widdowson, 2009). GE advocates, thus, must develop methods to bridge the gap between these two realms. This suggests that a more interactive process should stand in lieu of the prevailing hierarchic approach (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018) in GELT. This new approach would involve the people on both sides of the divide, including academics representing the disciplinary reality of the field on the one hand, and different stakeholders like parents, students, teacher educators, and supervisors representing the folk reality of ELT affairs on the other hand. Teachers often encounter cognitive dissonance as they find themselves caught in the middle, grappling with the disparity between these two factions. Having said that, however, all need to collaborate to address their concerns and limitations, aiming to find ways to effectively implement GE in English language classrooms. Without considering the input of

all these stakeholders, discussions about GE are likely to remain confined to the world of theory, rather than being put into practice in real educational environments.

Our data revealed that regular professional meetings with colleagues, engagement in discussions, sharing experiences, and receiving feedback from the community can expand teachers' understanding and influence their cognitions. This highlights the crucial role teacher education programs play in equipping aspiring teachers with the necessary knowledge and understanding of the intricacies involved in acquiring and teaching English (Sharma & Sievers, 2023). Therefore, adopting a reflective (Selvi & Yazan, 2021) and critical (Sharma & Sievers, 2023) approach to teacher education with an emphasis on different situated components of the English language teaching activity system, entailing practical, cognitive, learner, metacognitive, and critical elements (Akbari et al., 2010) can enhance teachers' understanding of GE and encourage them to opt for and implement GE-informed pedagogy. Accordingly, curricular reforms and the integration of diverse English varieties in teaching materials can contribute to enhancing teachers' cognitions of GE, fostering linguistic inclusivity and preparing students for the realities of a globalized world.

Alternatively, it can be questioned whether it is truly essential to synchronize ELT policies with the disciplinary reality in the Expanding Circle, considering the significant opposition to adopting GE by individuals who adhere to traditional language norms. In situations where GE-focused teaching has predominantly existed as “an ideological fantasy” rather than “a possible reality” (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018, p. 1), reverting to the conventional native speaker standard could potentially be a more favorable choice. As Widdowson (2009) elucidates, the crucial aspect of Applied Linguistics is that in order to address "real world problems," it cannot rely solely on a scientific or disciplinary standpoint; it cannot simply dismiss popular beliefs as misguided; instead, “it has to come to terms with them” (p. 30).

While the findings of the study are generally consistent with previous research in terms of the teachers' propensity for adopting native-standard-oriented instruction, it is important to be cautious when applying these findings to other regions of the country. This is because the study was conducted as a case study within a specific educational context and may not necessarily reflect the broader situation. Moreover, it is essential to investigate the status quo of GE and GE-aware pedagogy in other countries of the Expanding Circle. This inquiry is crucial in order to identify any theoretical flaws and inadequacies in GE-related debates and implement necessary measures to make GE suitable for classroom environments. Moreover, because of practical limitations, the study only included two novice teachers. However, conducting future longitudinal studies with a larger number of participants, including both novice and experienced teachers as well as native and non-native teachers could yield more intriguing findings. Additionally, we analyzed our data based on our understanding of the constituent components of the activity system under investigation. Similar future studies using CHAT as their theoretical framework might come up with different findings depending on how they define these components.

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