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"I Didn't Know There Were So Many Ways to Speak English": Developing Global Englishes Awareness Among Colombian Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines what happened when Global Englishes (GE)–informed pedagogy was brought into a public secondary school in Boyacá, Colombia, and how it shaped students' understandings of English. Working within an interpretivist paradigm and borrowing elements from action research and classroom-based research, we taught six GE-informed sessions to 17 tenth-grade students in the school's English major. Data came from an entry survey (ES), students' reflections (SRs), and focus group discussions (FGDs), and were analyzed through bottom-up qualitative content analysis. At the start, most participants tied English to Inner Circle countries and to native-speaker norms. After the sessions, they spoke of English as a global language, recognized more of its diversity, and began to talk about ownership of English as something shared. These newer views did not replace the older ones, though. They sat alongside beliefs about correctness and about the need for a stable reference variety that students had picked up over years of schooling. GE-informed pedagogy, we argue, can open space for critical awareness of English as a global resource, but the change it produces in learners' language ideologies is slow, uneven, and at times contradictory.

Keywords: English as a global language; global Englishes; global south; learners' attitudes; secondary school

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Introduction

Understandings of English have changed considerably. For a long time, English was tied to Anglo-Saxon cultures because of the history of inner circle nations. Today, however, English is increasingly understood through a more plural framework that takes linguistic diversity as its starting point (Boonsuk, 2025). Global Englishes (GE) along with other paradigms that favor language variation (León, 2018), have emerged from this shift as a way to account for the many ways in which English is used around the world.

Rose and Galloway (2019) define GE as "an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and users in a globalized world" (p. 4). In broad terms, GE combines principles of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL), World Englishes (WE), translanguaging, and the multilingual turn (Rose & Galloway, 2019) as it seeks to transforms practices within and outside classroom contexts. In other words, whereas related paradigms such as ELF and WE have focused primarily on describing and legitimizing language variation, GE places stronger emphasis on pedagogical action, offering practical ways to challenge Anglo-centric assumptions about English.

Although GE offers practices that can positively transform English language education (Canagarajah, 2013; Fang & Xu, 2022) little research in Colombia has explored its transformative potential in secondary education. In Colombia, as in many other contexts, English language teaching still tends to reward native-like proficiency and Western norms (Matsuda, 2002). There is, then, a mismatch between what GE scholarship proposes and what happens in classrooms, which calls for frameworks are needed that bring GE principles into everyday teaching.

Considering the aforementioned aspects, this study examines how Colombian secondary school respond to GE-informed classroom sessions. More specifically, we sought to understand whether these sessions raised students' awareness of the diversity of English and whether they changed students' views on what counts as a legitimate speaker and what counts as communicative competence. The research question that guided the current study was: How do Colombian secondary school students respond to Global Englishes-informed sessions?

Literature Review

Global Englishes and the Shift from Monocentric to Pluricentric Perspectives in ELT

Rose and Galloway (2019) theorize Global Englishes as "an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and users in a globalized world" (p. 4). GE builds on earlier work on language variation, especially ELF, EIL, and WE, and it also takes up more recent ideas such as translanguaging and the multilingual turn (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Although these paradigms come from different theoretical traditions, they agree on one point: the Anglo-centric assumptions that have guided English language teaching need globally to be challenged. GE thus sees English as owned and defined by speech communities who use in different extents and for different purposes and gives weight to the role of speakers in expanding and outer circle contexts in shaping how the language develops (Boonsuk, 2025; Prabjandee & Fang, 2022).

It is necessary to clarify that even though GE advocate for language variation, it does not mean that GE accept any form of English uncritically. The overall target is to influence educational systems to acknowledge the existence and usage of other types of English or Englishes that have been historically overlooked. In other words, it invites English teacher and the whole academic community not to focus on native speaker models and standards any longer but to develop among students and users intelligibility, adaptability, and intercultural communication, that is, tools that can help them navigate deriving from scenarios where English is the preferred communicative tool.

Such a move from a monocentric to a pluricentric view of English is especially relevant in expanding circle countries like Colombia, where ELT has long followed native speaker standards. Colombians who use English are much more likely to talk with other non-native speakers than with native speakers, yet classrooms still tend to hold up inner-circle varieties as the model. This can feed negative attitudes toward non-native varieties and marginalize speakers whose English departs from standard norms. Put in other terms, GE-informed pedagogies may help close the distance between what is taught and how people actually communicate. When learners work with different varieties of English and are encouraged to be more open toward linguistic diversity, they are arguably better prepared for communication in a multilingual and interconnected world (Boonsuk, 2025; Jenkins, 2007; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

GE Research in Colombia and Beyond

Research on GE is not new, but interest in it has grown in recent years, and GE-informed pedagogies have been tried in many parts of the world. In Japan, Galloway and Rose (2018) undertook a study with Japanese learners of English with the intention of examining the potential impact that bringing GE to the fore could have on the students' views concerning English. By promoting a classroom-based intervention, participants were invited to select one of the English varieties from the three circles available to them and make a series of student-led presentations centered on the phonological, lexical, and discursive distinctions of each of the varieties. By using a series of written reflections and by fostering critical reflective engagement with the varieties presented, Galloway and Rose (2018) were able to determine that whereas at the beginning of the tasks the participants had a rather scarce degree of knowledge related with GE, after the gradual exposure to this intervention, they developed a significant level of awareness in relation to the aforementioned dimension. Concretely, the study suggested that a continuous engagement with GE modified pedagogies have the chance to raise awareness about the multiplicity of English. This particular finding was reaffirmed in the study by Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) who concluded that bringing global English varieties to language education presents several benefits. New and more realistic perspectives towards English, and a renewed sense of legitimacy as non-native speakers are some of the most salient elements that seem to have been reported as a result of this research.

In Singapore, Rose and Galloway (2017) used debates and reflective writing to explore how university students saw the government's "Speak Good English Movement." Rose and Galloway (2017) implemented, in the Singaporean setting, a multi lesson debate task consisting of structured public debates, and student reflective writing tasks, to raise awareness about the "Speak good English movement" taking place nationwide. The study, developed in the context of 108 universities of the country, held interesting results. Rose and Galloway (2017) found that while the "Speak good English movement" was being highly promoted principally by the Singaporean government and other stakeholders like its respective Ministry of Education, the students did not feel comfortable with the idea of supporting such a movement. On the contrary, they reported that speaking what has been labeled as Singaporean English, or Singlish, which is a mixture of English with indigenous languages of the territory, represents their national identity as local speakers of the English language. This study, therefore, raised issues of cultural and linguistic identity while also questioning the legitimacy of native speakers of English.

In Thailand, Boonsuk (2025) found that GE awareness workshops led students and teachers to rethink native-speaker ideologies and to focus instead on meaningful, intelligible communication. In Chinese mainland, Fang and Ren (2018) reported that an undergraduate course on "English as a World Language" made students considerably more confident about their own accents and more appreciative of linguistic diversity. In Nepal, Dhami and Prabjandee (2024) found that graduate students were increasingly rejecting standard language ideologies and preferring communication models oriented to interaction with English users worldwide. In Taiwan, Chang (2014) observed that working with WE topics led students to question native-speaker benchmarks and accept more plural norms. Furthermore, in Indonesia, Kusumaningputri (2020) brought TED Talks by non-native speakers into university classrooms to build sensitivity toward non-standard varieties, though the study also documented how persistent internalized linguistic hierarchies can be.

Something similar has happened in Colombia, where GE research has overlapped with related approaches such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), WE, ELF, and EIL. Although these come from different theoretical traditions, Colombian scholars tend to use them for the same purposes: to question native-speakerist assumptions, to argue for context-sensitive pedagogy, and to make the sociolinguistic diversity of English more visible.

Macías (2010) is regarded as one of the first Colombian scholars to argue for a perspective close to GE. He called for moving past the native/non-native dichotomy, for teaching practices sensitive to context, and for ELT materials developed locally. Vélez-Rendón (2003) had earlier described English in Colombia from a WE perspective, but it was Macías (2010) who explicitly asked for a more plural understanding of English in Colombian ELT. More recent work has taken the discussion further. Parra-Báez (2021), Mosquera-Pérez (2022), and Losada-Rivas (2023) examined what GE means for assessment, teacher education, professional development, and a view of bilingualism that goes beyond market-oriented skills. González (2024) found that bringing GE perspectives into classroom practice made learners more aware of the global diversity of English and strengthened their sense of legitimacy as users. Torres-García (2018) and Pulgarín-Pérez (2023), on the other hand, reported that pre-service and in-service teachers often still prefer native varieties because of the global prestige attached to them. This mixed picture suggests that GE-informed pedagogies can challenge settings historically shaped by American or British English and by the legacy of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), but that taking up a GE perspective also requires teachers and learners to change their attitudes (León, 2018).

Classroom interventions in Colombia that put GE principles into practice have produced encouraging results. In Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024), pre-service teachers gave presentations on varieties of English, which broadened their understanding of the language and helped them see themselves as legitimate users. Mosquera-Pérez (2025) looked at the design of GE-aware teaching materials and showed that they can encourage plural perspectives and a stronger sense of ownership of English, although choosing varieties and designing materials remained difficult. Mora (2022) and Vargas Arévalo (2025) likewise argue that GE-informed practices could change ELT in Colombia by encouraging ecological, context-sensitive approaches that draw on local languages and cultures.

GE research in Colombia is still a young field, but it is increasingly seen as a useful framework for understanding and teaching English, one that can help Colombian ELT move past native-speakerist norms and traditional EFL approaches toward more inclusive and locally grounded practice. What stands out, however, is that most GE-informed interventions so far, both abroad and in Colombia, have involved teachers or university students (e.g., Chang, 2014; Dhami & Prabjandee, 2024; Fang & Ren, 2018; Kusumaningputri, 2020; Pulgarín-Pérez, 2023; Rose & Galloway, 2017; Torres-García, 2018). Secondary school learners have received much less attention, especially in Colombia, even though adolescence is when learners' ideas and attitudes about English are still taking shape. This study addresses that gap by examining how GE-informed pedagogy shapes the perceptions of Colombian secondary school students.

Methodology

We worked within an interpretivist paradigm, which suits research concerned with how people make sense of their experience. The study also drew on action research and classroom-based research, since we set out to engage with, and intervene in, the dynamics of an existing classroom. Action research is often linked to solving problems in schools, but we did not see this classroom as deficient. We combined the two approaches in a hybrid design, with the aim of unsettling some classroom routines and changing them for the better. Nor are we claiming that Colombian ELT has failed; it has done a great deal to expand English teaching and learning across very different settings. Our point is that, although ELT in Colombia works, some dimensions, particularly those raised by GE, deserve more attention, and combining action research with classroom-based research gave us room to try out other perspectives and practices within the existing system.

Context and Participants

The study took place in a public secondary school in Boyacá, Colombia. At the end of 9th grade, students at this school choose a specialization: Accounting, Spanish, a technical program (e.g., Marketing), or English. The English major was the setting for this study.

Seventeen 10th-grade students in the English major took part. They have about five hours of English a week, are between 14 and 17 years old, and most come from rural areas. We used purposive sampling (Marshall, 1996), choosing students for their academic profile and their relevance to the research focus. The choice also had a practical side: the teacher wanted to introduce GE, and the students were keen to try something new.

Parents or guardians gave informed consent, after which students gave their assent and took part in the activities. Students were told that participating would have no effect on their grades. All procedures followed ethical standards for research with minors. Because the study was carried out independently and did not require formal institutional review, approval from an ethics committee was not applicable.

Table 1
Profile of the participants

Participants	*Age*	*Gender*	*Home Region*
Student 1 (S1)	15	Female	San José de Pare (Urban area)
Student 2 (S2)	17	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 3 (S3)	15	Female	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 4 (S4)	15	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 5 (S5)	16	Female	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 6 (S6)	15	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 7 (S7)	15	Male	San José de Pare (Urban area)
Student 8 (S8)	16	Female	San José de Pare (Urban area)
Student 9 (S9)	14	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 10 (S10)	15	Female	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 11 (S11)	16	Female	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 12 (S12)	16	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 13 (S13)	15	Female	San José de Pare (Urban area)
Student 14 (S14)	15	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 15 (S15)	15	Female	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 16 (S16)	15	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)
Student 17 (S17)	16	Male	San José de Pare (Rural area)

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Data Collection Instruments

Entry survey (ES)

The first instrument was an entry survey, which we used to get a sense of participants' perceptions of and attitudes toward English before the GE-informed sessions began. It had 14 multiple-choice and 4 open-ended questions, written both to capture students' initial views of English and to bring to the surface the ideologies that might lie behind them. We also wanted to know whether students had encountered GE in earlier English classes. Although the survey was mainly exploratory, it also served as students' first contact with GE ideas, since several questions dealt with the uses, functions, and global status of English.

Global Englishes awareness workshops (GEAWs)

The second instrument was a six-session intervention (see Table 2) designed to raise students' awareness of English as a global language. The sessions dealt with personal trajectories in learning English, English in a global context, an introduction to GE, GE in popular culture, exposure to varieties of English, and Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT). Each two-hour session was built around a workshop that put its objectives into practice, using multimodal resources and situated tasks that had students engage with different varieties of English and reflect critically on their assumptions about the language. The school granted access, but we designed and taught all sessions and materials ourselves, as Boonsuk (2025) did in Thailand. How students took part in the workshops also gave us early clues about how they understood varieties of English and GE concepts, which their oral and written reflections later expanded on.

Table 2
Distribution of the sessions

Session	Focus	Aims	Hours	Key Instructional Activities	Expected Learning Outcomes
1–2	Exploring personal trajectories in English learning and contextualizing English as a global language	Encourage reflection on personal English learning histories; identify assumptions about English use; introduce English as a global and pluricentric language	2 hours	Students discuss how and where they use English beyond the classroom and reflect on learning experiences, challenges, and successes. Through guided questioning, the teacher elicits assumptions about where English is spoken worldwide. Learners collaboratively mark these contexts on a world map. The teacher then expands the discussion by highlighting English use in non-native and local contexts (e.g., Colombia, San Andrés Creole), supported by visual aids, slogans, and local brand names that illustrate English use in multilingual and contact settings.	Identify and articulate prior beliefs about English learning and use; recognize English as a global, pluricentric language; locate and describe diverse sociolinguistic contexts in which English functions.
3	Introducing core concepts of Global Englishes	Introduce foundational ideas from GE and ELF; challenge native-speaker-centered norms	2 hours	A brainstorming activity prompts students to identify countries they could potentially visit using English, leading to	Demonstrate initial understanding of GE and ELF principles;

				the introduction of ELF. Students watch short videos on ELF and GE, supported by teacher input emphasizing that most English interactions today occur among non-native speakers. A guided written reflection based on a video of Karol G speaking English addresses accent, correctness, identity, and emotional responses as English learners.	question deficit views of accented English; reflect critically on language, identity, and legitimacy.
4	Global Englishes in popular culture	Examine representations of English varieties in media and reflect on attitudes toward accent diversity	2 hours	Working in small groups, students selected short clips (1–3 minutes) from films, television shows, interviews, or online media featuring diverse English accents. Groups introduce the context of their chosen clips and present them to the class. Guided discussion focuses on accent features, intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, identity, and personal reactions. Each group produces a brief written synthesis shared on a collaborative digital Padlet.	Analyze representations of global English varieties in media; reflect on how portrayals shape attitudes toward English use; value linguistic diversity as a communicative resource.
5	Exposure to Global English varieties	Raise awareness of diverse Englishes and foster appreciation of accent diversity and intelligibility	2 hours	Students listen to curated video samples featuring Brazilian, Jamaican, Korean, Canadian, and Indian Englishes. In small groups, they discuss intelligibility, affective responses, perceived difficulty, and identity representation. Individually, students select an additional English variety to research and create a short explanatory video addressing reflective prompts related to legitimacy, communication, identity, and pedagogical relevance.	Describe linguistic, cultural, and social features of selected English varieties; critically reflect on intelligibility and speaker identity; recognize the legitimacy of multiple Englishes in global communication.
6	EFL- and GELT-oriented pedagogies	Contrast EFL and GELT perspectives and connect GE awareness to future ELT practices	2 hours	The course concludes with a whole-class reflection guided by questions addressing changes in students' understanding of English,	Articulate changes in perceptions of English and English teaching; connect GE

	implications for teaching, and challenges of implementing GE-informed practices. As a final task, students produce a short-written reflection titled "My English, Our English," shared on a reflection wall and focusing on personal meanings of English, future aspirations, and respect for linguistic diversity.	principles to inclusive and equitable ELT practices; envision pedagogical applications of Global Englishes.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Students' reflections (SRs)

Students' reflections were collected in writing and orally. Using both formats gave us more complete accounts of what students were learning and experiencing as they moved through the tasks. After each session, we asked participants what they had taken from the activities. In both formats the questions were open-ended, which gave us a baseline against which to trace possible shifts in how students understood GE. The questions asked about the tasks and the varieties covered in each session, and also about students' developing beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes regarding English use, linguistic legitimacy, and language diversity in general.

Focus group discussions (FGDs)

We then held focus group discussions to follow up on what students had said in their written and oral reflections. There were three focus groups of about one hour each. Although students in the English major are fairly exposed to English, the discussions were held in Spanish so they could express themselves fully. This follows Boonsuk's (2025) suggestion that letting participants use their first language in focus groups lowers anxiety and leads to more open discussion. Questions were built from participants' earlier reflections, so that each stage of data collection followed from the one before. The discussions gave us a fuller and evolving picture of how students saw GE, including their past experiences of learning English, how they perceived different accents, and whether hearing speakers of other varieties made them less anxious about using English themselves.

Data analysis

We analyzed the data using qualitative content analysis to identify patterns in participants' experiences of the GE-informed sessions. Coding was bottom-up, so themes came from the data rather than from a predefined list (Creswell & Clark, 2011). We began with the workshop materials and students' written and oral reflections and then transcribed the focus group recordings. Participants checked the transcripts for accuracy, and we then translated them into English, taking care to keep what students meant.

Initial codes were generated directly from the English transcripts and then grouped into broader categories that showed how codes related to one another and what participants had experienced. Themes unrelated to the focus of the study were set aside. Four main themes emerged (see Findings), which we arranged into two broad categories: participants' views of GE before and after the intervention. Because the analysis was concerned with content, we did not consider discourse features such as tone, intonation, or pauses.

We addressed trustworthiness through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. For credibility, we used member checking and triangulated data across workshops, reflections, and focus groups (Creswell & Clark, 2011). For intra-coder reliability, the data were re-coded after two weeks (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Transferability, dependability, and confirmability were supported by detailed descriptions of the context and a transparent record of the analytic process (Boonsuk, 2025; Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010).

Findings

Expanding Understandings of English as a Global Language

The first finding is connected to participants' expanding understandings of English. After the interventions carried out, it seems that participants point to a shift in how they thought about English as a global language. Explicitly, before the intervention, 13 of the 17 participants appeared to associate the English language with traditionally dominant English-speaking countries, particularly with the United States and the United Kingdom, indicating that prior to the sessions participant held a limited view of geographical and cultural boundaries in regard to English. However, as the GE sessions took place, participants started to show a wider awareness of English as a language used in different parts of the world.

This change in participants' views toward English appear in comments done after the workshops and activities as the excerpts from S7, S12, and S5 show. For example, one of them held that: "*I thought English mainly belonged to countries like the United States or England, but I didn't realize how many people around the world actually use it every day*" (S7 – ES). In other terms, becoming familiar with English being used in different parts of the world seems to have led students to revisit their earlier assumption that the language belonged to particular countries.

This idea was reinforced by another participant who mentioned that after listening to speakers from different linguistic and cultural background he had a wider view of English as a global language. Concretely, "*Listening to people from different countries speaking English made me understand that English is really global*" (S12 – SR). As just seen, for this participant context contact with diverse English users made him reflect about the shared role of English as a language of global communication.

Other comments made by participants went in a similar direction. One student argued for example that "*I did not know that so many countries use English in their own way. I thought it was only the same English that people speak in the United States or Britain*" (S5 – FGD). These types of comments suggest that in general terms the sessions helped participants see that English is used in many regions of the world and that it can reflect the linguistic and cultural background of its users.

Taken together, these insights indicate that the intervention helped students broaden their view beyond native speaker frameworks. In other words, beyond seeing English as belonging to a particular set of countries, participant became aware of the fact that nowadays English is used by many people from different contexts and regions of the globe.

Still, what students noticed was mostly the geographical spread of English. Their reflections said little about the more complex sociolinguistic questions of ownership, legitimacy, or power. In this sense, the findings capture an early stage of GE awareness: learners begin to see that English is

everywhere, but a deeper critical understanding of the social and ideological forces around the language is still developing.

Developing Awareness of English Varieties

Besides developing awareness of the current global role of English, after the interventions, participants also developed a higher awareness that English has many varieties. While reflections initially provided by participants suggested that 13 of the 17 participants knew mainly the dominant varieties, that is, American and British English, participants' reflections after their engagement with the interventions suggested that they had also developed a growing sense of awareness of accents and forms of English from different regions of the world. For instance, as S4 suggested "*Before these sessions, I didn't know there were so many ways to speak English*" (S4 – SR). The intervention, thus, appears to have provided participants with access to varieties they had rarely been exposed to in their classroom.

In a similar manner, following the set of interventions that took place another participant stressed that diversity does not have to get in the way of communication. Particularly, this student mentioned that "*I learned that people from many countries speak English differently, but they can still communicate with each other*" (S15 – FGD). Then, as seen in this comment, variation is now understood by the participant not as an obstacle but as a normal part of English in global communication.

Other reflections made by participants also show that being exposed to materials and interventions addressing English varieties also allowed them to notice how English not only shapes but is also shaped by linguistic and cultural settings of the regions it enters. Explicitly, one participant noticed: "*When we listened to people from different countries, their accents sounded different, but it was interesting to see how English changes depending on where people come from*" (S8 – SR). Comments like this one demonstrate that exposing students to hearing real example of the usage of English helped them to become aware of the fact that English is a language with a lot of linguistic diversity. This awareness, however, does not seem to have replaced older preferences toward English, as exemplified in the following data retrieved from participant 10, who claimed that "*It's interesting to hear different accents, but I think the American accent is still easier to understand*" (S10 – ES). Overall, although this particular participant accepts now that there are many forms and ways of using English, he thinks that a dominant variety, American English in this case, is still the easiest one to understand. This might happen, however, because American English is the variety this student has been more exposed to during his educational trajectory.

In general, the previously shared reflections reveal a tension in how students were coming to understand varieties of English. Participants were clearly more aware of linguistic diversity, but some of their comments show that old hierarchies among accents still shaped their perceptions. The sessions raised awareness of variation, then, but deeply rooted language ideologies may need longer pedagogical work before they are seriously challenged.

Emerging Reflections on the Ownership of English

The third finding that emerged from the study has to do with who has the right to use English. As shown earlier, before the intervention 13 of the 17 participants appeared to assume that legitimate English only belonged to those coming from traditionally dominant English-speaking countries. This reflects a deeply ingrained ideology that positions native English speakers as the main authorities and models in English language education. As the workshops took place, however, participants started to question whether belongs only to native speakers, as the following excerpts from S9, S3 and S6 illustrate.

Participant 9, for example, held that: "*English doesn't belong only to native speakers. People from many countries use it to communicate*" (S9 – FGD). These words suggest for this participant English does not belong to natives anymore. Instead, this suggests that now this participant perceives English as a shares resource for speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, another student suggests this recently gained positioning. S3, for example, mentions that "*If people can understand each other, it shouldn't matter where their English comes from*" (S3 – SR). In simple terms, the GE informed sessions seem to have prompted students to rethink their own assumptions about who holds linguistic legitimacy and authority.

This aspect is evident in other comments also made by the participants. A case in point is S6 who declared that "*English is not just from one place anymore because people everywhere use it for communication*" (S6 – ES). Put differently, as the interventions were developed, students commenced to see English as a resource shaped by its users rather than owned by particular communities.

The same sense of shared ownership came up in one of the group discussions held during the workshops. When carrying out the workshops, one participant claimed that: "*After the implementation, my way of thinking changed. I believe that all people have the right to communicate in English... it is a right that we all have*" (S13, FGD). Now, this student sees English as a right for everyone and not only as a source of some. In other words, engaging with GE also made participants think about linguistic rights.

On the whole, the intervention appears to have fostered more inclusive views about who owns English, as the sessions allowed students to increasingly recognized that the English language is used by diverse speakers around the world and not just by native communities. Additionally, it seems that participants were able to understand that communicating effectively can matter more than following native-speaker norms.

Reconsidering Assumptions about "Correct" English

The last result relates to what participants considered "correct" English. As is well known, in many educational establishments, correctness equals blindly following a single standard variety, usually a native speaker model from the United States or the United Kingdom, and some participants' early comments reflected this view. Nevertheless, participants' engagement with GE increased, many of these students started to question and rethink the relationship between correctness and communication. Listening how English is used differently in varied contexts seems to have shifted participants' attention toward intelligibility and effective interaction and away from conformity to one model. The excerpts taken from S6 and S11 illustrate the previously mentioned shift "*I used to think there was only one correct English, but now I see that people can speak differently and still communicate*" (S6 – SR). As exemplified, this participant has come to realize that variation does not necessarily get in the way of communication.

Similar to participant 6, participant 11 placed mutual understanding above native-like accuracy: "*What matters more is understanding each other, not speaking exactly like native speakers*" (S11 – FGD). Thus, as seen, as engaging with the interventions and GE practices overall participants began to question a notion of correctness exclusively tied to native-speaker norms.

Despite said meaningful shift, it is also important to share that while deeply ingrained views toward correct English seem to have challenged as a result of students' participation in the sessions, more traditional views do not appear to fully have gone away. Concerning this aspect, participant 13 commented that: "*Different accents are interesting, but I still think the British accent sounds more correct*" (S13 – ES). This particular viewpoint demonstrates that while learners can recognize diversity as a result

of their participation in GE oriented dynamics, they can still treat some varieties as more authoritative or legitimate. Students' understandings of English, then, were changing in complicated ways. The intervention seems to have made their ideas about correctness and legitimacy more flexible, but earlier beliefs about standard varieties still influenced how some of them judged different forms of English. This reflects a broader difficulty: deeply embedded language ideologies are hard to shift in a short intervention, meaning that perhaps longer interventions could have a more sustainable along time.

Discussion and Implications

Our findings show secondary school students moving between three things: recognizing that English is used globally, rethinking who owns it, and working out what counts as correct. Students came to see English as global and linguistically diverse, but native-speaker norms were still present in their thinking. This is consistent with GE research showing that learners' views tend to change through a mix of new awareness and continued attachment to traditional language ideologies (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2017). We discuss the findings under four headings: (1) recognizing the global reach of English, (2) rethinking the ownership of English, (3) negotiating ideas of correctness in English, and (4) implications for Global Englishes-oriented pedagogy.

Recognizing the Global Reach of English

The sessions appear to have widened students' awareness of English as a language used worldwide by people of many linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Before the intervention, several students associated English mainly with the traditionally dominant English-speaking countries. Taking part in the workshops and hearing varied examples of English led them to reconsider that view.

Participants 7, 12, and 5, for example, said explicitly that their views had changed: they had thought English belonged mainly to countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom. Through the activities, they began to see English as a global means of communication used in many sociocultural settings. This fits with earlier GE work. Exposure to diverse English users, scholars argue, can challenge monolithic ideas of English and show how plural and adaptable it is as a global language (Pennycook, 2007; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Classroom studies have likewise found that GE-informed activities can lead learners to question the assumption that British or American English are the only legitimate forms (Chang, 2014; Galloway & Rose, 2018).

Our participants, though, seem to be at an early point in this shift. They increasingly acknowledged that English is used well beyond the traditionally dominant countries, but they talked mainly about where English is spoken, not about linguistic authority, power relations, or ideological hierarchies. GE research has described a similar sequence, in which learners first become aware of the global distribution of English and only later engage critically with the sociopolitical side of its spread (Boonsuk, 2025; Matsuda, 2018).

Rethinking Who English Belongs To

Students also began to think differently about who owns English. In many language learning settings, English is implicitly linked to native speakers from the traditionally dominant countries. In the GE-informed sessions, however, discussions and activities asked participants to consider how English circulates globally and which communities use it.

Participants 9, 3, and 6, for instance, openly questioned the idea that English belongs only to native speakers. They stressed that people from many countries use English to communicate and that understanding each other matters more than where a speaker comes from. These views echo a core argument in GE and WE scholarship: English is a shared global resource, not the property of particular nations (Jenkins, 2015; Kachru, 1992).

Participants' responses thus point to more inclusive views of who is a legitimate English user. By acknowledging that English is widely used by speakers of many linguistic backgrounds, students began to question traditional ideas of linguistic authority. As in other GE studies, though, this seems to be an early stage. Participants recognized that English is used globally, but they did not yet engage with wider sociopolitical issues such as linguistic inequality, language ideology, or linguistic discrimination (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Matsuda, 2018).

Negotiating Ideas of Correctness in English

Students' ideas about what counts as "correct" English were also changing. In many educational settings, correctness means following standardized native-speaker norms, and several participants' early reflections showed this view.

After the sessions, however, some students started to question it. Participants 6 and 11, for example, said that communicating effectively and understanding each other may matter more than sounding exactly like a native speaker. This is close to arguments in GE and ELF research for making intelligibility, rather than strict adherence to native-speaker standards, the goal (Jenkins, 2007, 2009). Seen this way, intelligibility is a more realistic and empowering aim for many learners, particularly where English is used mainly for international communication (Fang & Ren, 2018).

Traditional beliefs about correctness did persist. Participant 13, for instance, still associated British English with greater correctness, a sign of how much influence native-speaker models continue to have in language education. GE research has documented the same tension, with learners recognizing linguistic diversity while still treating some varieties as more legitimate or authoritative (Jindapitak, 2019; Kusumaningputri, 2020). These patterns connect with broader critiques of native-speakerism, in which closeness to native norms is quietly equated with linguistic authority and professional legitimacy (Phillipson, 1992).

That inclusive views and native-speaker norms existed side by side shows how complicated it is for learners to work out what English means to them. As earlier research suggests, changing deeply embedded language ideologies usually takes sustained pedagogical work, not short interventions alone (Galloway & Rose, 2018).

Implications for Global Englishes-Oriented Pedagogy

Our findings suggest that GE-informed teaching can lead learners to reconsider traditional assumptions about English. Through contact with diverse English users and communicative contexts, participants began to see English as a global language, to acknowledge its diversity, and to question what they had believed about ownership and correctness.

At the same time, the tensions we observed across several themes show how strong native-speaker ideologies remain in language education. Studies in other educational settings have reported similar difficulties, suggesting that particular varieties are normalized through materials, assessment, and wider sociolinguistic ideologies (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Phillipson, 1992). Our results add weight to calls for bringing GE perspectives into language curricula in a more systematic way.

Teachers who include diverse varieties of English, open critical discussions about language ideologies, and expose learners to real global communication may help them build more inclusive and realistic understandings of English. Such approaches can also build learners' confidence as legitimate English users and prepare them for the varied communicative situations they are likely to meet (Jenkins, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Conclusion

At the outset, students' understandings of English were shaped largely by common language ideologies that present English as a single, standardized system belonging to the traditionally dominant English-speaking countries. Their early views, which tied English mainly to the United States and the United Kingdom and treated certain accents as more legitimate, show how naturalized standard language ideologies are in English language teaching. Within these ideologies, some varieties gain prestige not because they are linguistically superior but because of the sociopolitical power historically held by their speakers (Milroy, 2001). Students' tendency to equate "correct" or desirable English with Inner Circle varieties can also be read alongside critiques of linguistic imperialism, which place the global dominance of English within a history of political and economic power (Phillipson, 1992).

The GE-informed sessions appear to have started to unsettle these assumptions. Participants became more aware of how widely English is used, recognized more of its diversity, and began to question whether English belongs only to native speakers. Their comments also showed a gradual move toward valuing intelligibility and mutual understanding in communication. This is in line with ELF scholarship, which stresses intelligibility and communicative effectiveness in interactions among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004). Students' recognition that English takes on features of the linguistic and cultural settings of its users likewise reflects the WE emphasis on how English is localized and adapted across sociocultural contexts (Kachru, 1985; Matsuda, 2012).

These new understandings, however, coexisted with earlier beliefs about linguistic hierarchy and correctness. Several participants acknowledged that diverse varieties are legitimate, yet some still preferred traditionally dominant accents such as American or British English. Ideological change in language learning is rarely complete or linear. GE and ELF-oriented studies have reported similar patterns, with learners accepting more linguistic diversity while holding on to some standardized norms (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2015). What we observed, then, was less a transformation of beliefs than an ongoing negotiation between established language ideologies and the new perspectives introduced in the sessions.

Our findings are not conclusive, and the study has limitations. First, the sample was small (n = 17) and came from a single English-major cohort in one public secondary school in Boyacá, so the results cannot be generalized far beyond this setting. Second, six sessions is a short engagement with GE-informed pedagogy; longer interventions would be needed to examine shifts in students' language ideologies more thoroughly. Third, the researcher facilitated the sessions and collected the data, with classroom access granted by the students' English teacher. As is common in classroom-based and action research, this closeness to participants may have influenced their responses, especially in the focus groups and reflections (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). To reduce this risk, we told students that neither their participation nor what they said would affect their grades. Even so, this power dynamic should be kept in mind when reading participants' accounts, and future studies could add an external observer who does not facilitate the sessions.

Even with these limits, the study suggests that GE-informed teaching can work as a space for raising awareness in secondary school classrooms. Contact with diverse English users and communicative contexts led participants to start questioning assumptions they had taken for granted about where English is used, how it sounds, and who has the right to use it. The persistence of some native-speaker-oriented beliefs, however, shows how deeply language ideologies are embedded in schooling and in wider social discourse. Building more critical and plural understandings of English is likely to require sustained pedagogical work rather than one-off interventions.

For English language teaching in the Global South, and in Colombia in particular, our findings point to the value of carefully scaffolded, context-sensitive GE pedagogy. Teachers who expose learners to diverse varieties of English, invite them to reflect on language ideologies, and emphasize communication across linguistic difference can help them develop more inclusive and realistic understandings of English as a global language and, ultimately, see themselves as legitimate users of English in a multilingual world.

Authorship contribution statement

J.E.M.P. Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, data analysis, writing, original draft, review & editing, M.A.V.R. Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, data analysis, writing, original draft, review & editing

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Ethical statements

All data collection and analysis procedures were in agreement with ethical standards. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in the study.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Sample items from the Entry Survey (ES)

The entry survey aimed to explore participants' initial perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward English before the implementation of the Global Englishes-informed sessions. The survey included multiple-choice and open-ended questions focusing on students' understandings of English ownership, preferred varieties, exposure to different accents, and familiarity with Global Englishes.

Sample multiple-choice questions

1. **Which countries do you mainly associate with the English language?**
   - United States
   - United Kingdom
   - Canada
   - Australia
   - Many countries around the world
   - Other: _____
2. **In your opinion, which variety of English is most important to learn?**
   - American English
   - British English
   - Both equally
   - English used in different countries around the world
   - I am not sure
3. **How often have you heard people from non-English-speaking countries speaking English?**
   - Very often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never
4. **Do you think English belongs mainly to native speakers (e.g., from the United States or the United Kingdom)?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

Sample open-ended questions

1. Why do you think English is important today?
2. What does "speaking good English" mean to you?
3. Have you ever heard different English accents from around the world? If yes, where?
4. Have you ever heard about the concept of Global Englishes? If yes, explain what you know about it.

Appendix B – An example of one of the Global Englishes Awareness Workshops Applied (GEAWs)

Activity 1: English around the world

Objective. By the end of the activity, students will have explored how English is used by speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, recognizing that English functions as a global means of communication.

Instructions.

Watch short video clips of people from different countries (e.g., India, Nigeria, Japan, and Brazil) speaking English in everyday situations. After watching the clips, discuss your impressions in small groups and then share your reflections with the rest of the class.

Example discussion questions

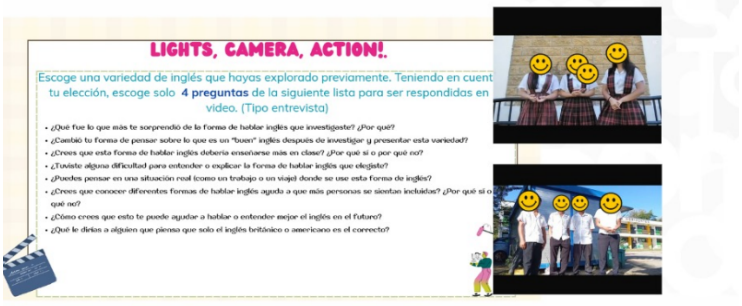
1. What differences did you notice in the way the speakers used English?
2. Were some accents easier or harder to understand? Why?
3. Do you think these speakers are using English correctly? Why or why not?
4. What does this activity suggest about how English is used around the world?

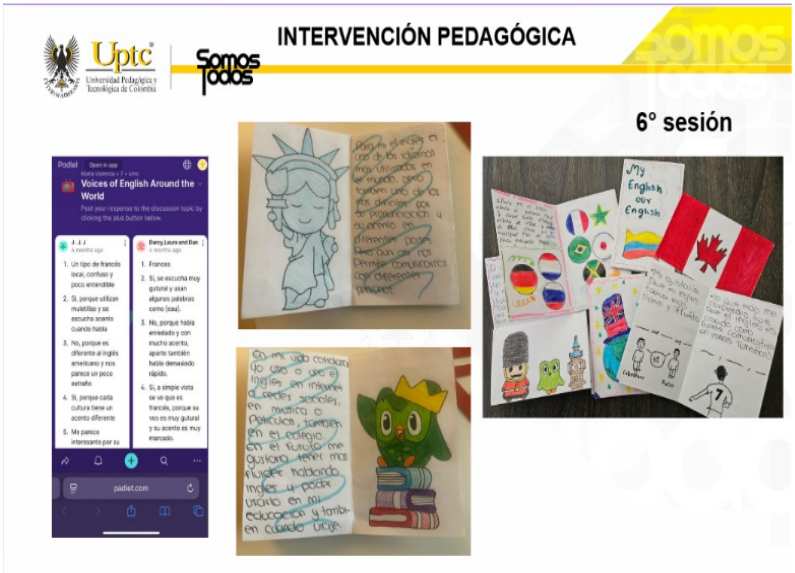
INTERVENCIÓN PEDAGÓGICA

1°y 2° sesión

	¿Cuál variedad te gustó más?	¿Cuál variedad te pareció más difícil?	¿Cómo te sentiste escuchando esta variación del Inglés?	¿Crees que estas variaciones representan la identidad de los hablantes como muestran los videos? Justifica tu respuesta.
Indian English				
Brazilian English				
Jamaican English				
Korean English				
Canadian English				

5° sesión





Appendix C. Prompts for Students' Reflections (SRs)
Students were invited to reflect on their experiences after each workshop session. Reflections were collected both in written form and through short oral discussions.

Sample reflection prompts

1. What was the most interesting idea you learned during today's session?
2. Did anything in the session change the way you think about English or its use in the world? Explain.
3. How did you feel listening to people from different countries speaking English?
4. Do you think it is necessary to sound like a native speaker to communicate successfully in English? Why or why not?
5. What challenges or difficulties did you experience during today's activities?
6. In your opinion, what does this session suggest about the role of English in global communication?

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