FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

NEGOTIATING ACCENT DIVERSITY: INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON NON-NATIVE ACCENT

Nadia Indah Safhira[1*] & Muhammad Handi Gunawan[2]
[1] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

*nadiaindahsaf@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

This study explores Indonesian EFL students' perceptions toward non-native English accents after exposure to Global Englishes materials and examines how they negotiate accent diversity with continuing native-speaker expectations. Although previous studies have examined attitudes toward English accents and have shown the potential of GE-oriented instruction to promote acceptance of accent diversity, limited attention has been given to how Indonesian EFL students who have received GE-related instruction perceive and negotiate non-native English accents. Employing a qualitative research design, data were gathered from undergraduate students in an English Language Education program at a public university in Bandung who had completed a Listening for Academic Purposes 2 course. Preliminary insights were collected through an open-ended questionnaire distributed to 22 students, followed by semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected participants to explore their viewpoints in greater depth. The data were analyzed thematically utilizing NVivo software. The study revealed that students generally recognized the legitimacy of diverse English accents and prioritized intelligibility over native-like pronunciation. However, exposure to GE did not completely eliminate preferences for native-speaker accents, which remained associated with prestige, attractiveness, and personal language-learning goals. Students therefore demonstrated an ongoing negotiation between their growing acceptance of accent diversity and their continued orientation toward native-speaker models. The findings suggest that GE exposure can support greater awareness of accent diversity, while native-speaker ideology may continue to shape students' perceptions and preferences. This study highlights the complexity of developing more inclusive perspectives toward non-native English accents in the Indonesian EFL context.

Keywords: Accent Insecurity, Global Englishes, Linguistic Ambivalence, Non-Native Accents, Student Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

English has become the most widely used language for global communication, particularly in education, media, and professional contexts (Ilyosovna, 2020). As a result, English is no longer used exclusively by native speakers, but increasingly by speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This global expansion has changed the way English is used and has given non-native English speakers an increasingly important role in shaping how

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

the language is spoken. As Kaur & Raman (2014) said that because of this global expansion, the linguistic landscape has shifted, and the number of non-native English users worldwide has vastly outnumbered native speakers. In this context, non-native English speakers can be understood as those for whom English is not their first language (Jenkins, 2012). Consequently, this quantitative demographic shift redefines what it means to be a competent speaker, moving the conversational focus away from traditional cultural hubs. In mapping out this evolution, Jenkins (2015) notes that this widespread use has resulted in diverse English accents shaped by the speakers' first languages and local identities. These new ways of speaking reflect where people come from, showing that the spread of English around the world does not mean giving up local accents.

In sociolinguistics, an accent is simply understood as a distinct way of pronouncing a language that is connected to a specific region, ethnicity, or community (Fitria, 2023). This localized pattern functions as an auditory signature, reflecting the shared historical and social background of a community. It shows how the phonological sounds and intonation of a speaker's native language naturally influence their pronunciation when they communicate in a foreign language (Lippi-Green, 2012). This phonetic influence is a systematic and predictable outcome of multilingualism rather than an accidental error. This massive increase of multilingual English users has brought a much-needed new perspective in English Language Teaching (ELT), commonly known as Global Englishes (GE). This movement reshapes the classroom space by encouraging educators to integrate diverse non-native variations into standard instructional tasks. When introducing this shift, Galloway and Rose (2015) emphasize that English no longer belongs only to native speakers, arguing that there is no single "correct" form of English because the language naturally varies across different cultures. This diverse perspective challenges classical pedagogies that measure correct language use against one geographical standard.

To understand this spread, Kachru's (1986) Three Concentric Circles Model provides a foundational framework for understanding the historical spread and sociolinguistic distribution of English worldwide. The model distinguishes English use into the Inner Circle, where English is traditionally used as a native language, the Outer Circle, where English has developed institutional functions in postcolonial contexts, and the Expanding Circle, where English is primarily learned as a foreign language. From this perspective, Indonesia is traditionally categorized within the Expanding Circle because English is primarily learned and used as an additional language rather than as an institutional or native language.

However, the model has also been discussed in relation to the increasingly diverse and dynamic use of English worldwide. Its categorization of English users may not fully capture the fluidity of contemporary English use, particularly as English is increasingly used as a lingua franca among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Al-Mutairi, 2020). Therefore, in this study, Kachru's model is used primarily as a contextual framework for understanding Indonesia's position within the global spread of English. The study further draws on a Global Englishes perspective to consider the diversity and legitimacy of different English varieties and non-native accents.

From the Global Englishes perspective, both the native-speaker model and the competent non-native speaker model are equally valid for learners in this context (Fang &

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

Widodo, 2019). This theoretical view treats intelligibility as the primary goal of language learning, which justifies the legitimacy of localized speech varieties. To support this idea, classroom interventions have been done worldwide to raise students' linguistic awareness (Galloway & Rose, 2017). These instructional practices aim to expose students to various accents, teaching them to listen to global varieties without judgment. To close this discussion, Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018) demonstrate that these progressive pedagogical movements are designed to help students build intercultural communication skills as global citizens. This pedagogical effort ensures that learners can successfully negotiate meaning in diverse transnational networks where localized speech patterns are the norm.

Despite this inclusive theory, English education in many EFL countries still strictly prioritizes native-speaker models like American and British English as the ideal targets (Yuwita & Ambarwati, 2023). This conservative approach creates a sharp divide between inclusive university lectures and rigid institutional expectations. In many classrooms, students are implicitly pressured to sound like native speakers, which wrongly positions non-native accents as deficient or incorrect. If left ignored, this preference can cause serious psychological issues for students, such as low self-confidence, language anxiety, and a deep reluctance to speak in class (Dirham, 2022). Moreover, as observed by Young and Walsh (2010), these accent-based judgments create a strict hierarchy that marginalizes local identities and affects how speakers are judged in terms of competence and credibility. This phonetic hierarchy functions as an institutional filter, unfairly lowering a speaker's authority based on external performance. In the Indonesian context, these judgments are constantly reinforced by deep-rooted societal beliefs that tie professional mastery strictly to native-like speech patterns.

Previous empirical studies show that introducing Global Englishes in the classroom can successfully build learners' confidence and create positive attitudes toward accent diversity (Boonsuk et al., 2021). These classroom lessons show that systematic pedagogical exposure can temporarily dismantle negative student responses to localized speech. In the Indonesian context, non-native English teachers also generally accept localized accents as a valid standard for communication and identity (Dirham, 2022). This local teaching community values functional clarity over native approximation, proving that academic circles understand the value of non-native identities. However, these developments do not necessarily indicate a complete shift away from native-speaker ideology. Furthermore, a crucial point is raised by Afra et al. (2024), whose recent work emphasizes that a student's accent preference is deeply tied to their personal identity, involving a complex interplay of regional heritage and individual agency. This internal attachment reflects how individual speakers navigate their cultural heritage while striving for global integration. However, a persistent problem is that native-speaker norms often remain deeply embedded in learners' personal goals, even when they intellectually know about diversity (Wang, 2016). This deep attachment demonstrates that classroom information alone cannot completely override the desire to conform to dominant global structures. Overall, these findings point to a tension between what learners know about English diversity and what they continue to value as an ideal form of English.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

This tension is consistent with the broader view of English as both an empowering resource and a hegemonic force. As Saarinen and Ennser-Kananen (2020) argue, English simultaneously functions as an empowering resource and a hegemonic force, meaning that discussions about accent are never just about language sounds; instead, they reflect deep institutional tensions tied to social, political, and cultural power dynamics. However, previous research has largely examined either learners' awareness of English diversity or their continued preference for native-speaker norms, leaving less attention to how these orientations coexist within the same learners. In the Indonesian university context, this is particularly important because students may recognize the legitimacy of non-native English accents while simultaneously regarding native-like pronunciation as a more desirable or credible model. Thus, the gap is not simply whether Indonesian EFL students accept accent diversity, but how they negotiate competing beliefs about English pronunciation, legitimacy, and proficiency after being exposed to Global Englishes.

To address this gap, this study explores Indonesian EFL students' perceptions toward non-native English accents after they have completed a Listening for Academic Purposes 2 course that incorporated Global Englishes content. . The primary objective of this research is to critically analyze how students conceptually perceive and evaluate the paradigm of Global Englishes when confronted with diverse global accents. By focusing on students who have received explicit exposure to Global Englishes, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Global Englishes awareness and native-speaker ideology. Rather than treating increased awareness as evidence of a straightforward shift away from native-speaker norms, the study conceptualizes students' perceptions as a process of negotiating competing beliefs about English pronunciation, legitimacy, and proficiency. Therefore, this research contributes to addressing this gap in the Indonesian ELT context by examining the cognitive readiness of EFL students to embrace Global Englishes while navigating persistent native-speaker norms.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore Indonesian EFL students' perceptions of non-native English accents. A qualitative approach was considered suitable because perceptions of language and accent were subjective and socially constructed, requiring in-depth exploration rather than numerical measurement (Creswell, 2012). This study utilized two data collection methods: an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was used to gather initial insights into students' perspectives, while the semi-structured interviews allowed for deeper exploration of their responses. This combination enabled the researcher to obtain both broad and detailed understandings of students' views toward non-native English accents.

This study was conducted at a public university in Bandung, Indonesia, involving undergraduate students from an English Language Education program. The research site and participants were selected based on specific purposive criteria: the students must had completed the Listening for Academic Purposes 2 course, which explicitly incorporated topics and materials on Global Englishes. This exposure ensured that the participants possessed the necessary theoretical background to reflect on diverse English accents.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

The initial stage of data collection was carried out through an open-ended questionnaire distributed to students who meet the research criteria. A total of 22 responses were collected and used as the primary dataset for preliminary analysis. As Creswell & Creswell (2018) stated that the open-ended format allowed participants to freely express their opinions and experiences without being limited by predefined answer choices.

Following the questionnaire stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six selected participants. In doing so, these semi structured interviews used a flexible interview guide (Galletta, 2013), allowing the researcher to follow predetermined questions and exploring other ideas in better depth. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling based on their questionnaire responses. As Nuralim et al. (2024) explain, purposive sampling required the researcher to identify and select people who meet specific criteria and eliminate those who do not align with the study's criteria. Specifically, participants were selected because their responses were particularly noteworthy and differed from those of other respondents in several ways, including their level of acceptance toward non-native English accents, preferences for native-speaker accents, and personal experiences with accent-related communication. These distinctive and contrasting responses allowed the researcher to explore a wider range of viewpoints and obtain richer, more in-depth accounts during the interviews. Specifically, participants were selected to represent varied perspectives, allowing the researcher to explore a range of viewpoints in greater depth. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research as it enables the selection of participants who can provide rich and relevant information aligned with the research objectives (Rose, 2019). All interviews were conducted with participants' consent, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. During the interviews, the researcher used guiding questions while also exploring emerging topics that arise during the discussion. To protect the participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms are used throughout the presentation and discussion of the findings. The pseudonyms do not represent the participants' real names and are used solely to maintain their anonymity.

Furthermore, the data from the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed together using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To manage and code the data, the researcher used NVivo software. The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher read the transcripts multiple times to understand the data. The questionnaire responses were analyzed first to select six students for the interviews. Next, data from both the questionnaire and interviews were coded and analyzed together in NVivo.

Next, relevant segments of both the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts were coded according to their meaning and relevance to the research questions. Initial codes were then compared across the dataset to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. Related codes were grouped into broader categories, which were subsequently reviewed and refined by repeatedly comparing them with the original responses to ensure that the categories remained grounded in the data and represented coherent patterns. This process also provided an audit trail of the coding and theme development, allowing the researcher to trace how the initial codes were developed into broader categories and themes. Through this process, the researcher developed five main themes: Intelligibility, Global Englishes, Native Ideology, Linguistic Ambivalence, and Accent Difficulty. Finally,

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

after presenting these findings, the researcher discussed the results and drew conclusions based on the obtained data and relevant studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis shows that Indonesian EFL students have complex views about non-native English accents. The findings reveal a clear paradox between what students learn and what they feel. On one hand, they academically support Global Englishes and value clear communication over perfect accents. On the other hand, they still face severe accent insecurity. This is due to the pressure to sound like native speakers in real-world situations. These conflicting dynamics are discussed in detail through the five themes.

Fostering Awareness of Global Englishes

The first theme from the data analysis highlights a shift in students' cognitive awareness regarding linguistic diversity. After completing the Listening for Academic Purposes 2 that explicitly introduces Global Englishes Frameworks, the participants demonstrated an understanding that English no longer belongs exclusively to its native speakers. In this context, English functions as a means of communication among people from different first language backgrounds (Jenkins, 2012). Instead, they view English as a dynamic global lingua franca where local identities and diverse accents are completely legitimate. This conceptual awakening is clearly reflected in the students' responses during the interviews. One participant emphasized the natural connection between accent and cultural background:

> *"I support Global Englishes. So, accent is not the main thing because the tongue and the way of speaking in every culture vary. We do not always have to follow native [standards]." (Dina)*

Based on this excerpt, it is evident that students recognize how geographical and cultural backgrounds naturally shape an individual's pronunciation. Rather than viewing these variations as linguistic errors or deficiencies, the participant accepts them as a natural outcome of multicultural communication. This mindset indicates that the classroom materials on Global Englishes are successful. They reduced the belief that native-speaker accents are the only acceptable way of speaking.

This stance was also supported by another student who explicitly encouraged a shift away from native-speaker norms:

> *"In fact, there is a theory about it, right? Global Englishes. In my opinion, we need to start breaking this [native-speaker stereotype] down slowly. We should no longer be highly affiliated with, what is it? With just one specific accent, like the British accent, for example." (Agi)*

This statement underlines a clear challenge against the dominance of standard varieties like British English. The participant's call to "start breaking this down slowly" reveals that the exposure to GE theory does not merely provide students with passive

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

knowledge. However, it actively empowers them to challenge preexisting linguistic biases that place native accents at the top of a perceived hierarchy.

These findings strongly align with previous studies exploring the impact of Global Englishes instruction in higher education. For instance, Johansen (2023) observed that engaging students in accent-related coursework not only improves their listening comprehension of unfamiliar accents but also deepens their understanding of the broader sociolinguistic dimensions of language usage. Similarly, Boonsuk et al. (2021) reported that a dedicated Global Englishes course fosters a much greater acceptance of English diversity and actively builds learners' confidence toward their own localized accents.

Furthermore, the pedagogical success observed in this classroom echoes the arguments of Fang and Ren (2018), who concluded that a Global Englishes-oriented curriculum changes student perceptions from a restrictive "native-speaker" ideal toward a more inclusive framework. By centering classroom discussions on communicative success and identity rather than forcing phonetic perfection, educational programs can effectively reduce students' linguistic anxiety and encourage tolerance for worldwide English varieties.

In conclusion, the data showed that the academic materials given in the classroom successfully equipped Indonesian EFL students with a mature, inclusive sociolinguistic awareness, allowing them to reject native-speaker standards in favor of mutual intelligibility and cultural authenticity.

Prioritizing Mutual Intelligibility over Accent

The second major theme identifies the students' strong orientation toward communicative function rather than phonetic perfection. The data show that a majority of the students cognitively understand that the primary objective of any language is the effective communication of meaning between speakers, regardless of differences in linguistic background. Rather than worrying about whether their speech mirrors a native model, they value clarity and the smooth exchange of information. This perspective was explicitly shared by one of the participants during the interview:

> *"As long as the pronunciation is clear. The purpose of communication is to convey ideas or thoughts. So, [accent] is not a problem as long as that goal is achieved." (Tania)*

As clearly demonstrated by this excerpt, students understand that the main purpose of effective communication lies in its clarity and intelligibility, remaining largely unbothered by the accent itself. As long as the interaction between speakers is conducted smoothly and mutual understanding is reached, phonetic variations are deemed irrelevant. This view of language usage was further stated by another participant:

> *"I think what matters is how we deliver [the message]. It is not about the accent, or, well, no, it is not [about that]." (Nala)*

This statement shares the exact same view as the previous one, reinforcing the idea that the clear delivery and the ability to explain ideas effectively are far more important than speaking with a particular accent. Consequently, an accent is not seen as a structural barrier to communication, but simply as a characteristic of speech.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

These insights closely align with what has been discussed by Ennser-Kananen et al. (2021). They argue that accent does not directly determine the actual intelligibility or understandability of speech, nor does it define a speaker's formal language proficiency. Instead, accent refers to pronunciation features that do not change the main meaning in the way that incorrect vocabulary, inappropriate prepositions, or the misuse of idiomatic expressions can. Because the participants prioritize understanding the intended message, they tend to view localized accents as effective and legitimate means of global communication.

Furthermore, this student perspective is highly consistent with empirical findings in the Indonesian EFL context. For instance, Dirham (2022) found that Indonesian non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) generally accept localized accents as a legitimate part of their linguistic identity and a valid standard for teaching. Like the students in this study, these educators prioritize effective communication and mutual understanding over the unrealistic native-like perfection

However, although students demonstrate cognitive understanding of English diversity, a compelling paradox emerges when examining their psychological desires. Despite their academic awareness of Global Englishes, linguistic hierarchies remain influential. The following section explores how deeply rooted native speaker ideologies still persist within the participants' personal motivations.

The Persistence of Native Speaker Ideology

Native speaker ideology refers to the belief that legitimate and correct English is primarily associated with people who speak English as their mother tongue, particularly those from traditionally English-speaking countries. Such an ideology can influence how native and non-native English speakers are perceived, particularly in English language teaching (ELT) contexts, including Indonesia (Adalta & Arsyad, 2023) . In this study, the persistence of this ideology is reflected in students' continued preference for native-speaker models despite their exposure to Global Englishes.

The third theme explores that exposure to Global Englishes does not completely erase internal preference to native-speaker models. Despite their academic understanding of linguistic equality, many participants still express a strong desire to sound like native speakers. One participant openly expressed this preference:

"But I want to sound like a native [speaker] because, in my opinion, it is cool." (Rina)

This statement demonstrates that, on an affective level, native-speaker accents carry a high level of social prestige value. Even when students understand that non-native accents are functionally adequate, they still associate native phonology with status and modern appeal. This finding directly aligns with Yuwita and Ambarwati (2023), who found that deep-rooted preferences for American or British English heavily persist due to the societal perception that native accents sound more prestigious, attractive, and professional. This psychological preference indicates that classroom lessons cannot easily clear away years of exposure to media and societal standards that glorify specific certain native English varieties.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

However, the desire to achieve a native-like accent is not solely based on social aesthetics; for some students, it serves as a practical goal for self-improvement and educational progress. Another participant explained that aiming for a native accent provides a psychological boost to elevate their language proficiency:

"I want to sound like a native speaker because I feel it drives me to improve my English level to match theirs. Although it might not be exactly the same, it triggers my motivation and enthusiasm to learn English." (Fara)

In this context, the native speaker accent is viewed as an aspirational goal that sparks motivation, rather than an oppressive standard. This shows that instead of being passively submissive to native-speaker ideology, students actively use the native model as a personal benchmark to drive their own learning progress." This double meaning shows that native standards do not always act as a negative force. Instead, students can actively remake these targets into a positive internal drive to practice harder. This perspective adds depth to our understanding of Global Englishes, proving that a learner can support linguistic diversity while choosing a native model as a personal learning target.

"I once read that having an accent similar to a native speaker makes it easier to get hired in certain places." (Tania)

Another thing that can be seen from students' perception about its potential professional value. For example, having native-like accent with better employment opportunities. Her statement suggests that her perception of native-like accents is influenced not only by their perceived attractiveness or their value as a learning model, but also by the belief that sounding more like a native speaker may provide advantages for future career opportunities. Importantly, the student framed this belief based on information she had previously encountered, rather than presenting it as her direct professional experience. This response may indicate that perceptions of native-like pronunciation can also be associated with expectations about future employment opportunities.

These findings suggest that native-speakaer ideology does not persist only because students passively accept native-speaker norms. Instead, some students actively attach personal value to native-like English, viewing it as a source of motivation, prestige, or potential social mobility. Thus, Global Englishes awareness may coexist with native speaker ideology rather than automatically replacing it.

In conclusion, while classroom pedagogy successfully builds cognitive respect for all English varieties, it does not fully eliminate the personal desire to sound native.

Navigating Students' Linguistic Ambivalence

The fourth theme captures the difficulty students experience when shifting from classroom theory to practical social realities. On one hand, the participants expressed a strong sense of pride and linguistic identity, This internal confidence was highlighted by a participant who noted the positive value of retaining one's native accent:

"Maintaining a bit of our original accent is often viewed positively as a form of authenticity." (Vero)

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

Another participant reinforced this stance, claiming a total absence of shame regarding their non-native accent:

"So, actually, there is never any shame with accents. Personally, I am very confident with my accent." (Rara)

These responses demonstrate that, within the supportive and inclusive environment of the classroom, students develop strong personal agency and positive perceptions of different accents. They recognize that their localized accent is not a defect, but a unique marker of identity. This finding aligns with Afra et al. (2024), who assert that accent preferences are deeply tied to identity, involving a complex interplay of social, cultural, and individual factors, including regional heritage and personal agency.

However, a contrast emerges when students encounter the rigid expectations of the real world. Despite their internal confidence, participants openly acknowledged that society routinely judges an individual's professional competence based purely on external native-like speech patterns rather than formalized test scores:

"Yes, because in reality, people will not look at what our TOEFL score is, or what this and that score are. Instead, they look at us based on how we speak [our accent]." (Dina)

This societal pressure becomes even more problematic when institutionalized within educational settings. One participant shared a frustrating contradiction they encountered during field experience, where educators themselves actively rejected Global Englishes principles:

"It is quite contradictory because what I found in the field is that there are still teachers who force [students], saying that when we speak, we must use a British accent." (Agi)

This fieldwork reality highlights a huge gap between what is taught at the university and the real-world expectations in schools. The fact that schoolteachers still insist on a British accent shows a strong institutional bias. As noted by Fang et al. (2022), many educators still view native speakers as the only ideal role model for language learning. This mindset treats "nativeness" as the ultimate goal, forcing students to modify or hide their authentic accents just to be accepted professionally.

This contradiction reflects a form of linguistic ambivalence among the participants. Although students demonstrated a greater appreciation of accent diversity after engaging with Global Englishes materials, they continued to navigate competing beliefs regarding what constitutes a desirable English accent. On the one hand, they recognized that all accents are legitimate representations of English and viewed their localized accent as an authentic marker of identity. On the other hand, they remained aware that native-like accents continue to be associated with prestige, professionalism, and linguistic competence in broader social and educational contexts.

Rather than indicating inconsistency, this ambivalence may be understood as the coexistence of multiple language ideologies that students perceive as equally valid. Jaspers (2020) argues that ambivalence often emerges when individuals are required to negotiate between competing values rather than fully committing to one perspective over another. In

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

the context of this study, participants appeared to balance the inclusive principles of Global Englishes with the persistent influence of native-speaker ideology that remains deeply embedded in educational institutions and societal expectations.

A similar phenomenon was identified by Gabanamotse and Batibo (2016), who found that language users frequently experience tension between maintaining their linguistic identity and pursuing linguistic forms associated with wider social mobility and acceptance. While the participants in this study expressed pride in their own accents, they also acknowledged that professional opportunities and social judgments are often influenced by native-oriented standards. Consequently, students were not rejecting Global Englishes perspectives; rather, they were actively negotiating between personal linguistic authenticity and the social realities that continue to privilege native-like speech.

This theme reveals a deep linguistic ambivalence among Indonesian EFL students. While they are personally ready and confident to embrace their own localized accents, they remain constrained by educational and societal structures that continue to privilege native-speaker norms. The findings suggest that exposure to Global Englishes can foster greater acceptance of accent diversity; however, transforming long-standing language ideologies within broader educational systems may require more than classroom-level interventions. The persistence of native-speaker expectations indicates that students are not merely learning new perspectives about language, but are also negotiating complex tensions between identity, authenticity, and professional legitimacy.

This ambivalence should not necessarily be understood as inconsistency in students' beliefs. Rather, it reflects how students negotiate between their recognition of accent diversity and their perceptions of the social expectations attached to English in educational and professional contexts. In this sense, Global Englishes awareness may provide students with an alternative perspective, while broader social and institutional expectations can continue to shape how they evaluate and use English.

Managing Technical and Phonetic Difficulties

The final theme addresses the practical and technical challenges students face when listening to unfamiliar accents. Beyond the social and psychological pressures, certain phonetic variations present real barriers to immediate comprehension. As noted by Buck (2001), accent is a significant variable that can heavily affect listening comprehension. This difficulty was clearly shared by a participant when dealing with strong native varieties:

> *"For example, a British accent that is heavily British. Honestly, when it is like that, I find it a bit difficult to catch the meaning, and sometimes I choose not to talk much because I am afraid of misunderstanding." (Rara)*

Another participant echoed this sentiment, explaining that unfamiliar accents directly hinder their understanding:

> *"If the accent is difficult, I cannot hear it properly, so I do not understand what the speaker is trying to say." (Vero)*

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

These excerpts show that when an accent is too thick or unfamiliar, it creates linguistic problems, causing students to withdraw from communication out of fear of making mistakes.

Despite these comprehension difficulties, students actively employ personal strategies to overcome their comprehension difficulties. One participant emphasized the importance of self-exposure and familiarity:

> *"We really have to study it and become familiar with it first. Only then can we understand it. The best way is by familiarizing ourselves [with the accent]." (Fara)*

Additionally, students utilize digital features to manage listening difficulties when engaging with multimedia materials:

> *"For instance, if the accent in a video is too fast or hard to understand, I usually slow down the playback speed to 0.75 or 0.8 so I can comprehend it. Or otherwise, I will just not watch it at all." (Rara)*

These practical solutions show that students do not just passively struggle with diverse accents. Instead, they use active learning strategies such as adjusting technology and building personal familiarity. These adaptive behaviors suggest that students view accent-related comprehension difficulties as manageable challenges rather than permanent obstacles. Instead of perceiving unfamiliar accents as evidence of linguistic deficiency, participants demonstrated a willingness to modify their learning approaches to facilitate understanding. This finding suggests a shift from focusing on accuracy to focusing on effective communication, where understanding the message becomes more important than immediate comprehension. Through repeated exposure and strategic use of technological support, students gradually develop greater listening flexibility and confidence when encountering diverse English varieties. Such experiences may also contribute to their ability to engage more effectively in multilingual and multicultural communication settings where accent variation is a natural part of language use.

While technical and phonetic difficulties can temporarily disrupt their comprehension, students show great resourcefulness. They proactively use digital tools and continuous exposure to bridge the gap between accent difficulty and successful understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a clear sociolinguistic paradox among Indonesian EFL students regarding non-native English accents. Culturally and cognitively, the Global Englishes curriculum successfully teaches students to value mutual intelligibility and respect diverse accents. However, in real-world situations, students still face heavy accent insecurity because schools and society continue to demand strict conformity to native standards like a British accent. While students creatively use digital tools to overcome technical listening difficulties, this research moves the scientific field forward by exposing a severe gap: university classrooms are ready for linguistic diversity, but the actual educational ecosystem is not. Because this study only observed a small group of 22 students at one university, these localized findings cannot be broadly generalized to all EFL contexts.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

Based on these findings, future educational practices and research should focus on bridging this pedagogical gap. For curriculum developers, Global Englishes principles could be incorporated into pronunciation and listening materials by including a wider range of English accents and emphasizing intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation as the main goal. Teacher education programs could also provide training on Global Englishes to help teachers critically reflect on native-speaker norms and avoid presenting a single accent as the only appropriate model. For future studies, researchers should expand the sample size across multiple universities to explore if this linguistic ambivalence happens on a larger scale.

REFERENCES

Adalta, F. A., & Arsyad, S. (2023). Native-speakerism ideology among EFL students in english language learning and teaching: A survey study. *Journal of English for Specific Purposes in Indonesia*, *2*(2), 108–114. https://doi.org/10.33369/espindonesia.v2i2.28051

Afra, F. T., Noni, N., & Muhayyang, M. (2024). EFL learners' perception of non-native speakers' accent and identity in English Education Study Program Universitas Negeri Makassar. *Journal of Excellence in English Language Education*, *3*(3), 427–433.

Al-Mutairi, M. (2020). Kachru's three concentric circles model of english language: An overview of criticism & the place of kuwait in it. *English Language Teaching*, *13*(1), 85–88. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p85

Boonsuk, Y., Ambele, E. A., & McKinley, J. (2021). Developing awareness of global Englishes: Moving away from "native standards" for Thai university ELT. *System*, *99*, Article 102511. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102511

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732959

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dirham, U. R. (2022). English as a lingua franca: Perceptions of Indonesian non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) on English pronunciation and accents identity. *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching*, *7*(1), 105–114. https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v7i1.12992

Ennser-Kananen, J., Halonen, M., & Saarinen, T. (2021). "Come join us, and lose your accent!": Accent modification courses as hierarchization of international students. *Journal of International Students*, *11*(2), 322–340. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11i2.1640

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN: 2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

Fang, F., & Ren, W. (2018). Developing students' awareness of Global Englishes. *ELT Journal*, *72*(4), 384–394. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy012

Fang, F., & Widodo, H. P. (Eds.). (2019). *Critical perspectives of global Englishes in Asia: Language policy and curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment*. Multilingual Matters

Fang, F., Widodo, H. P., & Elyas, T. (2022). Guest editors' introduction: Critical global englishes in language education. *Asian Englishes*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2022.2076027

.Fitria, T. N. (2023). Javenglish (when Javanese speak English with a Javanese accent): An analysis of social media posts. *Widyaparwa*, *51*(2), 453–468. https://doi.org/10.26499/wdprw.v51i2.1189

Gabanamotse-Mogara, B., & Batibo, H. M. (2016). *Ambivalence regarding linguistic and cultural choices among minority language speakers: A case study of the Khoesan youth of Botswana.* African Study Monographs, 37(3), 103–115. https://doi.org/10.14989/216688

Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9780814732939.001.0001

Galloway, N. (2017). *Global Englishes and change in English language teaching: Attitudes and impact*. Routledge.

Galloway, N., & Rose, H. (2015). *Introducing global Englishes*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315734347.

Ilyosovna, N. (2020). The importance of English language. *International Journal on Orange Technologies*, *2*(1), 22–24.

Jaspers, J. (2020). Linguistic dilemmas and chronic ambivalence in the classroom: Introduction. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1733586

Jenkins, J. (2012). English as a Lingua Franca from the classroom to the classroom. *ELT Journal*, *66*(4), 486–494. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccs040

Jenkins, J. (2015). *Global Englishes* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Johansen, A. (2023). Accent on openness: Reflection on diversity through accent work. In *De nouvelles stratégies relationnelles dans un monde connecté: Une approche linguistique et interculturelle* (pp. 157–173). Presses des MINES – TRANSVALOR.

Kachru, B. B. (1986). *The alchemy of English: The spread, functions and models of non-native Englishes*. University of Illinois Press.

Kaur, P., & Raman, A. (2014). Exploring native speaker and non-native speaker accents: The English as a lingua franca perspective. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *155*, 253–259. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.288

(cc) BY

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Copyright © The Author(s)
Vol. 7, No. 4, October 2026
***e*-ISSN**: **2723-4126**
***p*-ISSN**: **2776-8880**

Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203348802

Nuralim, N., Rizky, M. S., & Aguspriyani, Y. (2024). Teknik pengambilan sampel purposive dalam mengatasi kepercayaan masyarakat pada Bank Syariah Indonesia. *Musytari: Neraca Manajemen, Akuntansi, Dan Ekonomi*, *3*(2), 11–20.

Rose, H. (2019). Researching English as an international language. In G. Barkhuizen (Ed.), *Qualitative research topics in language teacher education* (p. 6). Routledge.

Saarinen, T., & Ennser-Kananen, J. (2020). Ambivalent english: What we talk about when we think we talk about language. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, *19*(3), 115. https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.581

Wang, Y. (2016). Native English speakers' authority in English. *English Today*, *32*(1), 35–40. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078415000516

Young, T. J., & Walsh, S. (2010). Which English? Whose English? An investigation of 'non-native' teachers' beliefs about target varieties. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *23*(2), 123–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908311003797627

Yuwita, M. R., & Ambarwati, N. D. (2023). Exploring university students' attitudes towards their English accent and native English accents. *Linguistics and Literature Journal*, *4*(1), 21–27.